

A Message from the Director of the National Science Foundation

Early on, I was fortunate to have multiple experiences that solidified my love for astronomy. I continue to marvel at the rapid progress science has made and the multiple windows now opening on the universe. Just this month, NSF-funded astronomers from Arizona State, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of Colorado at Boulder reported on the detection of a signal from the first stars emerging in the early universe. We can now pinpoint when the cosmic light switch flipped on, moving the universe out of darkness.

Such exciting discoveries may spark others to become curious about pursuing a career in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), but we need to ensure better access to STEM. That's why I have made it a priority to promote opportunities in STEM through [NSF INCLUDES](#) (Inclusion across the Nation of Communities of Learners of Underrepresented Discoverers in Engineering and Science), a national effort to widen STEM participation. [The initiative](#) is also one of the agency's [10 Big Ideas for Future NSF Investments](#) at the frontiers of science and engineering.

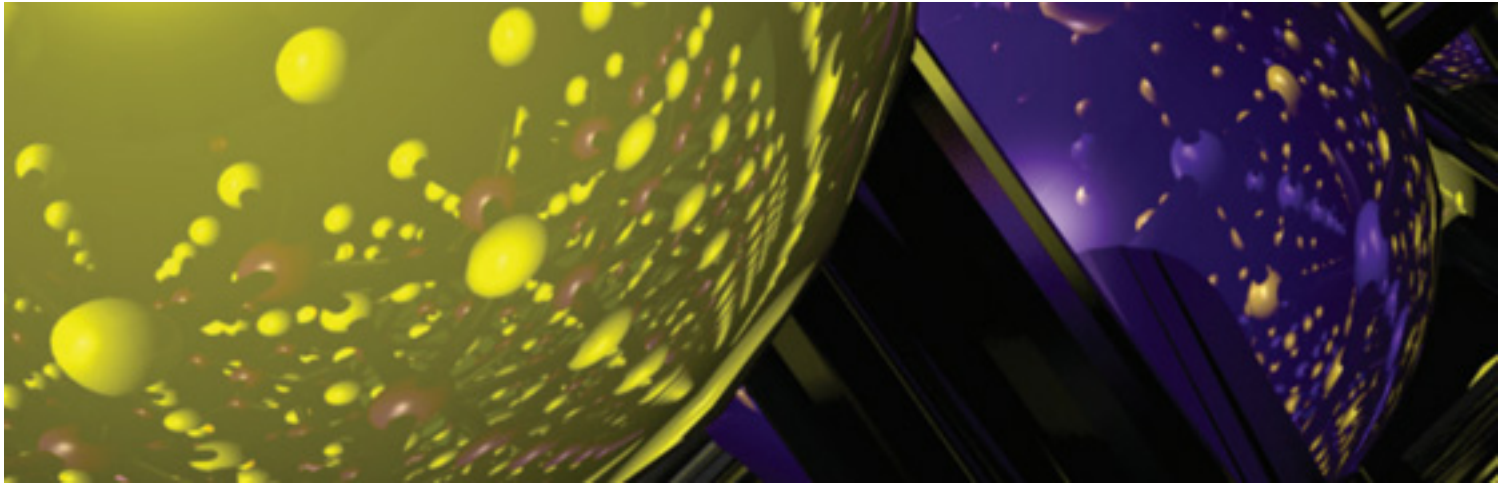


To mark the progress made by NSF INCLUDES during its two-year existence and to outline a vision for the program's future, this month we released the [NSF INCLUDES Report to the Nation](#). The report highlights key strategies, lessons learned and important program milestones.

As you read the report, you will understand the integral role collaboration plays in this effort. We are grateful to the many organizations and businesses in 45 states, the District of Columbia, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam and the Marshall Islands who have partnered with us on the Design and Development Launch Pilots. I encourage you to connect with the NSF INCLUDES National Network and to visit the [INCLUDES web site](#) to learn more.

Together we can create a future that looks very different from the past: one that celebrates the creativity and curiosity brought to the bench by individuals with diverse experiences. These enthusiastic learners carry the DNA of future U.S. STEM advances.

Where Discoveries Begin...



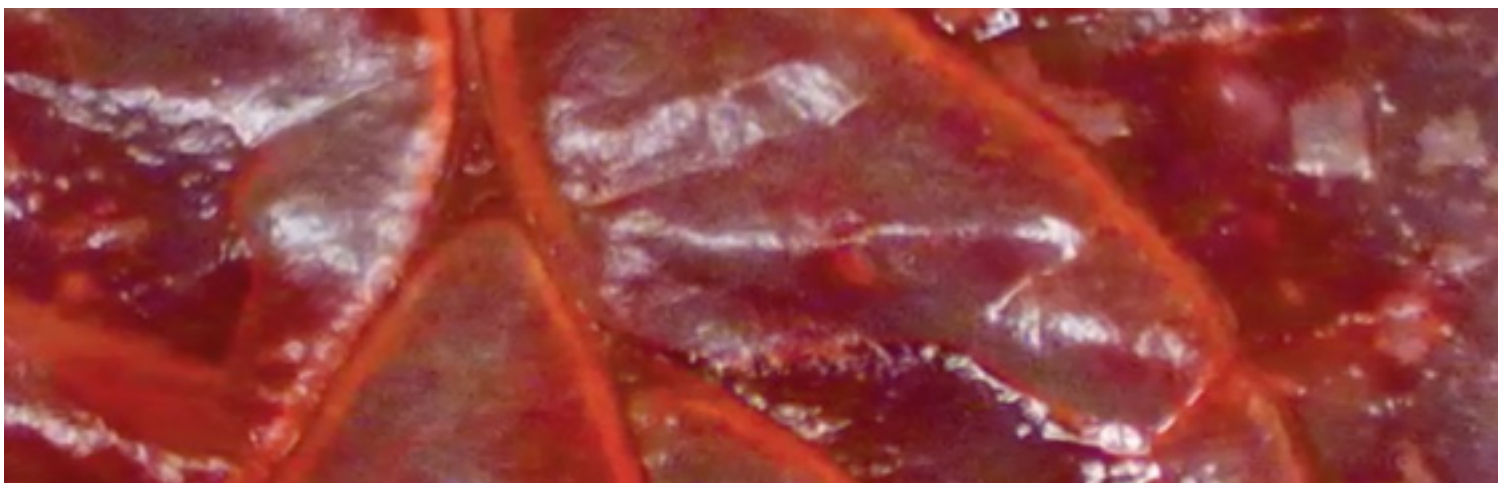
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What's Next?

April 7 & 8: [USA Science & Engineering Festival](#), Walter E Washington Convention Center. Come see and experience the NSF pavilion, #529, and meet the NSF-funded researchers from 12 states across the country. There will be 22 unique interactive exhibits representing all the directorates at NSF, resulting in numerous opportunities to engage with NSF-funded graduate students, postdocs, and principal investigators.

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