



**U.S. NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION**  
2415 EISENHOWER AVENUE  
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

**NSF 24-080**

## Dear Colleague Letter: Joint National Science Foundation and United States Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture Funding Opportunity: Supporting Foundational Research in Robotics (FRR)

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April 18, 2024

Dear Colleague:

Recognizing the importance of use-inspired collaborations in promoting scientific discoveries, the National Science Foundation (NSF), in collaboration with United States Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA/NIFA), seeks proposals to advance foundational research in agricultural robotics. These proposals should be of mutual interest to the NSF [Foundational Research in Robotics](#) (FRR) program and to [USDA/NIFA](#).

NSF's FRR program, jointly led by the Directorate for Engineering (ENG) and the Directorate for Computer and Information Science and Engineering (CISE), supports research to create innovative robots with unprecedented new functionality. USDA/NIFA has the mission to provide leadership and funding for programs that advance agriculture-related sciences. Proposals submitted under this Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) should present a compelling vision for pioneering robots with transformative potential in agricultural contexts. It is highly suggested that potential proposers contact the USDA/NIFA program director first (listed below) with a short narrative to determine project applicability for this program. If appropriate, an NSF program director will be further consulted.

### **PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

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NSF is the lead agency for this collaboration. Proposals to be considered under this Dear Colleague Letter should have a title prefixed by "NIFA:" and should be submitted to the FRR program. Submissions will be evaluated in FRR review panels, following the requirements of the NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG) (<https://new.nsf.gov/policies/pappg>), and the FRR Program Description (<https://new.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/foundational-research-robotics-frr>). Proposals

submitted under this Dear Colleague Letter must be clearly justified by important needs in agriculture and the agricultural sciences.

NSF will manage and conduct the review process of proposals submitted in accordance with NSF standards and procedures, as described in the PAPPG. USDA staff will participate in panels as observers during the discussion of USDA-focused proposals. Information about proposals and unattributed reviews of proposals will be shared with USDA staff. NSF and NIFA will meet as soon as possible after the proposals have been reviewed to formulate a set of funding recommendations consistent with the goals of this DCL. Note that if a proposal is selected for an award to be funded by NIFA, NSF will request the submitting institution withdraw their NSF proposal and submit to NIFA.

Recipients funded by NIFA will be encouraged to participate in annual FRR grantee meetings, along with recipients funded by NSF.

Interested parties are encouraged to contact the listed program directors at NSF and USDA/NIFA prior to submission.

**TECHNICAL POINTS OF CONTACT**

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FRR Program Officers:

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Signed,

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