



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
2415 EISENHOWER AVENUE  
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

**NSF 20-131**

## Dear Colleague Letter: Division of Ocean Sciences' Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Opportunities for 2021

---

October 2, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

Postdoctoral Research Fellowship (PRF) programs have a history of serving as launching pads for the successful careers of faculty members, research scientists, engineers, entrepreneurs and innovators. A PRF opportunity allows an individual to transition from student to professional, further establish their own research portfolio and develop new collaborations that expand their research horizons.

This fall, NSF's Division of Ocean Sciences intends to announce a funding opportunity for Postdoctoral Research Fellowships to provide opportunities for scientists early in their careers to work within and across traditional disciplinary lines, develop partnerships, and avail themselves of unique resources, sites, and facilities. The fellowship program will provide beginning investigators of significant potential with experiences that will further prepare them for positions of leadership in the scientific community. During their PRF tenure, fellows will affiliate with an appropriate research institution(s) and conduct research on topics supported by OCE.

NSF is committed to supporting early career researchers during the national crisis created by the COVID19 pandemic. The pandemic has put the country's academic enterprise under extreme duress. The human impact on all academic members is acute, but especially so for graduate students and early-career scientists. The OCE PRF program will provide important employment options for early career scientists. OCE anticipates awarding about fifteen Postdoctoral Fellowships with approximate start dates of mid 2021 or later.

The OCE PRF will emphasize strong scientific merit in a field of science supported by the Division of Ocean Sciences (see <https://www.nsf.gov/div/index.jsp?div=OCE>) and will require letters of support from a mentor(s). The purview of OCE includes a diversity of disciplinary and cross-disciplinary areas. Projects that make use of existing data, including data archived through NSF-supported data centers such as the Ocean Observatories Initiative (OOI), the

Biological and Chemical Oceanography Data Management Office (BCO-DMO), and the sites hosted by the Interdisciplinary Earth Data Alliance (IEDA), such as the Marine Geoscience Data System (MGDS), and EarthChem, are encouraged.

Fellowships will include participation in a professional development program that emphasizes development of mentoring skills and that coordinates the engagement of Fellows in conferences and activities that are focused on increasing the participation of underrepresented groups in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Applicants who are women, veterans, persons with disabilities, and underrepresented minorities in STEM, or who have attended Historically Black Colleges and Universities, community colleges, tribal colleges and minority-serving institutions are especially encouraged to apply.

Fellows, who must be U.S. Citizens or permanent residents, may propose to work at U.S. host institutions, although international travel to conferences and research facilities will be encouraged post-COVID.

## **CONTACTS**

---

Information regarding the OCE PRF funding opportunity will be available this fall via the NSF website. The funding opportunity will list OCE points of contacts. In the meantime, general questions about this Dear Colleague Letter may be addressed to:

[OCE\\_PRF@nsf.gov](mailto:OCE_PRF@nsf.gov)

Sincerely,  
William E. Easterling  
Assistant Director for Geosciences