



***INFORMATION FOR ATMOSPHERIC AND
GEOSPACE SCIENCES POSTDOCTORAL
RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS (AGS-PRF)
(NSF 22-639)***

October 2022

National Science Foundation
Directorate for Geosciences
Division of Atmospheric and Geospace Sciences

IMPORTANT

This booklet outlines the terms and conditions of your National Science Foundation Atmospheric and Geospace Sciences Postdoctoral Fellowship (AGS-PRF) and provides general information for use during your tenure. Read it carefully and refer to it whenever you have a question about your Fellowship.

Contact information, including emails and phone numbers, is on the [AGS-PRF program page](#) on the NSF.gov website.

As a recipient of NSF funds, you are responsible for fulfilling the academic and fiscal obligations of your award.

Failure on the part of a Fellow to observe all the terms and conditions of a Fellowship award constitutes sufficient grounds for its revocation by the Foundation.

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION
2. HOST INSTITUTION(S)
3. SCIENTIFIC MENTOR(S)
4. START OF FELLOWSHIP
5. CHANGES TO THE PROJECT
6. STIPENDS
7. FELLOWSHIP ALLOWANCE
8. PROJECT REPORTS
9. CHANGE OF ADDRESS
10. FOREIGN TRAVEL
11. ADDITIONAL FELLOWSHIP PROVISIONS
12. TERMINATION OF FELLOWSHIP
13. ASSOCIATED FORMS AND DOCUMENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on being awarded a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship from the Division of Atmospheric and Geospace Sciences (AGS PRF). We hope that the experience you will obtain during the tenure of your Fellowship will enhance your development as a scientist and educator as well as contribute to the scientific and educational effort of the United States. Upon acceptance of an award under this program, the Foundation will issue a letter based on the information submitted in your Fellowship application.

2. HOST INSTITUTION(S)

As an AGS PRF, you must affiliate with an appropriate institution, as described in the Program Solicitation for the Atmospheric and Geospace Sciences Postdoctoral Research Fellowships, during the entire duration of your Fellowship. You are responsible for making all arrangements for such an affiliation with your host institution. A clear relationship should be established with the chosen institution before starting your Fellowship, thus ensuring it will be possible to carry out the proposed research project for which your Fellowship has been awarded.

If it becomes necessary or desirable to seek affiliation with an institution other than the one listed in the application, you must request permission from the Foundation **in writing**, stating the reasons for the proposed change and explaining the appropriateness of the new institution for the proposed plan for research and education (**See Section 5 of this document for more details**). This request must be made **before** final arrangements with the new institution are completed. You may not begin your Fellowship until all changes, including the new scientific mentor, have been approved by the cognizant program officer at NSF.

3. SCIENTIFIC MENTOR(S)

As an AGS Postdoctoral Research Fellow, you shall arrange for a staff member at the Fellowship Institution to serve as a scientific mentor. Usually, this individual will be a professor or staff scientist with whom you will be working closely during your Fellowship. This advisor will advise you and assist in the planning and initiation of your research program. The scientific mentor will be the institutional representative responsible for your activities during the duration of the Fellowship.

Any questions relating to your status at the Fellowship Institution that the scientific mentor(s) cannot answer should be referred to other appropriate officials within the Fellowship Institution such as a department chair, a graduate school dean or a designated institutional representative.

As with the host organization, a change of the scientific mentor(s) requires an e-mail request to and approval from the cognizant NSF program officer.

4. START OF FELLOWSHIP

You must begin Fellowship activities within 6 months of receiving the award.

Before you start your Fellowship, the Foundation must have the date on which you received your Ph.D. on record. If you do not receive your Ph.D. prior to the starting date of tenure, you must submit evidence that all the requirements for the degree have been completed. A certification form will be made available by the cognizant NSF Program Officer for this purpose.

A Fellowship Starting Certificate ([NSF Form 349](#)) will be made available to you after issuance of your award notice. These forms must be signed by the scientific mentor(s), or if absent, an appropriate official of the institution.

Fellowship tenure starts on the date a Fellow begins Fellowship activities (the first day of the month, e.g., January 1) and terminates on the date Fellowship activities are completed at the Fellowship Institution, as indicated on the starting and termination certificates.

These certificates are required to comply with governmental accounting regulations. If a Fellow interrupts tenure or affiliates with more than one institution, starting and termination certificates are required for each portion of tenure. **Stipend payments will not be authorized until a Starting Certificate has been received by the Foundation.** If the start date of the Fellowship is delayed beyond the effective date stated in the award notice, NSF may grant a no-cost extension to cover the time frame of the delay and permit the full appointment period. You (as an individual registered in Fastlane) must request a no-cost extension through [Research.gov](#). You also serve as the Authorized Organizational Representative for your award and must forward the request to NSF.

5. CHANGES TO THE PROJECT

Although it is expected that each Fellow will carry out the project as approved at the time of application, **minor** changes may be made at the discretion of the Fellow and with concurrence by the scientific mentor(s). However, any **major** changes must be outlined and justified in writing and approved by the cognizant NSF program officer (e.g. change in host institution with which the Fellow is associated, change in the scientific mentor(s)). The Foundation will determine if the proposed changes to the project fall within the intent of the award.

Changes in the Fellowship Institution will be approved only under unusual circumstances during the first year of the Fellowship. Since the impact of the scientific mentor(s) and the Fellowship Institution on the professional development of the Fellow is an important factor in the proposal evaluation process, the selection of both, especially for the first year of Fellowship tenure, are viewed as a commitment on the part of the applicant to fulfill the plan for research and education as outlined in the original application.

6. STIPENDS

A. Amount

The stipend will be paid at a monthly rate which totals \$70,000 for the first year and \$72,000 for the second year of the 2-year fellowship.

B. Payments

Stipend payments will be authorized after submission of both a properly completed Fellowship Starting Certificate ([NSF Form 349](#)) and the Fellow's banking information in Research.gov. Stipend payments are processed in the Award Cash Management Service (ACMS) of [Research.gov](#). You may make payment requests of stipend funds once a month. As the administrator in ACMS, you must review and manage user roles. If you are not able to successfully make a request of your fellowship funds by the close of business on the first day of the month, please contact your AGS program officer.

- 1) Fellowship Starting Certificate ([NSF Form 349](#)). As a Fellow, you must complete and submit this form to the cognizant NSF Program Officer. It gives the authority to begin your stipend payments and statement of tenure information. The form is countersigned by your scientific mentor(s) or other appropriate official at your Institution.
- 2) Stipend payments are made directly to you via electronic funds transfer to a U.S. account. The Fellowship is an award to you as an individual and payment cannot be deposited directly into the Host Institution's account. To receive payments from the Fellowship, you must submit your banking data via the Individual Banking portal of Research.gov. Please see the [Individual Banking How-to Guide](#) for specific guidance related to individual banking. You will be notified via automated email of the steps that must be completed in Research.gov to initiate NSF payments. The automated email will be sent from the "NSF Individual Banking Bot" email address (<mailto:btdfm005@associates.nsf.gov>) with "ACTION REQUIRED: Steps to Initiate NSF Payments" in the subject line. You must provide your home address; your financial institution must be located in the United States; and you must complete the Certification in Research.gov to certify both the accuracy of the information and that you have read the Privacy Act Statement.

No funds will be released to the Fellow without submission of this information.

- 3) After the completed NSF Form 349 is received and banking information is submitted in Research.gov and acknowledged by NSF, you may begin making monthly requests for your stipend payments. Fellows are encouraged to set up an account prior to the start of their fellowship tenure so that initial processing may proceed without delay. In addition, Fellows are requested to use the same account for the entire duration of their Fellowship, as any changes may involve significant delays in the processing of stipends. However, bank account updates may be made in Research.gov. See the [Individual Banking How-to Guide](#) for instructions.

- 4) Any changes or interruptions in stipend payment or any other miscellaneous actions should be requested and described on the Fellowship Action Form ([NSF Form 383](#)).

7. FELLOWSHIP ALLOWANCE

The annual Fellowship allowance of \$30,000 is expendable at the discretion of the Fellow. It is intended to cover costs such as:

- expenses directly related to the conduct of the proposed research and broadening participation activities including but not limited to materials and supplies, use or purchase of equipment, computing resources, publication charges, subscription fees and travel.
- expenses in support of the Fellow, such as office space, general purpose supplies and use of equipment, facilities and other institutional resources;
- expenses in support of fringe benefits, including health insurance provided through either a group plan offered by the host organization or an individual plan secured by the Fellow, dental and/or vision insurance, disability insurance, retirement, dependent care and moving expenses.

NSF considers it appropriate for the Fellow's host organization to make facilities and benefits available, at the organization's discretion. If costs are assessed to the Fellow, funds from the fellowship allowance may be utilized for this purpose. In such cases, the Fellow would pay the benefits to the host organization. NSF cannot pay the organization directly and is not responsible for any charges incurred by or on behalf of the Fellow.

If a fellowship is terminated early, the Fellow must return unused fellowship allowance funds to NSF. Generally, the Fellow would return a prorated portion of the allowance, e.g., if the Fellowship were terminated after 6 months, \$15,000 of the \$30,000 annual allowance would be returned. Exceptions may be considered for such things as equipment purchases and should be discussed with the cognizant NSF program officer.

Fellows are not in any sense NSF employees. Please see section 11.J below for tax implications of the Fellowship.

8. PROJECT REPORTS

A. Interim Report

Fellows are required to submit an interim report electronically via [Research.gov](#) three months after the start of the fellowship. The purpose of this report is to determine if the project is developing as proposed. This report must include a letter signed by the postdoctoral fellow and the host mentor on the expectations for the fellowship and the deliverables that must be produced at the end of the fellowship. This letter must be uploaded as an attachment to the interim report. If significant changes in the project occur, formal notifications should be submitted via Research.gov. See Section 5, Program Changes, for additional information.

B. Annual Reports

Fellows are required to submit annual project reports electronically via Research.gov. The content requirements for annual project reports are specified in the Research.gov system and may be supplemented in the award document. Note that the questions at the end of the report provide important specific information for NSF about the project results.

Unless otherwise specified in the award, annual project reports shall be submitted no later than 90 days prior to the end of each 12-month award period. Continued funding for the second year of the Fellowship will be contingent on approval of first annual project report. It is the Fellow's responsibility to ensure that annual reports are submitted in a timely fashion so that stipend payments are not interrupted. Please note that the final annual report also serves as the project final report and must be submitted in accordance (see C. Final Project Report).

C. Final Project Report

Unless otherwise specified in the award, the Fellow shall submit a Final Project Report electronically no later than 120 days following the end date of the award via [Research.gov](https://www.research.gov). In addition, at the end of the Fellowship tenure period, Fellows must submit (by fax or e-mail) the Fellowship Termination Certificate and Grant Fiscal Report ([NSF Form 453](#)) to the cognizant NSF Program Officer.

D. Project Outcomes Report for the General Public

No later than 120 days following the end date of the grant, a project outcomes report for the general public must be submitted electronically via [Research.gov](https://www.research.gov). The Fellow's project outcomes report will be posted exactly as it is submitted and will be accompanied by the following disclaimer:

“This Project Outcomes Report for the General Public is displayed verbatim as submitted by the Principal Investigator (PI) for this award. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this Report are those of the PI and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation; NSF has not approved or endorsed its content.”

Fellows must ensure that the report does not contain any confidential, proprietary business information; unpublished conclusions or data that might compromise the ability to publish results in the research literature; or invention disclosures that might adversely affect their patent rights or those of their organization in a subject invention under the award. Reports must not contain any private personally identifiable information such as home contact information, individual demographic data or individually identifiable information collected from human research participants.

9. CHANGE OF ADDRESS

A change in postal and/or electronic mail address should be reported promptly to the Foundation via e-mail. Fellows are also expected to maintain updated contact information in Research.gov, both as the Principal Investigator and the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) on the fellowship award.

10. FOREIGN TRAVEL

For all foreign activities undertaken, the Fellow must follow NSF regulations for International Activities as stated in the current [Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide](#). (Note that the PAPPG is updated every January and the most recent Guidelines should be followed).

11. ADDITIONAL FELLOWSHIP PROVISIONS

A. Length of Tenure

The AGS PRF is awarded for periods of 24 months, subject to satisfactory progress on the project. The tenure of a Fellowship may be interrupted only with the approval of the cognizant program officer at NSF. Interruptions may be approved with written justification for a period or periods of up to 12 months in total.

The Fellowship is subject to termination if the Fellow discontinues his/her research and educational activities for any reason prior to the end of Fellowship tenure. If a Fellow does not conform to the administrative requirements of the Fellowship Institution, the Foundation reserves the right to withhold all stipend payments, pending a full explanation.

B. Paid Leave

Within the 24-month fellowship period, two total months of fellowship duration may be used for paid leave including parental or family leave. Paid leave cannot be used to increase the level of NSF support beyond the duration of the Fellowship. NSF enables career-life balance through a variety of mechanisms. For more information, please see <https://www.nsf.gov/career-life-balance/>.

NSF allows such paid leave to be cited as a justification to request a no-cost extension to extend the time for completion of award activities beyond the initial duration of twenty- four months. However, no additional funds will be allowed to supplement the Fellowship award beyond the total salary support of twenty-four months.

C. Extension of Tenure

Requests for extensions of tenure involving new funds will not be granted. If, however, additional time beyond the established end date of the award is required by the Fellow to assure adequate completion of the original scope of work within the funds already made available, then a formal request for a no-cost extension must be submitted to NSF via [Research.gov](#) at

least 45 days prior to the end date of the award. The request must explain the need for the extension and include an estimate of the unobligated funds remaining and a plan for their use. Note that Fellows may not receive additional compensation while on active Fellowship tenure (see Section 11.K below).

D. Rights to Inventions or Writings

NSF claims no rights to any inventions or writings that may result from its fellowship awards. However, Fellows should be aware that NSF, other Federal agencies or private parties may acquire such rights through other grant support. Fellows should be aware of provisions related to rights to inventions and writing before commencing work.

E. Publications

Fellows are responsible for assuring that an acknowledgment of NSF support is made in any publication (including web pages) of material based on or developed from the fellowship-supported research with the following statement:

"This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Award No. (NSF award number)."

Fellows must orally acknowledge NSF support during all news media interviews, including popular media such as radio, television and news magazines.

Fellows are responsible for assuring that every publication of material (including web pages) based on or developed under this award, except scientific articles or papers appearing in scientific, technical or professional journals, contains the following disclaimer:

"Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation."

Finally, Fellows are responsible for assuring that the cognizant NSF Program Officer is provided access to a copy of every publication of material based on or developed under this award, clearly labeled with the award number and other appropriate identifying information, promptly after publication.

F. Liability

NSF cannot assume any liability for accidents, illnesses or claims arising out of any work supported by the Fellow's award or for unauthorized use of patented or copyrighted materials. The Fellow is advised to take necessary steps to insure and protect themselves and their property.

G. Sharing of Findings, Data and Other Research Products

Fellows are expected to develop and complete a data management plan for open sharing of data and material in an expeditious manner. Fellows are responsible for compliance with the following NSF guidelines on sharing of findings, data and other research products:

NSF expects significant findings from research and education activities it supports to be promptly submitted for publication with authorship that accurately reflects the contributions of those involved. It expects Fellows to share with other researchers, at no more than incremental cost and within a reasonable time, the data, samples, physical collections and other supporting materials created or gathered during the work. It also encourages Fellows to share software and inventions or otherwise act to make the innovations they embody widely useful and usable. General guidance for AGS Data Management Plans can be found at <https://www.nsf.gov/geo/geo-data-policies/ags/index.jsp>.

Adjustments and, where essential, exceptions may be allowed to safeguard the rights of individuals and subjects, the validity of results, and the integrity of collections or to accommodate legitimate interests of NSF-supported Fellows.

H. Government Permits and Activities Abroad

If any activities are undertaken abroad, the Fellow must follow the guidelines for international activities stated in the current [NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide \(PAPPG\)](#).

I. Referrals to the NSF Office of the Inspector General

The NSF Inspector General is responsible for investigating all allegations of fraud, waste and abuse, as well as allegations of research misconduct in connection with NSF programs and operations. The Fellow shall promptly refer to the NSF Inspector General (oig@nsf.gov; <https://www.oig.nsf.gov> or 1-800-428-2189) any allegations or credible evidence of research misconduct or criminal or civil violation of laws pertaining to misappropriation, fraud, conflict of interest, bribery, gratuity or similar misconduct involving NSF funds.

J. Income Taxes

All tax implications of the AGS-PRF are the responsibility of the Fellow. NSF does not withhold any taxes, provide any tax forms, or distribute any tax guidance. NSF recommends consulting with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) or a tax professional on questions surrounding tax estimation, withholding, and how to handle the PRF allowance.

No income tax will be withheld from any stipend. Provision must be made by the Fellow for payment of any tax, domestic or foreign, when due. Final authority as to the taxability of awards rests with the IRS and the courts. Specific questions should be referred to the IRS.

Fellows are not in any sense employees of the National Science Foundation. Therefore, no funds will be deducted from the stipends; no Social Security taxes will be paid by the Foundation; and no W-2 forms will be issued. Provision must be made by the Fellow for the filing of any necessary estimate of taxes due and for payment of all income taxes which may become due.

If you need a statement of funds received (including the fellowship allowance), send an email to bfadfmils@nsf.gov in the NSF Division of Financial Management.

The Foundation is unable to supply information concerning the income tax or other tax provisions of any foreign country. Inquiries should be directed to the authorities in the appropriate countries.

K. Supplementary Activities

During the tenure of the Fellowship, the Fellows are expected to devote full time to the program of scientific research and educational activities outlined in their proposal. A Fellow may not engage in activities for compensation (except for brief military obligations) or receive another Fellowship or similar award while pursuing Fellowship activities without **prior** approval of the Foundation. Approval will be granted only under exceptional circumstances.

L. Federal and/or Armed Forces Employees

If during any part of the Fellowship, a fellow will be a member of the Armed Forces or on leave from a position in Federal Service, a statement must be filed from a cognizant official of the Government organization involved specifying (1) the funds, if any, that will be made available to the Fellow during their tenure and the purpose for which they will be provided and (2) the funds, if any, that will be made available to the Fellowship Institution on the Fellow's behalf. The Foundation and the Fellow's organization must reach a mutually satisfactory agreement regarding the Fellow's support during tenure before any funds can be provided under the Fellowship.

M. Medical Insurance

No medical or hospitalization program for use in the event of illness or accident involving a Fellow (or dependents) during tenure is provided by the National Science Foundation. Medical or hospital fees may be paid from the annual fellowship allowance.

In the absence of medical and hospital insurance by the institution, it is recommended that Fellows continue during tenure any medical insurance programs with which they are affiliated, or if they are not members of any such program, make arrangements to join a medical program which gives a reasonable amount of protection.

N. Future Employment

The award and acceptance of a Postdoctoral Fellowship does not obligate a Fellow, the National Science Foundation or the United States Government with regard to future employment or future service of any kind.

O. Military Status

Brief interruption of a Fellowship for duly authorized military service or training will be permitted with prior Foundation approval. Requests for such interruptions of tenure should be directed to the Foundation in writing as soon as plans are final. Interruptions of less than 4 days need no approval.

In the case of a longer interruption resulting from active military service or from certain activities in lieu of service with the regular U.S. Armed Forces, provision can be made for reservations of a Fellowship (or the balance of it) and reinstatement of the unused portion at a later date. In such cases, Fellows should notify the Foundation immediately in writing of their plans and request further instructions.

P. Veterans' Benefits

In accordance with P.L. 91-219, educational benefits payments from the Veterans Administration may be received concurrently with and supplementary to Fellowship payments from the National Science Foundation.

Q. Special Considerations

A number of situations frequently encountered in the conduct of research require special information and supporting documentation before starting tenure. Among these are the following, some of which are mandated by Federal law:

- 1) research which has an actual and/or potential impact on the environment;
- 2) research at a registered historic or cultural property;
- 3) research involving the use of in vitro generated recombinant DNA molecules;
- 4) research involving the use of human subjects, hazardous materials, vertebrate animals or endangered species.

Fellows must provide information on the status of any special permissions, clearances or provision related to the above items before beginning tenure. Assessment of environmental impact will be required when appropriate. Specific guidance on the need for such additional documentation may be obtained from the Fellowship Institution's Sponsored Projects Office or the [NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide \(PAPPG\)](#) ending of the fellowship award, in whole or in part, at any time prior to the planned end of the period of performance.

Any suspension or termination action taken by NSF must be issued by a cognizant NSF Grants Officer and will be in accordance with this article, 2 CFR § 200.3440, and [PAPPG](#) Chapter XII.A.2.b. The fellowship award may be suspended or terminated in whole or in part in any of the following situations:

1. By NSF, if the Fellow fails to comply with the terms and conditions of the fellowship award;
2. By NSF, to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities;
3. By NSF, with the consent of the Fellow, in which case the two parties must agree upon the termination conditions, including the effective date and the amount of annual allowance that must be remitted to NSF;
4. By the Fellow upon sending to NSF written notification setting forth the reasons for such termination, the effective date, and the amount of annual allowance that must be remitted to NSF;
5. By NSF, pursuant to termination provisions included in the NSF award; or Misconduct [45 CFR Part 689].

12. ASSOCIATED FORMS AND DOCUMENTS

The following documents are referred to in this Handbook. These forms should be submitted to NSF at the appropriate time in the tenure of the Fellowship, as described above.

- Certification of PhD Receipt
- Fellowship Starting Certificate, [NSF Form 349](#)
- Fellowship Action Form, [NSF Form 383](#)