



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
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NSF 21-041

## Dear Colleague Letter: Supporting Data and Sample Reuse in Polar Research

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Dear Colleagues:

With this Dear Colleague Letter (DCL), the Office of Polar Programs (OPP) encourages submission of proposals that leverage existing data, physical samples, and non-physical samples (e.g., films, recordings, etc.), as well as those that facilitate the reuse of existing data. In this way, OPP aims to support both the Arctic and Antarctic research communities to drive polar science forward while capitalizing on NSF's previous research investments.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused severe disruptions to the polar research community's ability to access field sites. While field-based research is, and will continue to be, a critical element of polar science, it is one component of much broader Arctic and Antarctic research practices. This DCL aims to improve utilization of previous investments in in situ data and sample collections while also encouraging more inclusive participation of researchers in polar research who may not have the ability or desire to access field sites.

Proposals that leverage and make publicly available data or samples that are currently unavailable or inaccessible (i.e., data rescue and reuse) are welcome. Proposals that facilitate Arctic and Antarctic data reuse, whether through data rescue, documentation, or integration, and fit within the scope of the existing [Arctic Research Opportunities](#) and [Antarctic Research](#) solicitations, are also welcomed. OPP also encourages the polar research community to make polar data as fully compliant as possible with the FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable) and [CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance](#).

As specified in the current [Arctic Research Opportunities](#) and [Antarctic Research](#) solicitations, NSF-funded researchers must follow existing data policies (see [NSF 16-055, "Dear Colleague Letter: Data Management and Data Reporting Requirements for Research Awards Supported by the Office of Polar Program"](#)). Polar data and/or samples are available from NSF-supported repositories like those linked in the NSF publications referenced above,

as well as other publicly available repositories.

Proposals that align with this DCL can be submitted to the current [Antarctic](#) and [Arctic](#) solicitations. Principal Investigators are encouraged to contact the relevant Program Officer(s) to discuss the scope and size of proposals.

Proposers whose interests focus on computational aspects may also benefit from considering other NSF funding opportunities. Such opportunities include [EarthCube](#), opportunities focusing on Artificial Intelligence ([https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub\\_summ.jsp?ods\\_key=nsf21022](https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=nsf21022) and [https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub\\_summ.jsp?ods\\_key=nsf20604](https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=nsf20604)), and Harnessing the Data Revolution, one of NSF's 10 Big Ideas (e.g., [Data Science Corps](#), or [Institutes for Data-Intensive Research](#)). Proposals must be consistent with the goals of the Program to which they are submitted and must adhere to guidance in the relevant solicitation.

Questions pertaining to this DCL may be submitted to Allen Pope, Program Officer for Polar Cyberinfrastructure ([apope@nsf.gov](mailto:apope@nsf.gov)), as well as relevant disciplinary Program Officers.

Sincerely,

William Easterling  
Assistant Director  
Directorate for Geosciences