



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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NSF 19-067

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for the Antarctic Artists and Writers (AAW) Program

The following set of questions and answers refer to Frequently Asked Questions about the National Science Foundation (NSF) Antarctic Artists and Writers (AAW) Program. They are not intended to be a modification of the Program Solicitation. If there are inconsistencies between the AAW Program Solicitation and these FAQs, the information in the Program Solicitation is correct.

Before preparing AAW proposals, please read the AAW Solicitation and refer to the general information about NSF proposal submission including:

- [NSF 19-568, Antarctic Artists and Writers Program Solicitation](#)
- [Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide \(PAPPG\)](#) submission guidelines
- [Research.gov Proposal Preparation FAQs](#)
- [Research.gov Document Upload FAQs](#)
- [FastLane FAQs](#)
 - **Note:** [FastLane](#) is NSF's proposal submission website that is in the process of migrating to **Research.gov**; Applicants attempting to use FastLane to submit proposals will be routed through Research.gov to sign in;
- [Grants.gov FAQs](#)

To find out more about the Office of Polar Programs (OPP) and the United States Antarctic Program (USAP), you can visit:

- [The Office of Polar Programs website](#)
- [The USAP website](#)
- [USAP FAQs](#)
- [USAP Participant Guide](#)

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A. ELIGIBILITY

1. **Are foreign nationals allowed to apply?**

Foreign nationals may apply only if they are permanent residents of the U.S.

2. **Is there an age limit to those who may apply?**

Participants must be 21 years or older. There is no upper age limit, but every participant must be physically qualified by meeting medical standards set by NSF.

3. **What does it mean to be physically qualified?**

Medical and dental care in the Antarctic is limited. Field participants must pass screenings in the six months before the planned travel. Failure to meet medical and dental criteria results in disqualification for Antarctic travel, regardless of the merits of a proposal. NSF does not pay for examinations, follow-up visits, or remediation needed to pass the screenings.

B. PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION

4. **How do I apply?**

Proposals are submitted via one of the following portals: [Research.gov](#), [Grants.gov](#), or [FastLane](#).

Note: FastLane is NSF's proposal submission website that is in the process of migrating to **Research.gov**; Applicants attempting to use FastLane to submit proposals will be routed through Research.gov to sign in.

Both first-time and returning applicants are encouraged to consult [account management tutorials](#) to either create a new NSF account or migrate a pre-existing account to apply using Research.gov or FastLane.

Proposal applicants, also referred to as principal investigators, must first register on one of the respective sites in order to submit a proposal:

- [Research.gov](#) (FastLane users must use Research.gov to sign in)

- [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov)

Proposal submission specific details can be found in the [AAW program solicitation](#).

Proposals are not accepted by email or mail.

5. **Can I apply as an individual or do I need to be affiliated with an organization?**

Individuals may apply independently or through their employing organizations. Most AAW applicants apply independently.

On Research.gov applicants first register to use the site, then must 'add a new role' to submit a proposal. At this step, applicants indicate whether they are independent or affiliated (watch the 'Register for an NSF account' tutorial at [About Account Management on Research.gov](#)).

Note: If you are planning to apply as an affiliate of an organization on Research.gov, that organization must be registered in NSF's System for Award Management (SAM). Consult the 'Register a New Entity in the System for Award Management' tutorial on [Research.gov About Account management](#). Organizations newly registering to SAM may take up to two weeks to complete the registration process.

On Grants.gov applicants by default apply as individuals. If you prefer to apply as affiliated with an organization (e.g., academic institution), consult Grants.gov '[add a profile to account](#)' help page or consult your organization's Sponsored Projects Office.

6. **How do I fill out the Prepare New Proposal questions on Research.gov?**

- What is the Funding Opportunity? - Either search by Funding Opportunity number found at the top of the AAW Program Solicitation ([NSF 19-568](#)) or search by the title 'Antarctic Artists and Writers'
- Where to Apply? - ANTARCTIC COORDINATION & INFO
- What Type of Proposal should I select? - Research
- What Submission Type should I select? - Full Proposal
- Is it a collaborative proposal if two people are applying together? - No

7. **How do I fill out the Cover Sheet on Grants.gov?**

- What is the Division Code? - 06090000
- What is the Division Name? - OFFICE OF POLAR PROGRAMS
- What is the Program Code? - 5130
- What is the Program Name? - ANTARCTIC COORDINATION & INFOR

8. **How do I fill out the Budget?**

The budget should be submitted with \$0 requested. If you get an error message, be sure to remove the name of the person from Senior Personnel (Section A) of the Budget. See [PAPPG Chapter II.C.2.g \(i\)\(c\)](#) for further information.

9. Must I fill out the Collaborators and Other Affiliations Information (COA) information?

Yes. The COA template can be accessed at https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/coa/coa_template.xlsx.

If submitting your proposal through Research.gov, you may be routed to FastLane, the legacy proposal submission site, to upload your COA information. Should you need help navigating this system, please consult [FastLane FAQs](#) and if needed contact the [FastLane Help Desk](#) (fastlane@nsf.gov; 800-673-6188).

10. What is the deadline for proposal submission?

The deadline is July 1, 2019, 5:00 pm submitter's local time (June 1 in 2020 and thereafter). Note that 5:01 pm is past the deadline and late submissions will not be accepted. Prospective principal investigators (PIs) are strongly encouraged to submit their proposals in advance of the deadline to allow time to correct any problems that may occur in the submission process. Increased activity on the day of the deadline may mean your proposal is not submitted on time.

A few things to be aware of:

- If submitting through Research.gov, PIs will receive an email with an official NSF proposal number (e.g., 19xxxxx) once the proposal has been accepted. If an error message is received, the submission did not go through, and the PI will be directed to upload the correct document(s) to proceed, which must be done before 5:00 pm submitter's local time on the deadline day.
- If submitting through Grants.gov, the process is 2-stage. After uploading the proposal, the PI will receive an initial email indicating the proposal is uploaded to Grants.gov and will need to be validated by the receiving agency. The uploaded proposal is transmitted to NSF for compliance checking. If accepted by NSF, the PI will receive a second email with an official NSF proposal number. If the proposal is not accepted by NSF, the second email will state what is missing and indicate that the proposal needs to be resubmitted by the deadline. The compliance check can take up to 24 hours if the proposal is submitted via Grants.gov.

11. What if I am having trouble uploading a proposal?

For Research.gov user support, consult the Research.gov [self-help site](#) or contact the [NSF Help Desk](#) (rgov@nsf.gov; 800-381-1532).

For Grants.gov user support, consult Grants.gov [self-help site](#) or contact the [support desk](#) (support@grants.gov; 800-518-4726).

If Research.gov or Grants.gov is unable to resolve the submission problem and you cannot submit your proposal by the deadline, please make sure to get documentation that you contacted the respective support center before the deadline. For NSF to consider a deadline extension, you must provide supporting documentation from Research.gov or Grants.gov that there was a problem at the time of submission that could not be resolved in a timely manner. A possible slowdown of these systems due to volume is not a valid reason for an extension.

12. Is there an advantage if I apply months before the deadline?

No, proposals are reviewed only after the deadline. Submitting in advance of the deadline is advantageous only to ensure that proposers can resolve any difficulties with the submission process.

13. How much detail should be in the proposal?

The project description is limited to 15 pages and must address the intellectual merit and broader impacts of the project as well as include a full description of the project. The proposal must justify the need to go to Antarctica to complete the work as envisioned. Proposals submitted without full descriptions of the proposed work do not review well during the merit review process.

14. How can I find out what science projects will be in the field in the upcoming season and how do I contact researchers?

Information about awarded science projects, including contact information for the researchers, can be found in the current [Science Planning Summaries](#) or by using the [NSF.gov award search](#).

15. What may be included in Supplementary Documents?

Supplementary Documents are limited to 25 pages and should only be included if needed.

Supplementary Documents can be used to include letters of collaboration, e.g., with researchers.

Principal investigators (PIs) may also include digital samples of work, or published reviews of work, and letters of commitment (e.g., publishers or exhibit venues). These documents help reviewers assess the PI's achievements and their ability to disseminate work. These materials should be regarded as an electronic portfolio, demonstrating the

scope, quality, and impact of previous work that puts the proposal into context, whether or not that work is specifically related to the proposed Antarctic project.

Note that letters of recommendation or endorsement are not permissible.

16. What advice does the AAW program officer give most often to prospective applicants?

Read the solicitation carefully and follow all the instructions! Proposals that do not have the proper formatting will be returned without review.

17. How are proposals reviewed?

The AAW program officer will convene a panel of peers, typically including scientists, artists, and writers who cover a range of disciplines. Members of the panel write reviews and meet as a group to discuss and rate the proposals. Highly competitive proposals go through an additional logistical review. The AAW program officer will then recommend each proposal for award or decline. The Antarctic Sciences Section Head approves all final recommendations. After the review process is completed, proposers have access to the written reviews and program officer comments pertaining to their proposal.

C. ANNOUNCEMENT OF AAW AWARDS

18. When will I hear the results of my submission?

Most proposers will be notified within six months of submission. You can check the status of your proposal by accessing the Research.gov website. If you have not received notification of a decision on your proposal within six months of its submission and your proposal status is shown as "pending" in Research.gov, you can contact the program officer for the AAW Program to inquire about the status of your proposal.

Highly competitive AAW proposals go through a thorough logistic review, which takes additional time.

19. Who owns the copyright to the materials produced?

The AAW participant owns the copyright to the material produced.

D. ANTARCTIC DEPLOYMENT

20. How long are AAW deployments?

The length of deployment will depend on the nature of the work proposed. A typical deployment lasts approximately 6 weeks but can be longer or shorter.

21. Can AAW participants spend the austral winter in Antarctica?

In general, AAW participants do not winter over. Spending one austral winter month may be possible at McMurdo Station.

22. How should environmental stewardship be considered when proposing AAW projects?

Protection of the Antarctic environment is a fundamental consideration in all activities in Antarctica as described in the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty. To this end, projects should be planned to limit adverse impact on the Antarctic environment. The U.S. Antarctic Conservation Act (ACA) requires an environmental impact assessment (EIA) in advance of all U.S. Antarctic Program activities, including those in the AAW program. Permits may be required for some AAW projects. For further information, review the resources below and [contact the AAW program officer](#) if you have further questions.

For more information about U.S. Environmental Stewardship, see <https://www.nsf.gov/geo/plr/antarct/eas/start.jsp>.

For more information about the ACA and permits, see <https://www.nsf.gov/geo/plr/antarct/aca/aca.jsp>.

23. Are drones permitted to be used?

Applications to employ unmanned aerial vehicles, or drones, require a separate review of that portion of the application to ensure that the proposed use meets NSF's safety and environmental guidelines.

Any request to use drones as part of an Artists and Writers deployment should, at minimum, clearly indicate why this is necessary to achieve the proposed work in Antarctica and contain documentation of the training and experience of the person or persons who will be designated as the operator of the aircraft.

Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) and Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA), regardless of size, weight or form, are all subject to approval by NSF prior to use in the USAP.

24. Can an AAW participant dive?

All diving under NSF auspices in Antarctica requires prior approval from the NSF. Artists and Writers Program award recipients have been granted permission to dive, but this does not occur frequently. The [USAP Participant Guide](#) outlines strict diving qualifications and requirements, and these should be carefully considered before

proposing to dive in Antarctica. Requirements include submitting a dive plan and having it reviewed. There must be strong justification that diving is necessary.