



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
2415 EISENHOWER AVENUE
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

NSF 21-018

Dear Colleague Letters: Opportunities for Mid-Career Scientist Support in the Atmospheric and Geospace Sciences

October 26, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

Through this Dear Colleague Letter (DCL), the Division of Atmospheric and Geospace Sciences (AGS) within the Directorate for Geosciences seeks to highlight ways that our programs actively support mid-career scientists to sustain and broaden participation. Unique challenges affect the mid-career stage, including, but not limited to, balancing research, teaching, and/or service duties with dual-career relationships and family commitments. Evidence shows that these challenges can lead to outcomes such as the "leaky pipeline" of talented scientists, which disproportionately affects underrepresented groups. For the purposes of this DCL, the mid-career stage is loosely defined as encompassing the time period of 10-20 years after receipt of highest degree.

AGS programs are committed to supporting meritorious research while promoting equity and access that sustains a diverse and vibrant mid-career science community. Our programs have wide latitude to achieving these goals through the absence of proposal deadlines, accommodation of a wide range of project scope and institution types, and approval of salary compensation in excess of the two-month limit defined in the [NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide \(PAPPG\)](#) in well-justified cases.

To sustain and broaden participation at the mid-career level, AGS programs especially encourage proposal submissions from principal investigators (PIs) who may meet one or more of the following criteria: (i) have no prior or recent NSF funding; (ii) are soft-money researchers; (iii) are from primarily undergraduate institutions, community colleges, and minority serving institutions (MSI); (iv) are from underrepresented groups in the AGS disciplines.

We strongly encourage mid-career scientists to contact the relevant Program Director to discuss proposal ideas.

Sincerely,

William E. Easterling
Assistant Director
Directorate for Geosciences