



National Science Foundation

4201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22230

Dear Colleague,

The Division of Atmospheric Sciences (ATM) of the Directorate for Geosciences (GEO) of the National Science Foundation (NSF) is preparing a competition that is expected to lead to the award of a single cooperative agreement for the future management and operation of the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR). In accordance with the National Science Board's resolution 97-224, NSF competes expiring awards unless it is judged to be in the interest of U.S. science and engineering not to do so. Sources that meet the eligibility requirements below are invited to submit Capability Statements in accordance with the stated criteria no later than May 1, 2006.

ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

The competition for the management and operation of NCAR will be open to universities or consortia of universities, other not-for-profit or nonprofit organizations, and any industrial firm operating as an autonomous organization or as an identifiable separate operating unit of a parent organization.

NCAR operations must be conducted in the public interest with objectivity and independence, free from organizational conflicts of interest, and with full disclosure of its affairs to NSF. NSF will have overall responsibility for award oversight, including technical, programmatic, and financial and administrative performance. For federal policy considerations, please see FAR 35.017, "Federally Funded Research and Development Centers" at <http://www.arnet.gov/far/>.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

NCAR was established in 1960 in Boulder, Colorado as a center of excellence for research and education in atmospheric science, providing research, facilities and services for the atmospheric and wider geosciences community. NCAR was designated as an NSF FFRDC in the early 1970s. The current cooperative agreement, for a total amount not exceeding \$548M, began October 1, 2003 and will expire on September 30, 2008. The 2005 base budget for the operation of NCAR was approximately \$80M, with additional support from other agencies of approximately \$14M.

The NCAR mission is to support, enhance and extend the capabilities of the atmospheric and broader science community by planning, organizing and conducting atmospheric and related research programs in collaboration with universities and other institutions, providing state-of-the-art research tools and facilities to the atmospheric sciences community, supporting and enhancing university atmospheric science education, and facilitating the transfer of technology to both the public and private sectors.

NCAR facilities and computing infrastructure currently available for use by the scientific community include two NSF-owned research aircraft, ground-based and airborne radar, lidar and radiometer systems, surface sounders and sondes. NCAR also develops and maintains sophisticated climate and meteorological models, and provides high-end supercomputing, network and data services for the atmospheric and broader geosciences community.

SPONSOR'S CONCEPT OF NCAR OPERATIONS

The recipient of the award (hereinafter referred to as the "Awardee") shall manage space and equipment provided by NSF, will provide additional space and equipment as necessary, and will provide support and

technical personnel to manage NCAR as an FFRDC. NCAR will act as a strategic partner of NSF, and will plan and execute a broad research program consistent with the objectives and priorities of NSF and the scientific community. Although NSF is the sponsoring agency, the scientific community is NCAR's primary customer; therefore, a significant portion of the research program will be carried out in collaboration with the community. NCAR will enhance the ability of the community to collectively explore, develop and extend its ideas by providing access to shared observational facilities, computational infrastructure and databases, and an integrated support network of institutional and individual sources of expertise that could not be contained within a single organization.

TASKS PERFORMED FOR OTHER THAN THE SPONSOR

As an FFRDC, NCAR may not use its privileged information or access to facilities to compete with the private sector; however, NCAR may perform work for other agencies under the Economy Act or other applicable legislation, when the work is not otherwise available from the private sector and is consistent with NCAR's mission as defined by NSF. Such work may be either accepted by NSF or authorized via amendment to the cooperative agreement, or in some cases provided by the other agency directly to NCAR.

CAPABILITY STATEMENT CONTENT

Interested organizations may submit a statement of their capabilities to perform the sponsor's concept of NCAR operations.

Organizations submitting capability statements will be assessed on the following:

- 1) Broad knowledge of, and connection to, the atmospheric and wider geosciences community.
- 2) An ability to attract, develop and retain experienced and highly qualified personnel for the facilities and research environments that NCAR is expected to operate.
- 3) Experience in the successful management and operation of complex facilities, virtual or physical, including responsibility for providing critical logistics support for short and long-term scientific initiatives.
- 4) The necessary organization, experience, accounting and operational controls (including such elements as property control and procurement systems), and technical skills, or the ability to obtain them along with adequate financial resources.

The Capability Statement shall not exceed 10 pages, and shall provide only substantive information essential for proper review. Attachments are not authorized and will not be considered. The Government will not pay for the cost of preparing and submitting the Capability Statement. The submission must be received at NSF no later than May 1, 2006 at 4PM EST. Amendments to responses after the close of this notice are not authorized and will not be considered.

Written Capability Statements may be submitted by mail to the National Science Foundation, Attn: Kristin Spencer, Grant & Agreement Specialist, Division of Contracts and Complex Agreements, 4201 Wilson Boulevard, Room 475, Arlington, VA 22230 or electronically to kspencer@nsf.gov. Facsimile responses are not authorized.

EVALUATION OF RESPONSES

Responses to this notice will be evaluated on the basis of the aforementioned capabilities. Only information submitted in response to this notice will be considered. Additional information and/or amendments to responses after the close of this notice are not authorized and will not be considered.

Based on the Government's assessment of the information provided, NSF will send a written notice advising respondents of their potential to be viable competitors. Organizations providing capability

statements in response to this announcement will not be rank ordered, weighted or scored. NSF's response will be advisement only, not a final determination. The advisement does not preclude any respondent from submitting a proposal in the future competition, nor will it guarantee award.

NSF will respond to written questions regarding the assessment. The NSF response may be in writing or in a meeting at NSF, at NSF's discretion.

ANTICIPATED COMPETITION SCHEDULE

This notice does not constitute a solicitation; therefore, no award of any kind will result from this notice. Although the competition is still in planning stage, NSF anticipates that a program solicitation will be issued on or about October 31, 2006.

It is expected that the solicitation will define the competition as a two-stage process. Preliminary proposals outlining the organization's vision and/or concept of design for the future of NCAR would be due on or about January 31, 2007. The preliminary proposal would be intended to provide an overview of the applicant's approach, and as such would be limited in length. Applicants would be notified of the outcome of evaluation of preliminary proposals by mid May 2007. Only those organizations successful in this stage would then be invited to submit full proposals, with an expected due date of August 1, 2007.

Sources of additional information:

- National Science Foundation, Atmospheric Sciences : <http://www.nsf.gov/div/index.jsp?div=ATM>
- National Science Foundation, Geosciences: <http://www.nsf.gov/dir/index.jsp?org=GEO>
- National Center for Atmospheric Research: <http://www.ncar.ucar.edu/>
- NCAR Strategic Plan: <http://www.ncar.ucar.edu/stratplan/2006/index.html>
- NCAR Annual Report: <http://www.nar.ucar.edu/>

Primary Contact:

Kristin Spencer,

NSF Grant & Agreement Specialist,

ph (703)292-4585; kspencer@nsf.gov.

Sincerely,

Jarvis L. Moyers

Division Director, GEO/ATM