



**NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
2415 EISENHOWER AVENUE
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314**

NSF 23-027

Dear Colleague Letter: Supporting Research on Food and Agricultural Challenges Facing Local Communities through the Civic Innovation Challenge

A joint effort between the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the US Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA/NIFA)

November 23, 2022

Dear Colleagues:

The National Science Foundation (NSF) and the US Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA/NIFA) announce their intention to jointly fund Stage 2 proposals submitted to the [Civic Innovation Challenge \(CIVIC\)](#). CIVIC is a federal research and action competition that accelerates the transition to practice of foundational research and emerging technologies into communities through civic-engaged research and is comprised of two focused challenge tracks.

Track A for CIVIC is centered on pre-disaster action around adaptation, mitigation, and resilience in community systems, services, and economic drivers that are vulnerable in the face of a changing climate. Track B is centered on enhancing peoples' access to essential resources and services—through efforts at the level of communities—where better accessibility could significantly improve quality of life and community resilience.

This DCL is aligned with ongoing collaborative support from NSF and USDA/NIFA for foundational and applied research at the intersection of computational, engineering, agricultural, and social sciences. The CIVIC program is designed to build on these efforts through its support for pilot projects that transition foundational advancements in areas such as automation and artificial intelligence into transformative, research-driven solutions addressing local community challenges. Additionally, CIVIC flips the community-university dynamic, with communities identifying civic priorities ripe for innovation and then partnering with researchers to address those priorities. The program supports proposals with pilots that can be scaled and sustained long-term within the partnering community and have aspects that are transferable to other communities across the US.

Only teams with active CIVIC Stage 1 awards from [NSF 22-565](#) are eligible to submit CIVIC Stage 2 proposals pursuant to this DCL.

Proposals pursuant to this DCL should aim to develop resilient, sustainable, and equitable solutions that address food and agricultural challenges facing local communities within the context of either track of CIVIC. Proposals that include partnerships with rural communities are of particular interest as are proposals involving urban, indoor, and emerging agriculture and their civic partners.

Specific topics of interest for this DCL include, but are not limited to, the following.

1. Track A proposals may focus on topics such as improving the resilience and robustness of agricultural and food systems to climate-related hazards and threats, adapting rural agricultural communities to environmental changes resulting from climate change, and innovative approaches, including financial and technological approaches, to decarbonize agricultural and food systems
2. Track B proposals may focus on topics such as creating resilient food distribution networks that can function during sudden disruptions and shocks within communities and improving the food and nutritional security of people living in food deserts.

Proposals must follow the guidance contained in NSF's [Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide \(PAPPG\)](#) and the corresponding solicitation, [NSF 22-565](#).

NSF will manage and conduct the review process of proposals submitted in accordance with NSF standards and procedures, as described in the solicitation. The review and award recommendations will be coordinated by program officers from NSF and USDA. Relevant information about proposals and reviews of proposals will be shared between the participating funding organizations as appropriate. Note that if a proposal is selected for an award to be funded by NIFA, NSF will request the submitting institution to withdraw their NSF proposal and submit to NIFA.

Awardees funded by NIFA will be required to participate in the “Communities of Practice” activities outlined in the CIVIC solicitation, as well as bimonthly discussions jointly with NSF and NIFA.

For more information, including questions about this DCL, please contact:

- David Corman, Program Director, NSF/CISE, dcorman@nsf.gov
- Michal Ziv-El, Program Director, NSF/CISE, mzivel@nsf.gov
- Yueyue Fan, Program Director, NSF/CMMI, yfan@nsf.gov
- Dann Liang, Program Director, NSF/CMMI, dliang@nsf.gov
- Steven Thomson, National Program Leader, USDA/NIFA,

Steven.J.Thomson@usda.gov

- Sarah Rucker, National Program Leader, USDA-NIFA, sarah.rocker@usda.gov
- Amy Ganguli, National Program Leader, USDA-NIFA, amy.ganguli@usda.gov
- Ashley Mueller, National Program Leader, USDA-NIFA, ashley.mueller@usda.gov

Sincerely,

Margaret Martonosi

Assistant Director, Computer and Information Science and Engineering, NSF

Susan Margulies

Assistant Director, Engineering, NSF

Alexandra R. Isern

Assistant Director, Geosciences, NSF

Kellina Craig-Henderson

Assistant Director, Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences, NSF