



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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AST 16-001

**Dear Colleague Letter: Directorate for Mathematical and Physical Sciences (MPS),
Division of Astronomical Sciences (AST) - Employment Opportunity for a
Program Director Positions (Open Until Filled)**

May 2, 2016

Dear Colleagues:

The Division of Astronomical Sciences (AST), within the Directorate for Mathematical and Physical Sciences (MPS) at the National Science Foundation (NSF), announces a nationwide search for multiple scientists in relevant research disciplines to fill Program Director positions under the provisions of the Intergovernmental Personnel Act.

Formal consideration of applications will begin on **June 1, 2016** and will continue until selections are made.

Program Directors have an unparalleled opportunity and responsibility to ensure NSF-funded research is at the forefront of advancing fundamental knowledge. In support of that, Program Directors are responsible for extensive interaction with academic research communities and industry, as well as interaction with other Federal agencies that may lead to development of interagency collaborations. Within this context, Program Directors solicit, receive and review research and education proposals, make funding recommendations, administer awards, and undertake interaction with research communities in these fields. They are also responsible for service to Foundation-wide activities and initiatives that together accomplish NSF's strategic goals to: (1) Transform the Frontiers of Science and Engineering; (2) Stimulate Innovation and Address Societal Needs through Research and Education; and (3) Excel as a Federal Science Agency. Program Directors have an unparalleled opportunity and responsibility to ensure that NSF-funded research is at the forefront of advancing fundamental knowledge. To discharge this responsibility requires not only experience in the appropriate disciplines, but also a commitment to high standards, a considerable breadth of interest and receptivity to new ideas, a strong sense of fairness, good judgment, the ability to collaborate with colleagues in a team-based environment, and a high degree of personal integrity.

AST supports research in all areas of astronomy, astrophysics and related multidisciplinary studies. The successful applicants will be involved in planning, budget development, program oversight, the merit review and proposal recommendation process, preparation of written material regarding the research supported by the Division, and interactions with other NSF programs, Federal agencies and organizations. Program Directors are expected to bring discipline expertise and to serve as a liaison between the astronomical community and NSF, disseminating information about AST and NSF activities and opportunities. Program Directors work with the astronomical research and education community to broaden the diversity of participants in all NSF programs. They may participate in facilities management, core AST individual investigator programs, multi-disciplinary research and education programs, and in the development of new programs. Program Directors participate in Divisional strategic and

implementation planning in response to community advice such as the 2015 National Research Council (NRC) report "Optimizing the U.S. Ground-Based Optical and Infrared Astronomy System," the NRC mid-decadal report (due for release in May 2016), the annual reports of the Astronomy and Astrophysics Advisory Committee, and preparation for the upcoming (2018-2020) NRC decadal survey. Candidates with expertise in all areas of astronomy will be considered; those with backgrounds in instrumentation, data science, computational astronomy, and scientific workforce development are especially encouraged to apply.

Qualification requirements include a Ph.D. in one of the relevant scientific disciplinary areas of the Division of Astronomical Sciences, plus after the award of the Ph.D., six or more years of successful research, research administration and/or substantial managerial experience in academia industry, or government. Appointees are expected to have significant knowledge of relevant research and research-related activities in astronomy and astrophysics. Also desirable are knowledge of the general scientific community and effective communication skills. Candidates will be expected to demonstrate ability in one or more of the following areas: research and research management, facilities management, strategic planning, multi-disciplinary research, program development, workforce development and education, or computational science (including areas such as cyber-infrastructure as well as the management and scientific use of very large data sets). All appointees are expected to function effectively both within specific programs and in a team mode, contributing to and coordinating with organizations in the Directorate, across the Foundation, and with other Federal and State government agencies and private-sector organizations as necessary.

The Program Director positions recruited under this announcement will be filled under the following appointment option:

Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) Assignment: Individuals eligible for an IPA assignment with a Federal agency include employees of State and local government agencies or institutions of higher education, Indian tribal governments, and other eligible organizations in instances where such assignments would be of mutual benefit to the organizations involved. Initial assignments under IPA provisions may be made for a period up to two years, with a possible extension for up to an additional two-year period. The individual remains an employee of the home institution and NSF provides the negotiated funding toward the assignee's salary and benefits. Initial IPA assignments are made for a one-year period and may be extended by mutual agreement. Please see the link <https://www.nsf.gov/careers/rotator/ipa.jsp>.

For additional information regarding NSF's IPA program, please visit the NSF website at: <https://www.nsf.gov/careers/rotator/ipa.jsp>.

Applications will be accepted from U.S. Citizens. Recent changes in Federal Appropriations Law require Non-Citizens to meet certain eligibility criteria to be considered. Therefore, Non-Citizens must certify eligibility by signing and attaching this [Citizenship Affidavit](#) to their application.

For additional information about AST research areas and programs, please see <https://www.nsf.gov/div/index.jsp?div=ast>.

Should you or your colleagues be interested in this position, please email a current CV accompanied by a cover letter that highlights the background that specifically relates to the program objectives to: ast-ipa@nsf.gov.

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HIGHLY QUALIFIED STAFF THAT REFLECTS THE DIVERSITY OF OUR NATION**