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# CubeSat-based Science Missions for Geospace and Atmospheric Research

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## PROGRAM SOLICITATION

NSF 14-535

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### REPLACES DOCUMENT(S):

NSF 12-536

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**National Science Foundation**

Directorate for Geosciences  
Division of Atmospheric and Geospace Sciences

**Full Proposal Deadline(s)** (due by 5 p.m. submitter's local time):

May 12, 2014

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND REVISION NOTES

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Solicitation reissued with deadline for proposal submission in 2014

Any proposal submitted in response to this solicitation should be submitted in accordance with the revised *NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide* (PAPPG) (NSF 17-1), which is effective for proposals submitted, or due, on or after January 30, 2017.

## SUMMARY OF PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

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### General Information

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**Program Title:**

CubeSat-based Science Missions for Geospace and Atmospheric Research

**Synopsis of Program:**

Lack of essential observations from space is currently a major limiting factor in many areas of geospace and atmospheric research. Recent advances in sensor and spacecraft technologies make it feasible to obtain key measurements from low-cost, small satellite missions. A particularly promising aspect of this development is the prospect for obtaining multi-point observations in space that are critical for addressing many outstanding problems in space and atmospheric sciences. Space-based measurements from small satellites also have great potential to advance discovery and understanding in geospace and atmospheric sciences in many other ways. To take full advantage of these developments, NSF is soliciting research proposals centered on small satellite missions.

The overarching goal of the program is to support the development, construction, launch, operation, and data analysis of small satellite science missions to advance geospace and atmospheric research. Equally important, it will provide essential opportunities to train the next generation of experimental space scientists and aerospace engineers.

To facilitate launch of the satellites as secondary payloads on existing missions, the focus of the program is on CubeSat-based satellites. Launch of the satellites will mainly be through the standardized CubeSat deployment system, the Poly Picosatellite Orbital Deployer (P-POD). Launch of the P-PODS will be as auxiliary payloads on DOD, NASA, or commercial launches. This will be arranged after selection and is not part of this solicitation. This solicitation covers proposals for science missions to include satellite development, construction, testing and operation as well as data distribution and scientific analysis.

**Cognizant Program Officer(s):**

*Please note that the following information is current at the time of publishing. See program website for any updates to the points of contact.*

- Irfan S. Azeem, telephone: (703) 292-8520, email: [sazeem@nsf.gov](mailto:sazeem@nsf.gov)

- Carrie E. Black, telephone: (703) 292-2426, email: [cblack@nsf.gov](mailto:cblack@nsf.gov)

**Applicable Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number(s):**

- 47.050 --- Geosciences

## Award Information

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**Anticipated Type of Award:** Standard Grant or Continuing Grant

**Estimated Number of Awards:** 2

**Anticipated Funding Amount:** \$600,000 annually, pending availability of funds.

## Eligibility Information

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**Who May Submit Proposals:**

The categories of proposers eligible to submit proposals to the National Science Foundation are identified in the *NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG)*, Chapter I.E.

**Who May Serve as PI:**

There are no restrictions or limits.

**Limit on Number of Proposals per Organization:**

There are no restrictions or limits.

**Limit on Number of Proposals per PI or Co-PI:**

There are no restrictions or limits.

## Proposal Preparation and Submission Instructions

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**A. Proposal Preparation Instructions**

- **Letters of Intent:** Not required
- **Preliminary Proposal Submission:** Not required
- **Full Proposals:**
  - Full Proposals submitted via FastLane: *NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide (PAPPG)* guidelines apply. The complete text of the PAPPG is available electronically on the NSF website at: [https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub\\_summ.jsp?ods\\_key=pappg](https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=pappg).
  - Full Proposals submitted via Grants.gov: *NSF Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for the Preparation and Submission of NSF Applications via Grants.gov* guidelines apply (Note: The *NSF Grants.gov Application Guide* is available on the Grants.gov website and on the NSF website at: [https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub\\_summ.jsp?ods\\_key=grantsgovguide](https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=grantsgovguide)).

**B. Budgetary Information**

- **Cost Sharing Requirements:**

Inclusion of voluntary committed cost sharing is prohibited.
- **Indirect Cost (F&A) Limitations:**

Not Applicable
- **Other Budgetary Limitations:**

Not Applicable

**C. Due Dates**

- **Full Proposal Deadline(s)** (due by 5 p.m. submitter's local time):

May 12, 2014

## Proposal Review Information Criteria

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**Merit Review Criteria:**

National Science Board approved criteria. Additional merit review considerations apply. Please see the full text of this solicitation for further information.

## Award Administration Information

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### Award Conditions:

Additional award conditions apply. Please see the full text of this solicitation for further information.

### Reporting Requirements:

Standard NSF reporting requirements apply.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

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The Division of Atmospheric and Geospace Science supports research to add new understanding of the behavior of Earth's atmosphere, Earth's space environment, Solar variability, and the interactions between these domains. Included are:

- Studies of the physics, chemistry, and dynamics of Earth's upper and lower atmosphere and its space environment
- Studies of the physics and dynamics of the Sun as it pertains to processes in the Earth's atmosphere and space environment
- Studies to understand space weather processes and effects
- Studies to understand climate processes and variations
- Studies to understand the natural global cycles of gases and particles in Earth's atmosphere

Lack of essential observations from space is currently a major limiting factor in many areas of geospace and atmospheric research. Recent advances in sensor and spacecraft technologies make it feasible to obtain key measurements from low-cost, small satellite missions. A particularly promising aspect of this development is the prospect of obtaining multi-point observations in space that are critical for addressing many outstanding problems in geospace and atmospheric sciences. Space-based measurements from small satellites also have great potential to advance discovery and understanding in many areas of geospace and atmospheric sciences in other ways.

National space policy emphasizes the need to develop a strong workforce and to ensure continued US leadership in space understanding and utilization. The NSF CubeSat program is designed to help address these needs. Specifically, the small satellite program will invest in facilities and instrumentation that support transformative technologies and will promote the development of a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) workforce for the 21st Century.

## I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

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The overarching goal of the program is to explore untraditional, creative, and low-cost ways to provide space measurements for scientific research. The program will execute small scientific satellite missions to advance space and atmospheric research. Equally important, it will provide essential opportunities to train the next generation of experimental space scientists and aerospace engineers. The program will support the development, construction, launch, and operation of small satellite systems as well as the distribution and analysis of the science data from the missions.

To facilitate launch of the satellites as secondary payloads, the focus of the program is on CubeSat-based satellites to be launched in California Polytechnic's standardized CubeSat deployment system, the Poly Picosatellite Orbital Deployer (P-POD). CubeSat and P-POD design specifications and guidance are open-source community standards and can be found at: <http://www.cubesat.org/>. Under this program it is expected that 2 P-PODS will be launched every year, accommodating at least as many individual satellite missions. Proposed missions are expected to fully comply with accepted CubeSat standards and proposals must clearly state and justify any deviations therefrom. Specifically, it is incumbent on proposals to clearly demonstrate that the proposed satellites can be launched by P-POD. If deviations are required or alternate launch options are desired, including hosted sensor opportunities on other NASA, DOD, or commercial spacecraft, proposers should contact a cognizant NSF Program Officer before preparing a proposal for submission to discuss the feasibility and appropriateness of their approach.

Awards funded through this solicitation are for science missions to include design, construction, testing and operation of satellites as well as data distribution and scientific analysis. To be considered for an award, proposals must describe complete science missions, including all of the above components. In the case that only partial funding for a mission is sought through this solicitation, a complete description of the mission is still required for the proposal and the proposal will be evaluated based on the full mission. The forming of appropriate collaborations that cover all the necessary areas of expertise within space science as well as aerospace engineering is also strongly encouraged. Emphasis of this solicitation is on missions with research focus within any of the geospace and atmospheric science disciplines of the AGS Division, but missions within other fields of science will also be considered.

Launch of the P-PODS will be as auxiliary payloads on DOD, NASA, or commercial launches. This will be arranged in collaboration with NSF after selection and is not part of this solicitation. Likewise the integration of satellites into P-PODS and final testing of the fully integrated payloads to satisfy the requirements of the launch provider is also outside the scope of this solicitation and will be planned in collaboration with NSF after selection. NSF will also assist with frequency allocation and licensing for space and ground systems as needed.

Additional technical information relevant to the program is posted on the NSF program web-site at: [https://www.nsf.gov/geo/ags/uars/cubesat/cubesat\\_info.doc](https://www.nsf.gov/geo/ags/uars/cubesat/cubesat_info.doc) and will be updated as new information becomes available. This includes information on requirements for launch qualification testing and telemetry licensing and specification.

Education and workforce development are important aspects of the program. Therefore, to be eligible for an award, proposals must include training opportunities for students as well as significant student participation in all aspects of the proposed projects.

## III. AWARD INFORMATION

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Typical awards from this competition are expected to be \$100,000 - \$300,000 per year for 3 to 4 years, not to exceed a total of \$900,000. In FY 2014, NSF expects to fund approximately 1 to 2 awards depending on the quality of submissions and the availability of funds. Up to \$600,000 will be available for new projects selected from this solicitation. The program budget, number of awards and average award size/duration are subject to the availability of funds.

## IV. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

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### Who May Submit Proposals:

The categories of proposers eligible to submit proposals to the National Science Foundation are identified in the *NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG)*, Chapter I.E.

### Who May Serve as PI:

There are no restrictions or limits.

### Limit on Number of Proposals per Organization:

There are no restrictions or limits.

### Limit on Number of Proposals per PI or Co-PI:

There are no restrictions or limits.

## V. PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

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### A. Proposal Preparation Instructions

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**Full Proposal Preparation Instructions:** Proposers may opt to submit proposals in response to this Program Solicitation via Grants.gov or via the NSF FastLane system.

- Full proposals submitted via FastLane: Proposals submitted in response to this program solicitation should be prepared and submitted in accordance with the general guidelines contained in the *NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide* (PAPPG). The complete text of the PAPPG is available electronically on the NSF website at: [https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub\\_summ.jsp?ods\\_key=pappg](https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=pappg). Paper copies of the PAPPG may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (703) 292-7827 or by e-mail from [nspubs@nsf.gov](mailto:nspubs@nsf.gov). Proposers are reminded to identify this program solicitation number in the program solicitation block on the NSF Cover Sheet For Proposal to the National Science Foundation. Compliance with this requirement is critical to determining the relevant proposal processing guidelines. Failure to submit this information may delay processing.
- Full proposals submitted via Grants.gov: Proposals submitted in response to this program solicitation via Grants.gov should be prepared and submitted in accordance with the *NSF Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for the Preparation and Submission of NSF Applications via Grants.gov*. The complete text of the *NSF Grants.gov Application Guide* is available on the Grants.gov website and on the NSF website at: ([https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub\\_summ.jsp?ods\\_key=grantsgovguide](https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=grantsgovguide)). To obtain copies of the Application Guide and Application Forms Package, click on the Apply tab on the Grants.gov site, then click on the Apply Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Application Instructions link and enter the funding opportunity number, (the program solicitation number without the NSF prefix) and press the Download Package button. Paper copies of the Grants.gov Application Guide also may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (703) 292-7827 or by e-mail from [nspubs@nsf.gov](mailto:nspubs@nsf.gov).

In determining which method to utilize in the electronic preparation and submission of the proposal, please note the following:

**Collaborative Proposals.** All collaborative proposals submitted as separate submissions from multiple organizations must be submitted via the NSF FastLane system. PAPPG Chapter II.D.3 provides additional information on collaborative proposals.

See PAPPG Chapter II.C.2 for guidance on the required sections of a full research proposal submitted to NSF. Please note that the proposal preparation instructions provided in this program solicitation may deviate from the PAPPG instructions.

#### Supplemental instructions

The following instructions supplement the *NSF GPG* and *NSF Grants.gov Application Guide* guidelines. **Proposals not following these instructions are subject to return without review**

#### Cover Page:

Proposal titles should begin with the word "CubeSat". If part of a collaborative, the proposal title should begin with: "Collaborative Research CubeSat"

#### Project Description:

1. Proposals should include a description of the science objectives and measurements planned for the proposed mission.
2. Proposals should include a description of the relevance of the proposed research mission to current geospace or atmospheric science research goals.
3. Proposals should include a description of orbital requirements for the mission and should discuss the potential impacts on the science objectives of all possible orbit scenarios.
4. Proposals should include a description of the technical approach of the instruments, various spacecraft subsystems (such as micro-controller, power, attitude control system, and communication), and mission operations, including ground station(s) and data distribution.
5. Proposals should include a detailed description of the technological readiness or heritage of the proposed technical approaches.
6. Any deviations from accepted CubeSat standards must be clearly stated and justified, and the proposal must clearly demonstrate that the deviations will not pose a problem for launching the satellite by P-POD. Deviations should not be considered without prior consultation with a cognizant NSF Program Officer.
7. Proposals should include a description of the student training opportunities and student involvement that the project will offer as well as any other educational activities that the proposal will support.

#### Special Information and Supplementary Documentation:

The following special information must be provided as a *Supplementary Document*. This information is not considered part of the 15-page project description limitation but should not exceed a total of 5 pages.

1. A detailed management plan including a description of the risk reduction approach being adopted.
2. A detailed project schedule.
3. A satellite and subsystem environmental testing plan that conforms to the CubeSat standard and a plan for how to meet additional testing requirements that may be issued by the launch provider.
4. A description of reviews planned during development and test.

## B. Budgetary Information

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### Cost Sharing:

Inclusion of voluntary committed cost sharing is prohibited.

## C. Due Dates

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- **Full Proposal Deadline(s)** (due by 5 p.m. submitter's local time):

May 12, 2014

## D. FastLane/Grants.gov Requirements

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### For Proposals Submitted Via FastLane:

To prepare and submit a proposal via FastLane, see detailed technical instructions available at: <https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/a1/newstan.htm>. For FastLane user support, call the FastLane Help Desk at 1-800-673-6188 or e-mail [fastlane@nsf.gov](mailto:fastlane@nsf.gov). The FastLane Help Desk answers general technical questions related to the use of the FastLane system. Specific questions related to this program solicitation should be referred to the NSF program staff contact(s) listed in Section VIII of this funding opportunity.

### For Proposals Submitted Via Grants.gov:

Before using Grants.gov for the first time, each organization must register to create an institutional profile. Once registered, the applicant's organization can then apply for any federal grant on the Grants.gov website. Comprehensive information about using Grants.gov is available on the Grants.gov Applicant Resources webpage: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants.html>. In addition, the NSF Grants.gov Application Guide (see link in Section V.A) provides instructions regarding the technical preparation of proposals via Grants.gov. For Grants.gov user support, contact the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 or by email: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov). The Grants.gov Contact Center answers general technical questions related to the use of Grants.gov. Specific questions related to this program solicitation should be referred to the NSF program staff contact(s) listed in Section VIII of this solicitation.

**Submitting the Proposal:** Once all documents have been completed, the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) must submit the application to Grants.gov and verify the desired funding opportunity and agency to which the application is submitted. The AOR must then sign and submit the application to Grants.gov. The completed application will be transferred to the NSF FastLane system for further processing.

Proposers that submitted via FastLane are strongly encouraged to use FastLane to verify the status of their submission to NSF. For proposers that submitted via Grants.gov, until an application has been received and validated by NSF, the Authorized Organizational Representative may check the status of an application on Grants.gov. After proposers have received an e-mail notification from NSF, Research.gov should be used to check the status of an application.

## VI. NSF PROPOSAL PROCESSING AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

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Proposals received by NSF are assigned to the appropriate NSF program for acknowledgement and, if they meet NSF requirements, for review. All proposals are carefully reviewed by a scientist, engineer, or educator serving as an NSF Program Officer, and usually by three to ten other persons outside NSF either as *ad hoc* reviewers, panelists, or both, who are experts in the particular fields represented by the proposal. These reviewers are selected by Program Officers charged with oversight of the review process. Proposers are invited to suggest names of persons they believe are especially well qualified to review the proposal and/or persons they would prefer not review the proposal. These suggestions may serve as one source in the reviewer selection process at the Program Officer's discretion. Submission of such names, however, is optional. Care is taken to ensure that reviewers have no conflicts of interest with the proposal. In addition, Program Officers may obtain comments from site visits before recommending final action on proposals. Senior NSF staff further review recommendations for awards. A flowchart that depicts the entire NSF proposal and award process (and associated timeline) is included in PAPPG Exhibit III-1.

A comprehensive description of the Foundation's merit review process is available on the NSF website at: [https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/merit\\_review/](https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/merit_review/).

Proposers should also be aware of core strategies that are essential to the fulfillment of NSF's mission, as articulated in *Investing in Science, Engineering, and Education for the Nation's Future: NSF Strategic Plan for 2014-2018*. These strategies are integrated in the program planning and implementation process, of which proposal review is one part. NSF's mission is particularly well-implemented through the integration of research and education and broadening participation in NSF programs, projects, and activities.

One of the strategic objectives in support of NSF's mission is to foster integration of research and education through the programs,

projects, and activities it supports at academic and research institutions. These institutions must recruit, train, and prepare a diverse STEM workforce to advance the frontiers of science and participate in the U.S. technology-based economy. NSF's contribution to the national innovation ecosystem is to provide cutting-edge research under the guidance of the Nation's most creative scientists and engineers. NSF also supports development of a strong science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) workforce by investing in building the knowledge that informs improvements in STEM teaching and learning.

NSF's mission calls for the broadening of opportunities and expanding participation of groups, institutions, and geographic regions that are underrepresented in STEM disciplines, which is essential to the health and vitality of science and engineering. NSF is committed to this principle of diversity and deems it central to the programs, projects, and activities it considers and supports.

## A. Merit Review Principles and Criteria

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The National Science Foundation strives to invest in a robust and diverse portfolio of projects that creates new knowledge and enables breakthroughs in understanding across all areas of science and engineering research and education. To identify which projects to support, NSF relies on a merit review process that incorporates consideration of both the technical aspects of a proposed project and its potential to contribute more broadly to advancing NSF's mission "to promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; to secure the national defense; and for other purposes." NSF makes every effort to conduct a fair, competitive, transparent merit review process for the selection of projects.

### 1. Merit Review Principles

These principles are to be given due diligence by PIs and organizations when preparing proposals and managing projects, by reviewers when reading and evaluating proposals, and by NSF program staff when determining whether or not to recommend proposals for funding and while overseeing awards. Given that NSF is the primary federal agency charged with nurturing and supporting excellence in basic research and education, the following three principles apply:

- All NSF projects should be of the highest quality and have the potential to advance, if not transform, the frontiers of knowledge.
- NSF projects, in the aggregate, should contribute more broadly to achieving societal goals. These "Broader Impacts" may be accomplished through the research itself, through activities that are directly related to specific research projects, or through activities that are supported by, but are complementary to, the project. The project activities may be based on previously established and/or innovative methods and approaches, but in either case must be well justified.
- Meaningful assessment and evaluation of NSF funded projects should be based on appropriate metrics, keeping in mind the likely correlation between the effect of broader impacts and the resources provided to implement projects. If the size of the activity is limited, evaluation of that activity in isolation is not likely to be meaningful. Thus, assessing the effectiveness of these activities may best be done at a higher, more aggregated, level than the individual project.

With respect to the third principle, even if assessment of Broader Impacts outcomes for particular projects is done at an aggregated level, PIs are expected to be accountable for carrying out the activities described in the funded project. Thus, individual projects should include clearly stated goals, specific descriptions of the activities that the PI intends to do, and a plan in place to document the outputs of those activities.

These three merit review principles provide the basis for the merit review criteria, as well as a context within which the users of the criteria can better understand their intent.

### 2. Merit Review Criteria

All NSF proposals are evaluated through use of the two National Science Board approved merit review criteria. In some instances, however, NSF will employ additional criteria as required to highlight the specific objectives of certain programs and activities.

The two merit review criteria are listed below. **Both** criteria are to be given **full consideration** during the review and decision-making processes; each criterion is necessary but neither, by itself, is sufficient. Therefore, proposers must fully address both criteria. (PAPPG Chapter II.C.2.d(i). contains additional information for use by proposers in development of the Project Description section of the proposal). Reviewers are strongly encouraged to review the criteria, including PAPPG Chapter II.C.2.d(i), prior to the review of a proposal.

When evaluating NSF proposals, reviewers will be asked to consider what the proposers want to do, why they want to do it, how they plan to do it, how they will know if they succeed, and what benefits could accrue if the project is successful. These issues apply both to the technical aspects of the proposal and the way in which the project may make broader contributions. To that end, reviewers will be asked to evaluate all proposals against two criteria:

- **Intellectual Merit:** The Intellectual Merit criterion encompasses the potential to advance knowledge; and
- **Broader Impacts:** The Broader Impacts criterion encompasses the potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes.

The following elements should be considered in the review for both criteria:

1. What is the potential for the proposed activity to
  - a. Advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields (Intellectual Merit); and
  - b. Benefit society or advance desired societal outcomes (Broader Impacts)?
2. To what extent do the proposed activities suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts?
3. Is the plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well-organized, and based on a sound rationale? Does the plan incorporate a mechanism to assess success?
4. How well qualified is the individual, team, or organization to conduct the proposed activities?
5. Are there adequate resources available to the PI (either at the home organization or through collaborations) to carry out the proposed activities?

Broader impacts may be accomplished through the research itself, through the activities that are directly related to specific research projects, or through activities that are supported by, but are complementary to, the project. NSF values the advancement of scientific knowledge and activities that contribute to achievement of societally relevant outcomes. Such outcomes include, but are not limited to: full participation of women, persons with disabilities, and underrepresented minorities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); improved STEM education and educator development at any level; increased public scientific literacy and public engagement with science and technology; improved well-being of individuals in society; development of a diverse, globally competitive STEM workforce; increased partnerships between academia, industry, and others; improved national security; increased economic competitiveness of the United States; and enhanced infrastructure for research and education.

Proposers are reminded that reviewers will also be asked to review the Data Management Plan and the Postdoctoral Researcher Mentoring Plan, as appropriate.

#### **Additional Solicitation Specific Review Criteria**

**Relevance of the proposed research to geospace or atmospheric science** Proposals will be evaluated according to their relevance to current key outstanding science questions within geospace and atmospheric sciences.

**Student training** Proposals will be evaluated according to the student training opportunities they offer and to the degree of student involvement in the various aspects of the proposed missions.

**Technical feasibility** Proposals will be evaluated according to their degree of technological readiness or heritage, or the degree to which they make use of emerging technologies. Proposals will also be evaluated according to their compliance with CubeSat and P-POD standards.

**Management plan** Proposals will be evaluated according to the soundness of their plans for management, scheduling, and risk reduction during the satellite development and operations phases of the mission, respectively.

## **B. Review and Selection Process**

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Proposals submitted in response to this program solicitation will be reviewed by Ad hoc Review and/or Panel Review.

Reviewers will be asked to evaluate proposals using two National Science Board approved merit review criteria and, if applicable, additional program specific criteria. A summary rating and accompanying narrative will generally be completed and submitted by each reviewer and/or panel. The Program Officer assigned to manage the proposal's review will consider the advice of reviewers and will formulate a recommendation.

After scientific, technical and programmatic review and consideration of appropriate factors, the NSF Program Officer recommends to the cognizant Division Director whether the proposal should be declined or recommended for award. NSF strives to be able to tell applicants whether their proposals have been declined or recommended for funding within six months. Large or particularly complex proposals or proposals from new awardees may require additional review and processing time. The time interval begins on the deadline or target date, or receipt date, whichever is later. The interval ends when the Division Director acts upon the Program Officer's recommendation.

After programmatic approval has been obtained, the proposals recommended for funding will be forwarded to the Division of Grants and Agreements for review of business, financial, and policy implications. After an administrative review has occurred, Grants and Agreements Officers perform the processing and issuance of a grant or other agreement. Proposers are cautioned that only a Grants and Agreements Officer may make commitments, obligations or awards on behalf of NSF or authorize the expenditure of funds. No commitment on the part of NSF should be inferred from technical or budgetary discussions with a NSF Program Officer. A Principal Investigator or organization that makes financial or personnel commitments in the absence of a grant or cooperative agreement signed by the NSF Grants and Agreements Officer does so at their own risk.

Once an award or declination decision has been made, Principal Investigators are provided feedback about their proposals. In all cases, reviews are treated as confidential documents. Verbatim copies of reviews, excluding the names of the reviewers or any reviewer-identifying information, are sent to the Principal Investigator/Project Director by the Program Officer. In addition, the proposer will receive an explanation of the decision to award or decline funding.

## **VII. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

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### **A. Notification of the Award**

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Notification of the award is made to *the submitting organization* by a Grants Officer in the Division of Grants and Agreements. Organizations whose proposals are declined will be advised as promptly as possible by the cognizant NSF Program administering the program. Verbatim copies of reviews, not including the identity of the reviewer, will be provided automatically to the Principal Investigator. (See Section VI.B. for additional information on the review process).

### **B. Award Conditions**

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An NSF award consists of: (1) the award notice, which includes any special provisions applicable to the award and any numbered amendments thereto; (2) the budget, which indicates the amounts, by categories of expense, on which NSF has based its support (or otherwise communicates any specific approvals or disapprovals of proposed expenditures); (3) the proposal referenced in the award notice; (4) the applicable award conditions, such as Grant General Conditions (GC-1)\*; or Research Terms and Conditions\* and (5) any announcement or other NSF issuance that may be incorporated by reference in the award notice. Cooperative agreements also are administered in accordance with NSF Cooperative Agreement Financial and Administrative Terms and Conditions (CA-FATC) and the applicable Programmatic Terms and Conditions. NSF awards are electronically signed by an NSF Grants and Agreements Officer and transmitted electronically to the organization via e-mail.

\*These documents may be accessed electronically on NSF's Website at [https://www.nsf.gov/awards/managing/award\\_conditions.jsp?org=NSF](https://www.nsf.gov/awards/managing/award_conditions.jsp?org=NSF). Paper copies may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (703) 292-7827 or by e-mail from [nsfpubs@nsf.gov](mailto:nsfpubs@nsf.gov).

More comprehensive information on NSF Award Conditions and other important information on the administration of NSF awards is contained in the *NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide* (PAPPG) Chapter VII, available electronically on the NSF Website at [https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub\\_summ.jsp?ods\\_key=pappg](https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=pappg).

#### Special Award Conditions:

- Awardees will work with NSF to identify and pursue suitable launch opportunities, including submitting additional applications or documentation to potential launch providers as required
- Once a suitable launch opportunity for the selected science mission has been identified and manifested, Principal Investigators will be responsible for satisfying the environmental testing requirements at the satellite level, including the provision of specific documentation, appropriate for that particular launch vehicle.
- As soon as a launch date has been set, a schedule for completion, testing, and delivery of the payload within the given time-frame must be submitted by the Principal Investigators and approved by a cognizant NSF Program Officer.
- The Principal Investigators will work with the NSF spectrum management office to ensure proper and timely certification and licensing for the project.
- Throughout the design, construction, testing, and operations phases of the mission it is expected that awardees will have regular dialogue and status reviews with cognizant NSF Program Officers to ensure satisfactory progress, the timely completion and qualification of the payload, and the proper and successful operations of the satellite.
- Principal Investigators will ensure the on-time delivery of their payload along with any required documentation for P-POD integration and testing prior to launch.
- Principal Investigators will participate in the timely resolution of any problems encountered during P-POD integration and testing, and satellite on-orbit operations.
- Awardees accept that NSF maintains control of the satellite and the project throughout the operational phase as necessary to comply with applicable federal rules and regulations for space projects.

## C. Reporting Requirements

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For all multi-year grants (including both standard and continuing grants), the Principal Investigator must submit an annual project report to the cognizant Program Officer no later than 90 days prior to the end of the current budget period. (Some programs or awards require submission of more frequent project reports). No later than 120 days following expiration of a grant, the PI also is required to submit a final project report, and a project outcomes report for the general public.

Failure to provide the required annual or final project reports, or the project outcomes report, will delay NSF review and processing of any future funding increments as well as any pending proposals for all identified PIs and co-PIs on a given award. PIs should examine the formats of the required reports in advance to assure availability of required data.

PIs are required to use NSF's electronic project-reporting system, available through Research.gov, for preparation and submission of annual and final project reports. Such reports provide information on accomplishments, project participants (individual and organizational), publications, and other specific products and impacts of the project. Submission of the report via Research.gov constitutes certification by the PI that the contents of the report are accurate and complete. The project outcomes report also must be prepared and submitted using Research.gov. This report serves as a brief summary, prepared specifically for the public, of the nature and outcomes of the project. This report will be posted on the NSF website exactly as it is submitted by the PI.

More comprehensive information on NSF Reporting Requirements and other important information on the administration of NSF awards is contained in the *NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide* (PAPPG) Chapter VII, available electronically on the NSF Website at [https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub\\_summ.jsp?ods\\_key=pappg](https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=pappg).

## VIII. AGENCY CONTACTS

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*Please note that the program contact information is current at the time of publishing. See program website for any updates to the points of contact.*

General inquiries regarding this program should be made to:

- Irfan S. Azeem, telephone: (703) 292-8520, email: [sazeem@nsf.gov](mailto:sazeem@nsf.gov)
- Carrie E. Black, telephone: (703) 292-2426, email: [cblack@nsf.gov](mailto:cblack@nsf.gov)

For questions related to the use of FastLane, contact:

- FastLane Help Desk, telephone: 1-800-673-6188; e-mail: [fastlane@nsf.gov](mailto:fastlane@nsf.gov).

For questions relating to Grants.gov contact:

- Grants.gov Contact Center: If the Authorized Organizational Representatives (AOR) has not received a confirmation message from Grants.gov within 48 hours of submission of application, please contact via telephone: 1-800-518-4726; e-mail: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov).

## IX. OTHER INFORMATION

The NSF website provides the most comprehensive source of information on NSF Directorates (including contact information), programs and funding opportunities. Use of this website by potential proposers is strongly encouraged. In addition, "NSF Update" is an information-delivery system designed to keep potential proposers and other interested parties apprised of new NSF funding opportunities and publications, important changes in proposal and award policies and procedures, and upcoming NSF [Grants Conferences](#). Subscribers are informed through e-mail or the user's Web browser each time new publications are issued that match their identified interests. "NSF Update" also is available on [NSF's website](#).

Grants.gov provides an additional electronic capability to search for Federal government-wide grant opportunities. NSF funding opportunities may be accessed via this mechanism. Further information on Grants.gov may be obtained at <http://www.grants.gov>.

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NSF funds research and education in most fields of science and engineering. It does this through grants and cooperative agreements to more than 2,000 colleges, universities, K-12 school systems, businesses, informal science organizations and other research organizations throughout the US. The Foundation accounts for about one-fourth of Federal support to academic institutions for basic research.

NSF receives approximately 55,000 proposals each year for research, education and training projects, of which approximately 11,000 are funded. In addition, the Foundation receives several thousand applications for graduate and postdoctoral fellowships. The agency operates no laboratories itself but does support National Research Centers, user facilities, certain oceanographic vessels and Arctic and Antarctic research stations. The Foundation also supports cooperative research between universities and industry, US participation in international scientific and engineering efforts, and educational activities at every academic level.

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The National Science Foundation Information Center may be reached at (703) 292-5111.

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- **For General Information** (NSF Information Center): (703) 292-5111
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## PRIVACY ACT AND PUBLIC BURDEN STATEMENTS

The information requested on proposal forms and project reports is solicited under the authority of the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended. The information on proposal forms will be used in connection with the selection of qualified proposals; and project reports submitted by awardees will be used for program evaluation and reporting within the Executive Branch and to Congress. The information requested may be disclosed to qualified reviewers and staff assistants as part of the proposal review process; to proposer institutions/grantees to provide or obtain data regarding the proposal review process, award decisions, or the administration of awards; to government contractors, experts, volunteers and researchers and educators as necessary to complete assigned work; to other government agencies or other entities needing information regarding applicants or nominees as part of a joint application review process, or in order to coordinate programs or policy; and to another Federal agency, court, or party in a court or Federal administrative proceeding if the government is a party. Information about Principal Investigators may be added to the Reviewer file and used to select potential candidates to serve as peer reviewers or advisory committee members. See Systems of Records, [NSF-50](#), "Principal Investigator/Proposal File and Associated Records," 69 Federal Register 26410 (May 12, 2004), and [NSF-51](#), "Reviewer/Proposal File and Associated Records," 69 Federal Register 26410 (May 12, 2004). Submission of the information is voluntary. Failure to provide full and complete information, however, may reduce the possibility of receiving an award.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, an information collection unless it displays a valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The OMB control number for this collection is 3145-0058. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 120 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions. Send comments regarding the burden estimate and any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to:

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