



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
2415 EISENHOWER AVENUE  
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

**AST 19-002**

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

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May 31, 2019

### HOW TO APPLY

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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 and a [Citizenship Affidavit](#) (if applicable) to Richard Green at [ast-ipa@nsf.gov](mailto:ast-ipa@nsf.gov).

For information and conditions for IPA positions, please visit the NSF website at: [http://www.nsf.gov/about/career\\_opps/rotators/ipa.jsp](http://www.nsf.gov/about/career_opps/rotators/ipa.jsp).

For additional perspective on working at NSF, please see "Programs for Science/Engineering/ Education" on the NSF website at: <http://www.nsf.gov/careers/> and <http://www.nsf.gov/careers/rotator/microsite/>.

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

Dear Colleagues:

The Division of Astronomical Sciences (AST) of the Directorate for Mathematics and Physical Sciences at the National Science Foundation (NSF) announces a nationwide search for 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 Program Director positions under the provisions of the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (see details below). IPA Program Directors typically work within our Individual Investigator Grants programs, the largest of which is the Astronomy and Astrophysics

Research Grants program (AAG). 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 interactions with academic research communities and industry, as well as interactions with other Federal agencies that may lead to the 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.

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.

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 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) 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), 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. 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

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Candidates must have a Ph.D. in astronomy, astrophysics, physics or a closely related field plus after award of the Ph.D., six or more years of successful research, research administration, and/or managerial experience pertinent to the position.

Candidates 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

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 IPA assignments are made for a one-year period and may be extended by mutual agreement, with the maximum period being a total of four years. The individual remains an employee of the home institution and NSF provides the negotiated funding toward the assignee's salary and benefits, a stipend for per diem costs, and a travel allowance.

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 an Equal Opportunity Employer Committed to Employing a Highly Qualified Staff that Reflects the Diversity of Our Nation.**