



Smithsonian



National Science Foundation

Letter of Agreement between the National Science Foundation and the Smithsonian Institution Concerning a Partnership to Coordinate Mutual Research and Education Interests

The National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Smithsonian Institution (SI) are the United States Government's premier entities for broad-based research and education initiatives across the scientific spectrum and cultural domains. While NSF and the Smithsonian Institution originated under different circumstances and have independent missions, they share the goals of advancing the frontiers of knowledge, spurring innovation, and serving the national interest through discovery.

In order to enhance partnerships on STEM education, public outreach, research opportunities, and other mutually beneficial enterprises, the Smithsonian Institution and NSF are establishing parameters to guide and streamline future collaboration. There are numerous possibilities for NSF and the Smithsonian to aid and support each other, thereby advancing their mutual goals. With annual visit numbers that regularly exceed 30 million, the Smithsonian is an opportunity to highlight NSF's mission and the scientific and technological advances that NSF funding has enabled—in particular, the National Portrait Gallery is an opportunity to showcase the careers and stories of America's most accomplished scientists. STEM education is a central element to the mission of both the Smithsonian and NSF, and thus developing plans and platforms to cultivate learning opportunities for a variety of audiences will be a primary focus of collaboration.

In addition to setting the intention to engage in collaborative STEM outreach, this agreement is also intended to provide guidance on circumstances in which research conducted under the aegis of the Smithsonian Institution may receive NSF funding. NSF will consider funding Smithsonian researchers, as specified below:

- Any support for the Smithsonian Institution (SI), regardless of whether the SI employee is a federal employee or is a trust-funded employee, will be reviewed in the same manner as proposals submitted by institutions of higher education (IHE). Any funded proposal from an SI employee will be subject to the same terms and conditions as would apply to a funded proposal from a non-profit organization.
- Consistent with NSF policy about employees of federal agencies who have joint appointments with IHE, Smithsonian federal employees who have joint (paid or unpaid) appointments with IHE may submit proposals through the IHE and may receive support if they are a faculty member (or equivalent) of the IHE, although part of their salary may be provided by the federal agency. Any funded proposal will be awarded to the IHE and will be subject to the applicable terms and conditions.

The Offices of the NSF Director and the SI Secretary will identify individuals within their respective organizations who will field inquiries should they arise regarding SI eligibility to receive NSF funding or other matters of coordination between the parties. These points of contacts will be reviewed and exchanged annually by the organizations.

The National Science Foundation and the Smithsonian Institution look forward to working together to foster collaborative research, increase public outreach to highlight the benefits of research and education, and advance the national interest through scientific discovery and the diffusion of knowledge.

Lonnie G. Bunch III
Secretary, Smithsonian Institution

France A. Córdova
Director, National Science Foundation

Date

Date