National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
Office of STEM Engagement  

National Space Grant College and Fellowship Program: Program-Level Independent Evaluation Opportunity  

Cooperative Agreement Notice  

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Space Grant Program-Level Evaluation Opportunity

1 Overview of the Funding Opportunity

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Office of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Engagement (OSTEM) solicits new competitive proposals from the National Space Grant College and Fellowship Program (Space Grant) consortia. The Space Grant Program is dedicated to building, sustaining, and deploying a skilled, high-performing and diverse STEM workforce that meets the current and emerging needs of NASA and the nation. The goal of this solicitation is to invite Space Grant consortia members, specifically all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, to submit proposals to conduct an independent program-level impact evaluation of multiple state consortiums in the Space Grant Program. NASA’s OSTEM seeks innovative proposals to conduct an independent program-level, two-year impact evaluation pilot. This pilot evaluation will be representative of the Space Grant Program offerings across multiple states that can be scaled to assess the entire Space Grant Program (based upon the findings and recommendations of the pilot studies). It is essential to NASA’s OSTEM that this evaluation be performed on a truly independent basis in order to ensure that the input the Space Grant Program receives under this funding opportunity is objective and unbiased.

The purpose of this independent program-level impact evaluation is to 1) determine how and to what extent the Space Grant Program is designed and executed in alignment with federal law and NASA’s STEM engagement goals and priorities; and 2) assess the impact and degree to which the Space Grant Program is achieving its intended outputs and outcomes on a national level. These efforts will provide Space Grant Program Management with robust evidence that can be used to drive future scaled evaluation strategy, program policy, data collection plans, and appropriated competitive awards. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) and NASA define program evaluation and an independent evaluator as follows:

- GAO defines “program evaluation” as a systematic study using research methods to collect and analyze data to assess how well a program is working and why. Evaluations answer specific questions about program performance and may focus on assessing program operations or results. Evaluation results may be used to assess a program’s effectiveness, identify how to improve performance, or guide resource allocation.
- NASA defines an “independent evaluator” as a third party or a current employee of the awardee organization who is independent from the policy, operations, and management functions of the project activity requiring evaluation.

At a minimum, proposals shall be quasi-experimental in nature and comply with professional standards of evaluation practice and common guidelines for education research and development, including but not limited to the following:

- Program Evaluation Standards developed by the Joint Committee on Standards for
Educational Evaluation

- “Common Guidelines for Education Research and Development”
- “Designing Evaluations”
- What Works Clearinghouse
- American Evaluation Association (AEA) Roadmap for Government Evaluation
- “Effective Practices for Evaluation STEM Out-of-School Time Programs”
- “Identifying and Implementing Educational Practices Supported by Rigorous Evidence: A User Friendly Guide”
- “User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation”

Specific proposal content details are set forth in Section 7 of this solicitation.

NASA plans for the resultant awards to be cooperative agreements, with no cost matching requirement for awardees; however, proposers shall specify any voluntary cost matching offered in their proposals.

2 NASA’s STEM Engagement Vision, Focus Areas, Architecture, Goals and Objectives

NASA (or Agency) is committed to defining and implementing a portfolio intended to drive a coherent and coordinated set of activities devoted to engaging students in STEM through NASA’s mission. This portfolio contributes to achieving NASA’s STEM Engagement vision to immerse students in NASA’s work, enhance STEM literacy, and inspire the next generation to explore.

Central to this effort is a new architecture designed to enable relevant student contributions to NASA’s mission and work, driven by requirements from NASA’s Mission Directorates. This new structure will align appropriated STEM engagement programs, existing and emerging relevant projects, and activities and products from across the Agency, into an overarching framework and strategy. The results will be more effective and coherent approaches and outcomes, see Figure 2.

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At the core of NASA’s efforts in STEM Engagement are the following cross-cutting design and operational principles. These principles guide the STEM engagement community in the planning and execution of work in direct support of achieving the objectives.

- Mission-driven authentic STEM experiences
- Evidence-based practices
- Diversity and inclusion
- Scalability through partnerships and networks

NASA’s STEM engagement function will play a critical role in achieving the Agency’s Strategic Objective 3.3 by implementing activities within three focus areas: 1) Create unique opportunities for students to contribute to NASA’s work in exploration and discovery; 2) Build a diverse future STEM workforce by engaging students in authentic learning experiences with NASA’s people, content and facilities; and 3) Strengthen understanding by enabling powerful connections to NASA’s mission and work. The goals and objectives for NASA STEM Engagement are:

**Goal 1.0: Enabling contributions to NASA’s work**
- **Objective 1.1:** Students contribute to NASA’s endeavors in exploration and discovery.
- **Objective 1.2:** Research and development capacity of educational institutions is enhanced, enabling broad and diverse contributions that directly address NASA priorities.

**Goal 2.0: Building a Diverse, Skilled Future STEM Workforce.**
- **Objective 2.1:** A broad and diverse set of students are attracted to STEM through NASA opportunities.
- **Objective 2.2:** Students, including those from underrepresented and underserved communities, explore and pursue STEM pathways through authentic learning experiences and research opportunities with NASA’s people and work.
- **Objective 2.3:** The portfolio of NASA STEM engagement opportunities meets agency
workforce requirements and serves the nation’s aerospace and relevant STEM needs. **Objective 2.4:** Strategic partnerships with industry, academia, non-profit organizations and educational institutions enhance and extend the impact of NASA’s efforts in STEM engagement.

**Goal 3.0:** Strengthen Understanding of STEM through Powerful Connections to NASA.

**Objective 3.1:** Youth are introduced to STEM concepts and content through readily available NASA STEM engagement resources and content.

**Objective 3.2:** Students gain exposure to STEM careers through direct and virtual experiences with NASA’s people and work.

### 3 National Space Grant Program Goals and Objectives

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1988, Public Law 100-147, authorized NASA to initiate the Space Grant Program to increase understanding, research, development, and utilization of aerospace science and technology through the nation’s universities. The goal of the Space Grant Program is to contribute to the NASA mission, specifically in the area of government and industry partnerships “to improve America’s aerospace technologies and advance American leadership” by funding education, research, and informal education projects through a national network of university-based Space Grant consortia. Space Grant consortia are expected to develop innovative and integrated plans to advance aerospace knowledge and expand related activities.

The specific objectives of the Space Grant Program are to:

- Promote a strong STEM education base from elementary through secondary levels while preparing teachers in these grade levels to become more effective at improving student academic outcomes;
- Contribute to the technological progress of NASA’s Mission Directorates;
- Establish and maintain a national network of universities with interests and capabilities in aeronautics, space, and related fields;
- Encourage cooperative programs among universities, aerospace industry, and Federal, state, and local governments;
- Encourage interdisciplinary training, research, and public service programs related to aerospace; and
- Recruit and train U.S. citizens, especially women, underrepresented minorities, and persons with disabilities, for careers in aerospace science and technology.

### 4 Office of STEM Engagement (OSTEM) Learning Agenda

OSTEM is in the process of moving beyond basic quantitative output measures of successful implementation, to a more robust, comprehensive approach to understand the scope and impacts of investments by generating a body of evidence that is increasing in rigor and focuses on outcomes. OSTEM’s historic use of quantitative output measures provided a limited understanding of the scope of NASA’s STEM engagement activities and did not provide the depth of understanding and quality of evidence needed to make meaningful programmatic decisions. To address this gap, OSTEM is now operating under a Learning Agenda, which serves
as the foundational document for building a culture of learning and continual improvement. The implementation of the Learning Agenda provides a systematic approach for building and using new knowledge about project and operational performance for evidence-based decision making and continual improvement.

The purpose of this Learning Agenda is to put forth *Learning Questions* with associated sub-questions, *Learning Activities* and assessment methodologies, and *Learning Products* that will inform the NASA OSTEM’s understanding of the scope, methods, mechanisms, and impacts of its investments. The answers to these questions will enable the NASA OSTEM to more effectively prioritize and narrow the focus of STEM engagement investment areas by making evidence-based budgetary, programmatic, and operational decisions. Specifically, the FY 2019 – FY 2020 NASA OSTEM Learning Agenda will be executed to gain an understanding of the extent to which STEM engagement investments are: a) contributing to NASA’s missions and work; b) contributing to the diversity of the future aerospace industry’s STEM workforce; and c) implementing enhancements to the STEM engagement performance assessment and evaluation strategy.

5  Eligibility

Proposals will be accepted from the lead institution of Space Grant consortia in each state along with the District of Columbia and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. NASA will only accept one proposal per consortium. The U.S. territories of Guam and U.S. Virgin Islands are not eligible to apply to this solicitation. A listing of current Space Grant institutions is available at this website:  

*NOTE:* Proposals involving bilateral participation, collaboration, or coordination in any way with China or any Chinese-owned company, whether funded or performed under a no-exchange-of-funds arrangement, may be ineligible for award.

6  Award Approach

Awards selected under this announcement will be considered Phase 1 Pilot awards. Phase 1 refers to the initial two-year period of performance and will be referred to as the “Phase 1 Pilot.” There will be a second phase to the awards, which will be referred to as “Phase 2.” Phase 2 will extend the initial two-year period of performance up to an additional two-years and will be a funded extension of approved work. NASA will evaluate the merit of exercising Phase 2 by reviewing the results from the Phase 1 Pilot (e.g. Interim Evaluation Report and Final Evaluation Report, which will include proposed plans for a Phase 2 scaled Space Grant Program-Level Impact Evaluation) using the same evaluation criteria described in Section 8 of this solicitation. NASA and the awardee will engage in a collaborative arrangement. For example, NASA will work with the awardees to provide evaluation technical assistance while monitoring progress of the proposed Space Grant Program-Level Impact Evaluation activities. Additionally, NASA will conduct a second level review to make selections of the Phase 2 awards.

6.1  Award Selection and Funding.
NASA plans for the awards to be Cooperative Agreements, with no cost matching requirement for awardees; however, any voluntary cost matching shall be specified in the proposal. See 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 200.306 and 1800.306 for more information on Cost Sharing. The total amount of funding available for this Phase 1 solicitation is $750,000, and NASA expects to make up to two (2) awards.

The estimated funding and number of proposals anticipated to be funded, as shown in this Cooperative Agreement Notice (CAN) under Section 13 entitled “Solicitation Summary” are subject to the availability of appropriated funds, as well as the submission of a sufficient number of proposals of adequate merit.

6.2 Period of Performance
The expected start date for awardees is September 1, 2020, and the period of performance is up to two (2) years. As this is a new effort, applications for renewal or supplementation of existing projects are not eligible to compete with applications for new Federal awards. Proposers shall respond to this solicitation with a two-year budget and budget narrative. Funded extensions will be dependent on the availability of appropriated funds.

6.3 Summary of Space Grant Awardee Responsibilities

Principal Investigator
- Space Grant Lead Institutions (i.e., recipients) shall assume primary responsibility for implementing, operating, and managing the project as described in their original proposal and as modified in subsequent proposals for continuation beyond the initial period.
- The recipient shall appoint a Principal Investigator (PI) (i.e., Space Grant Director) in support of this Agreement. If the PI to be named is different from the individual identified in the proposal, the NASA Space Grant Program Office shall be notified in writing per the Guidelines for Space Grant Director & Lead Institution Changes. Any proposed change to the PI under this Agreement is subject to NASA’s written approval. NOTE: If NASA approves the proposed change, the NASA Grant Officer will issue a formal written modification to the Agreement to reflect such change. If NASA does not approve the change in the PI, the recipient will propose another PI until NASA’s written approval is obtained.
- The recipient shall provide a written response as to how the recommendations by the NASA Space Grant Program will be integrated into the programmatic and/or administrative plan.
- The recipient shall submit a variety of reports and data, including quarterly progress reports, performance and participant data, evaluation data, and annual reports. The recipient also shall host an annual on-campus NASA site visit, following the schedule in the Management Guidelines. See additional information regarding reporting under Cooperative Agreement Award Reporting Requirements.
- The recipient, in concert with the Space Grant PI (Director), is responsible for the financial management of the Consortium as specified in the basic award notice under the terms and conditions issued by NASA and in the NASA Grant and Cooperative Agreement Manual (GCAM). A recipient’s failure to comply with the terms and conditions of an award can result in termination of the award by NASA.
- The recipient shall ensure that all peer-reviewed scientific research publications authored or co-authored by investigators and sub-recipients and funded, in whole or in part by NASA, are submitted to PubMed Central system at
The recipient shall provide a list of publications with annual and final reports.

- NASA reserves the right to impose additional requirements during the Cooperative Agreement’s period of performance in order to achieve broader Space Grant or NASA objectives.
- Recipients shall utilize all data collection tools and complete all assigned data entry tasks for NASA’s approved data management system (i.e., OEPM, NASA Internship Application Management System-NIAMS). OSTEM plans to develop a new enhanced data management system that aligns with Federal, Agency and OSTEM performance and evaluation priorities and requirements. Space Grant Management will communicate training and provide data collection tasks for existing and newly developed systems.

**Independent Evaluator**

- Develops comprehensive evaluation plan ensuring alignment with evaluation standards, best practices and proposal guidelines in collaboration with PI.
- Develop necessary documentation and coordinate the review process in order to secure Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval protecting human subjects in proposed evaluation.
- Coordinates and administers data collection, analysis and reporting of proposed pilot program-level impact evaluation data.
- Provides status updates to the PI on evaluation activities, progress, and challenges.
- Commits to participate in annual kick-off meeting, virtual site visits, and evaluation technical assistance meetings with NASA and the NASA contract evaluator to review proposed program’s progress in achieving the goal and objectives of this procurement.
- Develops monthly progress status updates, Year 1 Pilot Interim Report, Year 2 Pilot Final Evaluation Report which includes an evaluation plan for scaled Space Grant Program-Level Independent Evaluation for execution in Years 3-4.

7 **Space Grant Program-Level Evaluation Proposal Details**

7.1 **Required Sections**

- Title page
- Executive Summary
- Proposal Body
- Budget, Budget Tables and Narrative
- Project Milestones
- CVs of key team members
- Organizational Conflict of Interest (OCI) Plan
### Proposal Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposal Element</th>
<th>Page Limit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title Page</td>
<td>1 page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>1 page</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposal Body</td>
<td>10 pages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Budget, Budget Tables and Narrative</td>
<td>As needed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Milestones</td>
<td>As needed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key Personnel Curriculum Vitae (CVs)</td>
<td>2 pages per person</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational Conflict of Interest (OCI) Plan</td>
<td>As needed</td>
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Proposals shall use standard size 8 ½” x 11” paper with at least a 12-point font with a minimum 1” margin on all sides of each page. Proposals shall use an easily readable font such as Times New Roman, Calibri, Arial, Helvetica, Georgia or Garamond. Illustrations, tables and charts shall not be smaller than an 8-point font. Proposals shall be uploaded into NSPIRES in PDF format with applicable section bookmarks.

**Important note on creating PDF files for upload:** It is essential that all PDF files generated and submitted meet the NASA requirements below. This will ensure that the submitted files can be transferred into NSPIRES. At a minimum, it is the proposer’s responsibility to: (1) ensure that all PDF files are unlocked and that edit permission is enabled – this is necessary to allow NSPIRES to concatenate submitted files into a single PDF document; and (2) ensure that all fonts are embedded in the PDF file and that only Type 1 or TrueType fonts are used. In addition, any proposer who creates files using TeX or LaTeX is required to first create a DVI file and then convert the DVI file to Postscript and then to PDF. See [http://nspires.nasaprs.com/tutorials/PDF_Guidelines.pdf](http://nspires.nasaprs.com/tutorials/PDF_Guidelines.pdf) for more information on creating PDF documents that are compliant with NSPIRES. PDF files that do not meet the NASA requirements may be declared noncompliant and not submitted to peer review for evaluation.

#### 7.1.1 Title Page

Include the name of the proposing institution and the PI’s contact information.

#### 7.1.2 Executive Summary

The Executive Summary shall be a high-level overview of the proposed activities. Proposers are urged to consider that these summaries will be released publicly and should be written in a manner that is easily understandable to the general public, as it will be publicly available.

#### 7.1.3 Proposal Body

The body of the proposal shall describe evidence-based comprehensive plans for conducting the proposed independent program-level impact evaluation of multiple states in the Space Grant Program for the Phase 1 Pilot and how the plan clearly aligns with the goals and objectives of this solicitation. The evaluation plan shall describe the purpose and explain when, how, and what will be evaluated including methods to scale the proposed Phase 1 Pilot evaluation and approaches to engage key stakeholders (e.g. NASA OSTEM, Space Grant Consortia) and publicly share findings. A program impact theory, often known as a logic model or theory of change should be included along with evaluation questions. The evaluation design shall be a sound experimental or quasi-experimental one and the methodology shall describe feasible
approaches to data collection, analysis and a Data Management Plan (DMP) in accordance with the NASA Plan for Increasing Access to the Results of Scientific Research (http://www.nasa.gov/sites/default/files/files/NASA_Data_Plan.pdf). While Space Grant awardees typically do not create the types of data normally captured and covered under a DMP, Space Grant awardees are required to capture and maintain the integrity of any personally identifiable information (PII) collected through the proposed evaluation. As such, the program requires a DMP to be described as a part of the proposed evaluation plan addressing the collection, storage, security and maintenance of PII data; specifying how data or products are to be stored, preserved, and shared.

The evaluation plan shall also document the intended outcomes and offer metrics for program evaluation to demonstrate progress toward and achievements of these outcomes. Quantitative metrics shall be identified where appropriate, and other means by which the consortium’s progress will be evaluated, including the approach to reporting information required (e.g. monthly status updates, the Pilot Interim Evaluation Report and Final Evaluation Report) shall be discussed. The proposal shall include a formative and summative evaluation plan (with measurable metrics).

Additionally, proposers shall provide information related to past performance of evaluative work conducted on similar education programs such as Space Grant or provide strong justification for why the past performance information is relevant to this effort. This section shall also provide an overview of the proposer’s approach to developing the program-level impact evaluation plan of the Space Grant Program. It shall specify how the entity that is performing the evaluation will maintain independence and objectivity from the Space Grant Lead Institution, and it shall also reference the relevant sections of the Organizational Conflict of Interest (OCOI) Plan in this regard.

The evidence-based comprehensive evaluation plan outline below shall be used to describe the proposed independent program-level impact evaluation of multiple states in the Space Grant Program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Plan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Purpose</td>
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<td>II. Evaluation Design</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Logic Model of Theory of Change</td>
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<td>b. Level of Rigor</td>
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<td>c. Evaluation Question(s)</td>
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<td>III. Evaluation Methodology</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Sampling Strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Data Collection Sources</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Human subject protections (Institution Review Board-IRB considerations)</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Data Analysis</td>
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<td>IV. Reporting Plan</td>
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<td>V. Timeline</td>
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The proposed independent Space Grant Program-Level evaluation plan shall describe the process to obtain qualitative and quantitative data and identify indicators that may be utilized to track student progress and quality of the program/activity by addressing the following:

- **Proposed Theory of Action/Change or Logic Model:** Theories of Action/Change or Logic models illustrate a sequence of cause-and-effect relationships – “a systematic and visual way to present and share your understanding of the relationships among the resources you have to operate your program, the activities you plan, and the changes or results you hope to achieve” (W. K. Kellogg Foundation).

- **Proposed Evaluation Design and Methodology:** Describe an appropriate evaluation plan approach/process to document outcomes and demonstrate progress toward achieving objectives of proposed education activities. The forms of evaluation shall be based upon reputable models and techniques that are appropriate to the content and scale of the Space Grant Program. Identify the independent evaluator who will develop the comprehensive evaluation plan, develop or identify tools or processes for data collection; carry out evaluation tasks; conduct analysis; and provide formative and summative feedback to the project leadership throughout the life cycle of the award. Describe proposed evaluation questions, program measurable goals, objectives, outcomes, and data collection tools that describe progress towards meeting Space Grant program goals, objectives and outcomes.

- **Evidence-Based Research and/or Best Practice Supporting Proposed Program and Evaluation Plan Approach:** Evaluation methods shall also provide useful information on the effectiveness and/or impact of the proposed cooperative agreement, and how stakeholders will be engaged to share findings and recommendations for improvements to be implemented based on evaluation evidence.

**7.1.4 Budget**

The budget narrative shall clearly align with the budget table (see [Appendix B for Sample Budget Table](https://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/procurement/nraguidebook/proposer2018.pdf)) and corresponding proposed activities to justify the proposed costs.

In addition to the funding guidelines and requirements in the March 2018 version of the NASA Guidebook for Proposers, the following restrictions in Title 2 CFR Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Government-wide regulations), and in 2 CFR Part 1800 (NASA’s supplementing regulations), govern the use of the federally-provided funds for this opportunity (referred to collectively as NASA Space Grant funds) and are applicable to this announcement:

- All resources will be paid to the lead institution. Subcontracts, partnerships and any other agreements within the proposing team are with the lead institution and not with NASA.
- The budget shall clearly include information for the lead institution’s overhead/general and administrative (G&A) expenses.
- Grants and Cooperative Agreements shall not provide for the payment of fee or profit to the recipient.
- Direct Labor costs shall be separated by titles with estimated hours, hourly rates, and total amounts of each. The certified negotiated indirect costs for the institution shall be explained sufficiently whether they are being requested from NASA funds or from the cost-share portion, if applicable.
Subcontract awards should include a separate budget, work statement, and/or a breakout of hourly rate for direct labor.

- Calculations of the basis for indirect costs or modified indirect costs shall be clearly explained.
- Other costs, with each significant category detailed, shall be explained in reasonable detail and substantiated whenever possible.
- Unless otherwise directed in 2 CFR Part 200.414, for changes to the negotiated indirect cost rate that occur throughout the project period, proposers shall apply the rate negotiated for that year, whether higher or lower than at the time the budget and application was awarded.
- Domestic travel shall include the purpose, the number of trips and expected location, duration of each trip, airfare, and per diem. Domestic travel shall be appropriate and reasonable to conduct proposed activities. Foreign travel is not permitted under this award.
- Funds shall not be used for subcontracted research/manufacturing efforts carried out by non-U.S. entities, but may be used for the direct purchase of supplies and/or services that do not constitute research/manufacturing from foreign sources. For additional guidance on foreign participation, see Proposals Involving Non-U.S. Organizations, March 2018 version of the 2018 NASA Guidebook for Proposers, page 29, Appendix A (https://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/procurement/nraguidebook/).
- Proposals shall not include bilateral participation, collaboration, or coordination with China or any Chinese-owned company or entity, whether funded or performed under a no-exchange-of-funds arrangement.
- Any funds used for match or cost sharing shall be allowable under 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 1800.
- The non-Federal entity shall use one of the methods of procurement as prescribed in 2 CFR Part 200.320. As defined in 2 CFR Part 200.67, the micro-purchase threshold for acquisitions of supplies or services made under grant and cooperative agreement awards issued to institutions of higher education, or related or affiliated nonprofit entities, or to nonprofit research organizations or independent research institutes is $10,000; or such higher threshold as determined appropriate by the head of the relevant executive agency and consistent with audit findings under chapter 75 of Title 31, United States Code, internal institutional risk assessment, or State law.
- Funds shall be expended on students, faculty and staff in accordance with the National Space Grant College and Fellowship Act (Public Law 100-147), and its implementing regulations at 14 CFR Part 1259, National Space Grant College and Fellowship Program.

7.1.5 Project Milestones
All proposals submitted under this announcement shall submit Project Milestones as a required appendix. Proposers shall include a milestone chart of all proposed activities to cover the award period of performance period (see Appendix A for Sample Milestone Chart). At a minimum, the milestones shall include final evaluation plan submission and approval, data collection instrument development, IRB submission and approval, data collection timeline, analysis timeline, pilot interim report (year 1), and a pilot final report (year 2). Upon selection, if an awardee needs to update its milestone chart, an awardee has up to 30 days after award notification from the NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC) to do so.

7.1.6 Key Personnel Curriculum Vitae (CVs)
All proposals submitted under this announcement shall submit Key Personnel CVs as a required
appendix. At a minimum, the CVs for the Principal Investigator (Space Grant Director) and Independent Evaluator shall be submitted.

7.1.7 Organizational Conflict of Interest (OCI) Plan
All proposals submitted under this announcement shall submit an Organizational Conflict of Interest (OCI) Plan as a required appendix. As previously stated in this solicitation, it is essential to NASA’s OSTEM that this independent evaluation be performed in a manner that will ensure that the input received from awardees is objective and unbiased. Accordingly, the OCI plan shall describe the processes and procedures the PI will implement in order to:

- Maintain the independence and objectivity of the proposed Space Grant Program-Level Impact Evaluation in compliance with NASA’s definition of an “independent evaluator” - a third party or a current employee of the awardee organization who is independent from the policy, operations, and management functions of the project activity requiring evaluation.
- Avoid any actual or perceived OCIs in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200.112 - Conflict of Interest. Non-federal entities (grantees and subgrantees) are required to disclose, in writing, potential conflicts of interest in accordance with Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) policy. CNCS added this requirement to General Terms and Conditions for grants. Non-federal entities shall develop and implement conflict of interest policies and procedures that incorporate this notice requirement.

7.2 Notice of Intent to Propose
A brief Notice of Intent (NOI) to propose is required for the submission of proposals to this CAN. The information contained in an NOI is used for planning purposes and to help expedite the proposal review activities and, therefore, is of considerable value to both NASA and the proposer. NOIs shall be submitted by the Space Grant Director, i.e., the proposal’s PI, through NSPIRES (http://nspires.nasaprs.com). Grants.gov does not support NOI submittal. Note that NOIs may be submitted within NSPIRES directly by the proposal’s PI; no action by an organization’s AOR is required to submit an NOI. The NOI, at a minimum, shall include a clear descriptive title and a technical summary of the anticipated research. The NOI shall:

- Identify the partners/collaborators and institutions proposing
- Provide a brief summary of evaluation approach

7.3 Procedural Information

7.3.1 Budget Risk Evaluation Process
The NASA Grants Officer will conduct a pre-award review of risk associated with the proposer as required by 2 CFR Part 200.205. For all proposals selected for award, the Grants Officer will review the submitting organization’s information available through the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) and the System for Award Management (SAM) to include checks on entity core data, registration expiration date, active exclusions, and delinquent federal debt.
Prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold (currently $250,000), NASA is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system (currently FAPIIS) accessible through SAM, https://www.sam.gov (see 41 U.S.C. 2313).

At its option, a proposer may review information in FAPIIS and comment upon any information about itself that NASA previously entered and is currently in the system. NASA will consider any comments received from the applicant, in addition to the other information in FAPIIS, to make a judgment about the applicant's integrity, ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards in completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR Part 200.205.

7.3.2 Budget Execution
Award funding will be managed by NASA OSTEM and the NSSC, in coordination with each awardee, including funding that spans multiple fiscal years. The total funds disbursed over the period of performance will not change, but the fiscal year in which funds are disbursed will be phased accordingly. NASA will make every reasonable effort to disburse award funds in a timely manner, and in accordance with applicable laws and procedures.

7.3.3 Cancellation of Awards
NASA reserves the right not to make any awards under this CAN and/or to cancel this CAN at any time prior to award. If this occurs, NASA assumes no liability (including reimbursement of proposal costs) for canceling the CAN or for any entity’s failure to receive actual notice of such cancellation.

7.3.4 Partnership Restrictions
OSTEM has a Task Order with Total Solutions, Inc. and Paragon TEC, Inc. to support the Space Grant and EPSCoR Programs. To further avoid any possible perception of real or potential conflict of interest, Total Solutions, Inc. and/or Paragon TEC, Inc. is/are not eligible to serve as a subcontractor, partner, or collaborator to an entity proposing under the Space Grant or EPSCoR Solicitations.

Additionally, to avoid any possible perception of a real or potential conflict of interest, the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), which is a Federally Funded Research and Data Center (FFRDC) managed by the California Institute of Technology under contract to NASA, is not eligible to serve as a subcontractor, partner, or collaborator to an entity proposing under this solicitation. However, this restriction does not preclude an applicant from proposing the use of JPL facilities or resources.

8 Proposal Evaluation Criteria

NASA will evaluate proposals based on the following criteria: (1) Intrinsic Merit, (2) Relevance to NASA, and (3) Technical/Management/Cost (TMC):

Intrinsic Merit (40%):
- The proposal is clear, comprehensive and well-organized
- Sound experimental or quasi-experimental design proposal that complies with
professional standards of evaluation practice and common guidelines

- The proposal is informed by the research literature
- The proposal includes an approach to ensure stakeholder engagement and publicly share findings
- The proposal has the potential to be scaled to evaluate the entire Space Grant Program
- Evidence of past and/or existing experience in performing evaluations within the Lead Institution and/or one or more Consortium

Relevance to NASA (35%):

- Proposal alignment to OSTEM’s:
  - vision, focus areas, and architecture; and
  - design principles and STEM Engagement goals/objectives
- Proposal alignment to Space Grant goals/objectives
- Proposal alignment to OSTEM Learning Agenda strategic questions in order to gain an understanding of the extent to which STEM engagement investments are:
  - contributing to NASA’s missions and work;
  - contributing to the diversity of the future aerospace industry’s STEM workforce; and
  - implementing enhancements to the STEM engagement performance assessment and evaluation strategy

Technical/Management/Cost (TMC) (25%):

- Proposal includes a sound technical approach with feasible and realistic design methods and project milestones that are capable of achieving the goals of the procurement
- The proposal clearly details how the project will be managed with plans to:
  - Ensure objectivity of the independent evaluator and avoid or fully mitigate any real or perceived organizational conflicts of interest (OCIs). Describe how the IE’s approach will ensure that the effort performed will be accomplished in a manner that is objective and free from any bias.
  - Clear roles and responsibilities for all proposed staff that are well-aligned to experience, relevant skills and tasks
  - Key Personnel CVs - Identifies major team members (Principal Investigator, Independent Evaluator, etc.) and how each will contribute to the effort (roles and responsibilities)
- Aligns with budget guidelines and requirements specified within this solicitation

Proposals that do not score at least an average score of 70% based on the online reviews, will not be referred for panel evaluation. Those proposers will receive a “declined” status in NSPIRES and a non-selection letter, see Section 10 for more information.

NOTE: If voluntary cost-sharing is proposed, it will not be evaluated during the selection process. Should a proposer voluntary offer cost-sharing, the funding offered should be aligned with the requirements specified in the “National Space Grant College and Fellowship Program - Opportunities in NASA STEM FY 2020 – 2024” Announcement Number: NNH19ZHA001C, see Sections 3.3 and 4.12.
9 Proposal Submission

9.1 Registration
In order to submit a proposal, all team members and their institutions shall first be registered in the NSPIRES (http://nspires.nasaprs.com) system. Registration in NSPIRES cannot be accomplished until each applicable institution obtains a Data Universal Number (DUNS) and registers in the System for Award Management (SAM, http://sam.gov). Once the DUNS and SAM steps are complete, the institutions and each team member shall then register with NSPIRES. Also, applicants are required to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a federal awarding agency.

NASA may not make a federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the federal awarding agency is ready to make a federal award, the federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a federal award to another applicant.

PLEASE NOTE: Linking a team member’s registration with its institution will automatically associate all required numbers (DUNS, CAGE, and EIN) with the same proposal. If an institution is not registered in SAM, then the point of contact (POC) from the Office of Sponsored Research/Electronic Business POC shall register it in SAM.

No later than the due date for proposals, proposers to this solicitation are required to have:
1) a DUNS number;
2) a valid registration with the SAM;
3) a valid CAGE Code; and
4) a valid registration with NSPIRES.

9.2 Proposal Submission Deadline
Proposals shall be submitted through the NSPIRES website by the deadline of 11:59pm EDT on July 16, 2020. If proposals are submitted after that deadline, the proposal will be deemed non-compliant and not submitted for peer review.

9.3 STEM Information Collection
NASA is implementing a process to collect demographic data from grant applicants for the purpose of analyzing demographic differences associated with its award processes. Information collected will include name, gender, race, ethnicity, disability status, and citizenship status. Submission of the information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award.

9.4 Inquiries
Technical questions about this CAN may be directed to:
Erica J. Alston, Ph.D.
Deputy Space Grant Manager
Langley Research Center
Hampton, VA 23681
Inquiries regarding the submission of proposal materials may be addressed to:
Ms. Tamra Ross
NASA Research and Education Support Services (NRESS)
2345 Crystal Drive, Suite 500
Arlington, VA 22202-4816
E-mail: SGCFP@nasaprs.com
Telephone: (202) 479-9030 x310
Fax: (202) 479-0511

10 Solicitation/Award Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solicitation Release</td>
<td>April 30, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Proposal Webinar Questions Due</td>
<td>May 21, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Proposal Informational Webinar</td>
<td>May 28, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notice of Intent (NOI)</td>
<td>June 5, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal Submission Due Date</td>
<td>July 16, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipated Selection Announcement</td>
<td>August 31, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipated Start of Phase 1 Award Funding</td>
<td>September 15, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of Phase 1 Deliverables for Phase 2 selection</td>
<td>July 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipated Selection Announcement for Phase 2 Awards</td>
<td>August 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipated Start of Phase 2</td>
<td>September 2022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Every effort will be made to announce selections within one month from the proposal submission deadline. Selection notifications will be communicated electronically via NSPIRES to the institution’s Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and the PI. NSPIRES sends a decision notice via email requesting the PI and/or AOR to log into NSPIRES. This decision notice e-mail means that NSPIRES has been updated to indicate the status of a proposal. When a PI and/or AOR logs into NSPIRES, the following are examples of the types of decisions possible:

- A “declined” status means that: 1) NASA’s review of the proposal is concluded; and 2) no NASA funds will be awarded to support the proposed project, or
- A “selectable (pending)” status means that the proposal review is ongoing.
- A “selected” status in NSPIRES means that the funding review and implementation process has begun. The funding process must be successfully completed before any funds can be transferred.

Proposers are strongly cautioned that only a NASA Grants/Contracting Officer may make commitments, obligations, or awards on behalf of NASA or authorize the expenditure of funds. **A commitment by NASA to fund an award is only made through a grant or cooperative agreement signed by a NASA Grants Officer.** A PI or organization that makes financial and/or personnel commitments in the absence of a grant or cooperative agreement signed by a NASA Grant Officer does so at its own risk and should be done in alignment with 2 CFR Part 200.458,
11 Award Administration Information

11.1 Notice of Award

For selected proposals, a NASA Grants Officer will contact the business office of the proposer’s institution. The NASA Grants Officer is the only official authorized to obligate the Government. For a grant or cooperative agreement, any costs that the proposer incurs within 90 calendar days before an award are at the recipient’s risk in accordance with Title 2 CFR Part 1800.209.

A proposer has the right to be informed of the major factor(s) that led to the acceptance or rejection of its proposal. Debriefings will be available upon request. Again, it is emphasized that proposers should be aware that proposals of nominally high intrinsic and programmatic merits may be declined for reasons entirely unrelated to any programmatic or technical weaknesses.

11.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements

All administrative and national policy requirements may be found at Title 2 CFR Part 200, Title 2 CFR Part 1800, Title 14 CFR Part 1274 and the NASA Grant and Cooperative Agreement Manual (GCAM) see links below.

- **2 CFR Part 200** Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) at http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/textidx.tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl
- **Award and intellectual property information** is available here: https://prod.nais.nasa.gov/pub/pub_library/srba/Award_and_IP_Information_for_Proposers.docx

11.3 Environmental Statement

Awards of proposals related to this solicitation shall comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); thus, proposers are encouraged to plan and budget for any anticipated environmental impacts. While most research awards will not trigger action-specific NEPA review, some activities (including international actions) will.

The majority of grant-related activities are categorically excluded as research and development (R&D) projects that do not pose any adverse environmental impact. A blanket NASA Grants Record of Environmental Consideration (REC) provides NEPA coverage for these anticipated activities. Section VIII includes a questionnaire to determine whether a specific proposal falls within the Grants REC and shall be completed as part of the solicitation process. Activities outside of the bounding conditions of the Grants REC will require additional NEPA analysis. Examples of actions that will likely require NEPA analysis include but are not limited to: suborbital-class flights not conducted by a NASA Program Office (see Section V); activities involving ground-breaking construction/fieldwork; and certain payload activities such as the use of dropsondes.
Questions concerning environmental compliance may be addressed to Tina Norwood, NASA NEPA Manager, at tina.norwood-1@nasa.gov or (202) 358-7324.

11.4 Access to NASA Facilities/Systems

All recipients shall work with NASA project/program staff to ensure proper credentialing for any individuals who need access to NASA facilities and/or systems. Such individuals include U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents (“green card” holders), and foreign nationals (those who are neither U.S. citizens nor permanent residents).

11.5 Limited Release of Proposers’ Confidential Business Information

(a) For proposal evaluation and other administrative processing NASA may find it necessary to release information submitted by proposers to individuals not employed by NASA. Business information that would ordinarily be entitled to confidential treatment may be included in the information released to these individuals. Accordingly, by submission of this proposal, proposers hereby consent to a limited release of its confidential business information (CBI).

(b) Except where otherwise provided by law, NASA will permit the limited release of CBI only pursuant to non-disclosure agreements signed by the contractor or subcontractor that is assisting NASA, and their individual employees who may require access to the CBI to perform the assisting contract.

12 Reporting Requirements

This project will have the following specific reporting requirements, in addition to the requirements contained in 2 CFR Parts 200.327 and 2 200.328. During the execution of the Pilot Space Grant Program-Level Evaluation (Years 1-2), the awardee will provide monthly progress status updates to NASA Space Grant Program Management and Performance & Evaluation (P&E) Support. The awardee will also develop an Interim Evaluation Report in Year 1 (to include preliminary evaluation findings, recommendations, lessons learned, proposed draft Space Grant Program Logic Model, and enhancements to evaluation plan for execution in Year 2, etc.). Additionally, the awardee will develop a Final Evaluation Report in Year 2 (i.e., final evaluation findings and recommendations, proposed final Space Grant Program Logic Model, and a proposed evaluation plan for scaled Space Grant Program-Level Evaluation for execution in Years 3-4). These reporting requirements also apply for the scaled Space Grant Program-Level Evaluation for execution in Years 3-4. There are no Office of Education Performance Measurement system reporting requirements.

The following describes key evaluation reporting milestones associated with the Space Grant Program-Level Evaluation:

- **Final Space Grant Program-Level Pilot Evaluation Plan (Submit a final comprehensive evaluation plan 30 days after award Kick-Off Meeting in accordance with NASA guidance provided at Kick-Off Meeting)**
  - The awardee will provide a final comprehensive evaluation plan that:
    - Addresses documented feedback and/or questions provided by NASA Space Grant Management and Performance & Evaluation (P&E) Support
• Includes final evaluation questions, theory of action/change or logic model
• Describes an appropriate evaluation plan/process (quasi-experimental design) to document outcomes/impact and demonstrate progress toward achieving the goals and objectives of proposed education activities.
• Evaluation methods shall be based upon reputable models and techniques.
• Measure effectiveness and/or impact of the proposed project via evaluation questions, data collection and results to assess performance
• “Evaluate with fidelity” – evaluations shall be conducted in the manner in which it was written.

• **Month Progress Status Updates (Submit and present updates in PowerPoint Slide Deck by the 15th of each month in accordance with NASA guidance provided at Kick-Off Meeting)**
  • Update Space Grant Program Management and Performance & Evaluation (P&E) Support on pilot evaluation progress including:
    • Evaluation planning;
    • IRB review and approval;
    • The timing and frequency of data collection development, execution and analysis;
    • Achievement/milestone highlights; and
    • Risks and mitigation strategies.

• **Interim Evaluation Report (Submit 90 days prior to Year 1 Anniversary Date in accordance with NASA guidance provided at Kick-Off Meeting)**
  • Provide an annual review of program progress, including the number of students and parents served, the timing and frequency of class sessions, and achievements
  • **NOTE:** At the end of the performance period (2 years), the Annual Report will be considered a Final Report, which will be due within 90 days of the expiration date of the grant or cooperative agreement.

• **Final Evaluation Report (Submit 90 days prior to Year 2 Anniversary Date in accordance with NASA guidance provided at Kick-Off Meeting)**
  • Provide an annual assessment of the evaluation questions identified in site evaluation plans using the methods and instruments previously identified.
  • **NOTE:** At the end of the performance period (2 years), the Evaluation Report shall provide the annual assessment of the evaluation questions along with a summary of the evaluation studies from both implementation years.

Recipients shall also complete all required reports as required by the NSSC as listed on the Terms and Agreements within the award document. Within 90 days after the completion of the project, using required report templates, recipients shall submit a final report with summary information from the entire project’s period of performance. Recipients shall also comply with requirements outlined in 2 CFR Parts 180.335 and 180.350 regarding reporting information before entering into a covered transaction with a Federal agency.

If the Federal share of any Federal award may include more than $500,000 over the period of performance, potential applicants also shall follow the additional reporting requirements set forth in 2 CFR Part 200 Appendix XII - Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters.
### Solicitation Summary

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<th><strong>Amount of award</strong></th>
<th>$750,000 total</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Start date</strong></td>
<td>September 15, 2020</td>
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<td><strong>Duration of award</strong></td>
<td>Phase 1: September 2020 – August 2022</td>
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<td><strong>Award type</strong></td>
<td>CAN</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Solicitation release</strong></td>
<td>April 30, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notice of Intent (NOI)</strong></td>
<td>June 5, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proposal due date</strong></td>
<td>July 16, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anticipated award date</strong></td>
<td>September 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Expected proposers</strong></td>
<td>Current Space Grant Consortia Lead Institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Page limit for the body of each proposal</strong></td>
<td>10 pages maximum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Submission medium</strong></td>
<td>Submit proposals via NSPIRES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Proposal contacts** | Erica J. Alston, Ph.D.  
Space Grant Deputy Manager  
Langley Research Center  
Mail Stop 033  
Hampton, VA 23681  
hq-space-grant@mail.nasa.gov |
| **Selection official** | Chad Rowe  
Acting Space Grant Manager  
NASA Headquarters  
300 E Street, Southwest  
Washington, DC 20546 |
| **Matching funds requirement** | No matching funds are required. However, proposers shall identify and summarize any voluntary matching fund arrangements in their proposals. |
14 Appendices

Appendix A: Sample Milestone Chart for Phase 1 Proposed Activities

Instructions: Proposers shall provide an estimate as to when a proposed activity will occur. The items listed below shall align with the content of the proposal, budget, and budget narrative.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: Analysis of OEPM data from previous FY</td>
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Example:

Analysis of OEPM data from previous FY
### Appendix B: Sample Budget Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Evaluation Phase 1 Proposed Budget</th>
<th>NAFA Funds</th>
<th>Cost-Share (if applicable)</th>
<th>Total Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Personnel/ Direct Labor</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Principal Investigator/ Director</td>
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<td>2. Program Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Research Associate</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Staff Support</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Salaries</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B. Fringe Benefits</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Principal Investigator/ Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Program Manager</td>
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<td>3. Research Associate</td>
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<td>4. Staff Support</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Fringe</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>C. Equipment</strong></td>
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<td><strong>D. Materials and Supplies</strong></td>
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<td><strong>E. Services</strong></td>
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<td><strong>F. Domestic Travel</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>G. Proposed Activities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Activity One</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Activity Two</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Activity Three</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Direct Project Costs</strong></td>
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<td><strong>H. Subcontracts</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>I. Total Direct Costs</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>J. Indirect Cost (% rate of item I)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Costs</strong></td>
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