



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
4201 WILSON BOULEVARD
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AST 17-001

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

December 9, 2016

Dear Colleague:

Directorate for Mathematical and Physical Sciences (MPS), Division of Astronomical Sciences (AST) at the National Science Foundation (NSF) announces a nationwide search for a Program Director positions. NSF maintains a year-round search for scientists in astronomy and related disciplines (astrophysics, astrochemistry, astrobiology, and astronomy technology development) to serve as Program Directors within the Division. Each year our goal is to fill one or more temporary Program Director positions under the provisions of the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (see details below). IPA appointees typically work within our individual investigator grants programs, the largest of which is the Astronomy and Astrophysics Research Grants (AAG) program. We are therefore particularly interested in attracting the services of community members with experience in applying for and/or reviewing research grants, though anyone with relevant experience is encouraged to apply.

Applications from suitably qualified individuals may be submitted at any time of the year and will be reviewed immediately. Start dates are negotiable; every effort will be made to facilitate the needs of the applicant's home institution.

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. The position requires a commitment to high standards of intellectualism and ethical conduct, a considerable breadth of interest, receptivity to new ideas, a strong sense of fairness, good judgment, and a high degree of personal integrity.

Temporary (IPA) Program Directors are involved in the merit review and proposal recommendation process, project oversight, budget management, program planning, the preparation of written materials describing research supported by the Division, and interactions with other NSF programs, external organizations and Federal agencies. Program Directors are expected to bring to the Division expertise in astronomy and astrophysics as well as an up-to-date perspective on the state of the astronomical research and education community; they also serve as a liaison between NSF and the community, disseminating information about NSF activities and opportunities. Program Directors strive to broaden the diversity of participants in all NSF programs; they work among a team of scientific and administrative professionals to support the Division's responsibilities within NSF's overall mission, which is to promote the progress of science and engineering, to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare, and to secure the national defense.

The mission of the Division of Astronomical Sciences is to support forefront research in ground-based astronomy; to help ensure the scientific excellence of the U.S. astronomical community; to provide access to world-class research facilities; to support the development of new instrumentation and next-generation facilities; and to encourage broad understanding of and diverse participation in the astronomical sciences.

The Division supports research in all areas of astronomy and astrophysics and related multidisciplinary studies. Modes of support include single-investigator and collaborative research awards, as well as awards to develop astronomical instrumentation and technology. Support is also provided for educational projects that leverage the Division's research investments to build workforce capacity, broaden participation of underrepresented groups, and/or increase scientific literacy. Through the national observatories and international partnerships, the Division provides support for a ground-based system of multi-aperture, research-class telescopes as well as frontier facilities that enable transformational capabilities in both radio and optical/infrared astronomy.

AST offers a range of funding opportunities to the community. Individual investigator and collaborative research grants for observational, theoretical, computational, laboratory, and archival data studies in all areas of astronomy are offered through our Astronomy and Astrophysics Research Grants (AAG) and Solar and Planetary Research Grants (SPG) programs. The Advanced Technologies and Instrumentation (ATI) program provides support for the development of state-of-the-art astronomical detectors and instruments, while the Mid-Scale Innovations Program (MSIP) supports astronomical activities of intermediate cost, including open access to astronomical facilities, major new instruments for existing telescopes, laboratory astrophysics experiments, and the design and development of programs for possible future large initiatives. The Major Research Instrumentation Program (MRI) serves to increase access to shared scientific and engineering instruments; it provides organizations with opportunities to acquire instrumentation that supports the research and research training goals of the organization and that may be used by other researchers regionally or nationally.

The Education and Special Programs (ESP) unit of AST administers or advises on programs that have significant educational components and/or emphasis on broadening participation in astronomy. Programs include Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) Sites and Supplements, a program that supports undergraduate students to participate in active research; the Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) Program, a Foundation-wide activity that offers prestigious awards in support of early career-

development activities of teacher-scholars; and the Partnerships in Astronomy & Astrophysics Research and Education (PAARE) Program, which aims to enhance diversity in astronomy and astrophysics research and education by stimulating the development of formal, long-term, collaborative research and education partnerships among minority-serving institutions and partners at research institutions. AST also annually offers prize postdoctoral fellowships through the NSF Astronomy and Astrophysics Postdoctoral Fellowships (AAPF) program.

IPA Program Directors within AST are expected to contribute to one or more of these programs.

NSF Program Directors bear the primary responsibility for carrying out the Agency's overall mission. To discharge this responsibility requires not only knowledge 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, and a high degree of personal integrity.

QUALIFICATIONS

Qualification requirements include a Ph.D. in astronomy, astrophysics, physics or a closely related field or equivalent professional experience in a relevant scientific discipline 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 research and research-related activities in astronomy and astrophysics; familiarity with and recent exposure to the astronomical community is also highly desirable. Program Directors must be excellent communicators, should be comfortable adopting a leadership role, and must be able to function effectively while working alone or within program-specific groups in the Division. Appointees should be willing to contribute to other NSF Divisions or Directorates, and coordinate with external agencies and organizations, as necessary. Additional activities might include serving on committees, developing new administrative approaches, or implementing community-based recommendations for Division activities.

The position will be filled with 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. For additional information regarding IPA positions, please visit the NSF website at: <https://www.nsf.gov/careers/rotator/ipa.jsp>.

For additional information on NSF's rotational programs, please see "Programs for Scientists, Engineers, and Educators" on the NSF website at: <https://www.nsf.gov/careers/> and <https://www.nsf.gov/careers/rotator/microsite/>.

Applications will be accepted from US 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. We also ask that you complete and submit the [Applicant Survey Form](#). This will help NSF to ensure that our recruiting efforts are attracting a diverse candidate pool; it will be used for statistical purposes only.

NSF is relocating to Alexandria, Virginia. In late summer of 2017, NSF will begin the transition from its current location in Arlington, Virginia to 2415 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22314. The new location is adjacent to a Metro station (Eisenhower Avenue on the Yellow Line) and there is ample parking in the area. There are several amenities nearby, such as restaurants, hotels, and shops.

HOW TO APPLY

To apply for a temporary Program Director position under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act, please email a current Résumé or short Curriculum Vitae along with a cover letter highlighting relevant skills and experiences to: ast-ipa@nsf.gov.

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

NSF IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER COMMITTED TO EMPLOYING A HIGHLY QUALIFIED STAFF THAT REFLECTS THE DIVERSITY OF OUR NATION.