August 18, 2015

Dear Colleague:

This letter is to inform the community that there will not be a full research proposal competition of the Arctic Social Science Program (ASSP) in 2015. The next ASSP open competition deadline will be in Fall 2016. During this hiatus, the ASSP will continue to accept proposals for Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grants (see section II (c) of the NSF 14-584, Arctic Research Opportunities solicitation), conferences, EAGER and RAPID (see Chapter II.D of the NSF Grant Proposal Guide) and INSPIRE (see NSF 14-106) as well as requests for supplemental funding (see Chapter I.E of the NSF Award and Administration Guide), Research Experience for Undergraduates (REUs) and Research Coordination Networks (NSF 13-520). Please alert the ASSP Program Director (Anna Kerttula de Echave, akerttul@nsf.gov, 703-292-7432) in advance of any submissions in these categories.

The hiatus period is being used to review and update ASSP priorities for the Fall 2016 Arctic Research Opportunities solicitation and to lower current out-year funding commitments in order to enhance responsiveness to new ideas.

The Arctic Social Sciences program at NSF was established in response to the National Academy of Science Polar Research Board's 1989 committee report "Arctic Social Science an Agenda for Action". Current priorities for the ASSP date to 2000 and were established on the basis of an NSF hosted 1997 Arctic social science workshop report "Arctic Social Sciences Opportunities in Arctic Research". These priorities have facilitated progress in a number of areas such as community participation in research, traditional and local knowledge based projects, indigenous scholarship, and indigenous led research projects; documentation of endangered languages; exploration of culture and environment during a period of rapid environmental change; and the study of the development of and political institutions, particularly in the Post-Soviet world.

Over the last 15 years, the number and size of the projects that ASSP supports have grown. In addition the Program has provided support for Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grants, EAGERs, RAPIDS, REUs, RCNs, and increasingly co-funded interdisciplinary projects with other partners. At the same time, the Arctic social and cultural landscape has been rapidly changing; some of this change is in response to rapid environmental change but much of it is due to the processes inherent in social and cultural systems.

In light of these changes, now is an opportune time to conduct a comprehensive assessment of research priorities to help ensure a robust ASSP over the coming decade that builds on past strengths. Over the next six months, the community will be engaged through a variety of means. For example, an All Hands
Workshop will be held to bring together diverse social and natural scientists, students, educators, and indigenous scholars to assist in the development of the next decade's priorities for the Arctic Social Sciences Program. Opportunities for participating in these planning activities will be announced on the Arctic Science Section webpage, the Arctic Research Consortium of the U.S. webpage link upcoming Events (ARCUS), and through International Arctic Social Science Association webpage link News (IASSA).

I thank the community for your patience and urge your participation in the ASSP assessment activities during the coming year. I know that the Program Director, Dr. Anna Kerttula de Echave, looks forward to working with you and to answering any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Eric Saltzman  
Section Head  
Arctic Section  
Division of Polar Programs