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Division of Environmental Biology Virtual Office Hour

Civic Innovation Challenge (CIVIC)

Please submit questions via the Q&A button available to you on Zoom.

Please set to "Send anonymously"

March 11, 2024

Welcome!

Division of Environmental Biology

NSF staff in attendance today:

- **Jeremy Wojdak** (host) – Population and Community Ecology
- **Chris Balakrishnan** – Systematics and Biodiversity Science (BIO) & CIVIC
- **Barbara Ransom** - Research, Innovation, Synergies, and Education (GEO) & CIVIC

Facilitators – Christina Washington and Megan Lewis



DEB Virtual Office Hour

DEB Office Hours: second Monday of each month, 1-2pm Eastern

Upcoming Topics:

April 8: Opportunities for broadening the STEM community

May 13: CAREER Solicitation

June 10: Merit Review and How to Get Involved with NSF



DEB Blog posts upcoming topics, registration, and recap posts

<https://debblog.nsfbio.com/office-hours/>

DEBbrief

Blog of the Division of Environmental Biology, NSF

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Office Hours

Join us the **second Monday of each month from 1pm-2pm Eastern Time** for the Division of Environmental Biology's (DEB) Virtual Office Hours. Representatives from each of the four clusters will be available to discuss specific programs and funding opportunities. There will then be an open question and answer period – questions can be on any NSF or DEB topic.

Join us remotely and bring your questions! Please use the registration link below to set up your



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AUGUST 21, 2023 BY DEB SCIENCE STAFF

8/14/23 Virtual Office Hours Recap: Things I wish I learned earlier about NSF

The Division of Environmental Biology (DEB) held its latest Virtual Office Hour on August 14, 2023. Program Officers discussed things they've learned during the transition from Principal Investigator to NSF Program Officer, helpful tips and tricks when applying for NSF funding, common misconceptions about the Merit Review Process, and more. We host these office hours 1-2pm EST on the 2nd Monday of every month. There is a designated theme each time, but attendees are welcome to ask about other NSF-related topics. Program Officers (POs) from different research areas are present at each Virtual Office Hour, so a wide range of scientific perspectives are represented.

The presentation slides, recording, and other documents are available here:

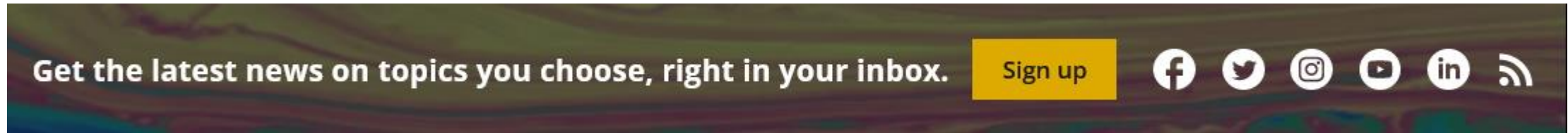


Search ...



BIO News and Updates

Visit www.nsf.gov and scroll down until you see the Sign up and social media banner, click on the yellow box, and follow the prompts.



Volunteer to review:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DEBexpertise>



Recent and Upcoming Funding Opportunities

Find links to all recent solicitations and DCL at the top of NSF.gov under Find Funding and Apply

*** NEW DEB Core Programs Solicitation (NSF 24-543) Released ***

- NSF 24-543– DEB Core Programs - **No deadline**
- NSF 22-591 – Opportunities for Promoting Understanding through Synthesis (OPUS) – **No deadline**
- NSF 24-531 – Partnership to Advance Conservation Science and Practice (PACSP) – **Deadline April 24**
- NSF 24-534 – Civic Innovation Challenge (CIVIC) – **Deadline May 1**
- NSF 22-500 – Building Research Capacity of New Faculty in Biology (BRC-BIO) – **Deadline July 1**
- NSF 22-586 – Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) - **Deadline July 24**
- NSF 23-620 – Postdoctoral Research Fellowship in Biology (PRFB) – **Deadline November 7**
- [BIO 18-001](#) – Biological Sciences Temporary/Rotator Program Officer



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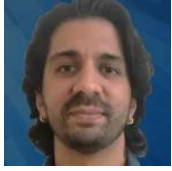
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CIVIC Program Team

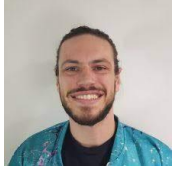
National Science Foundation



David Corman
Program Director
(CISE)



Vishal Sharma
Program Director
(CISE)



Jacob Kravetz
AAAS STPF Fellow
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Linda Bushnell
Program Director
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Ralph Wachter
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Siqian Shen
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Daan Liang
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Barbara Ransom
Program Director
(GEO)



Sara Kiesler
Program Director
(SBE)



Chris Balakrishnan
Program Director
(BIO)



Kirsten Schwarz
Program Director
(BIO)

MetroLab Network



David Rowe
Chief of Staff



Rose Mische-Commins
Civic Engagement
and Partnership
Coordinator



Kate Burns
Executive
Director



Kim Lucas
Professor of the
Practice
Northeastern
University

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David Alexander
Senior Science Advisor –
Resilience



Norman Speicher
Program Manager, S&T



Elizabeth Asche
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Program Manager, Technology
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David Howell
Director, Vehicle Technologies
Office, Energy Efficiency and
Renewable Energy

Department of Agriculture



Steve Thomson
National Program Leader,
Division of Agricultural Systems



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PROGRAM GOALS

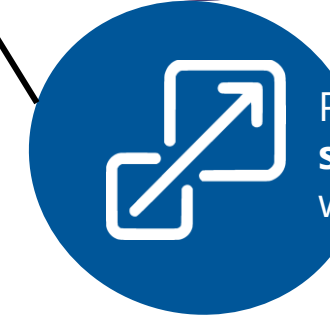
Accelerate transition to practice of foundational research and emerging technologies into local government and community organizations



Address local priorities and challenges through research-based pilot projects



Pilot projects must be co-created and executed as partnerships between researchers and a range of stakeholders on the front lines of their community challenge



Projects outcomes must have potential to be **scaled and sustained** in the pilot communities, with **transferability across the US**

Website: <https://nscivinnovation.org/>



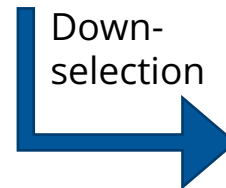
PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Focused track themes, developed with input from local government and community organizations and the priority areas of the co-funding federal agencies

Broad outreach to solicit project proposals with a focus on outreach to local government, community organizations, and research institutions

Project selection through NSF merit review involving civic and academic reviewers

Stage 1 Planning Grant Awards
(\$75K for 6-month awards, for team capacity building and to refine pilot project ideas)

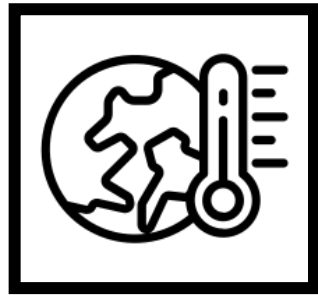


Stage 2 Pilot Awards
(\$1M for 12-month awards, to execute fast-paced pilot project)

Community of Practice to facilitate knowledge sharing, training, and networking between CIVIC teams

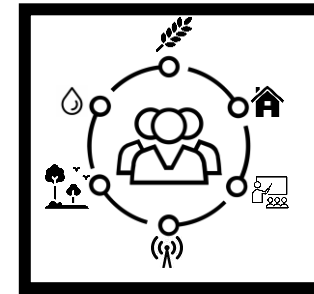


CIVIC 2.0 (2022-24)



Track A: Living in a Changing Climate

Adaptation, mitigation, and resilience in community systems, services, and economic drivers that are vulnerable in the face of a changing climate.



Track B: Bridging the gap between essential resources and services & community needs

Enhancing peoples' access to essential resources and services (e.g., food and housing) where better accessibility could significantly improve quality of life and community resilience.

Program Timeline:

- Stage 1: October 2022 – March 2023
- Stage 2: October 2023-2024

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NEW CIVIC SOLICITATION (NSF 24-534)

Refer to guidance and requirements in the solicitation, as well as NSF's Proposal and Award Policies and Procedure Guide (PAPPG)

PAPPG Link: https://nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=pappg



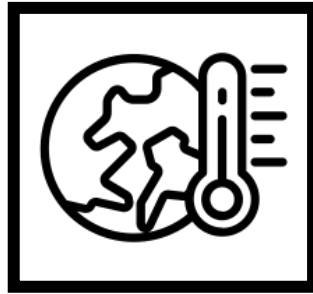
Updates to the Program Solicitation:

- The NSF Directorate for Biological Sciences has joined the program.
- The solicitation includes updated language for both Track A and Track B.
- Maximum allowable budgets for Stage 1 Planning Grants have been increased to \$75,000.
- The solicitation includes an update to the solicitation-specific review criteria.
- The Dear Colleague Letter ([NSF 23-027](#)) on USDA/NIFA participation in Stage 2 of the program does not apply to this solicitation.



SOLICITATION OVERVIEW: TRACKS

This round of CIVIC has two focused track themes that teams can apply to:

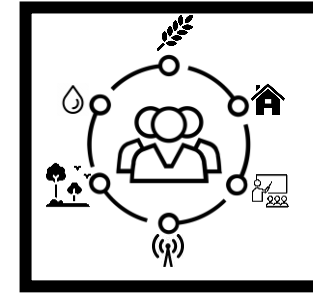


Track A: Climate and Environmental Instability

Strengthening the resilience of a community and its economy to climate- and associated environmentally-related instability and disasters such as extreme heat events, flooding, wildfires, etc.

Projects may target specific function(s) and aspects of a community such as (but not limited to):

- utilities, communications, and other critical infrastructure
- public health
- transportation and mobility
- food and agriculture
- water security
- ecosystem services
- financial services



Track B: Bridging the gap between essential resources and services & community needs

Enhancing peoples' access to essential resources and services (e.g., food, housing, broadband and mobile technologies) where better access could significantly improve quality of life and community resilience.

Projects may consider gaps and inequities in resource and service allocation resulting from (for example):

- Long-standing, systemic issues around accessibility
- Economic disparities
- Poorly designed interfaces
- Disruptions caused by a shock or disaster.

SOLICITATION OVERVIEW: STAGES

Stage 1 Planning Grants

Proposals due: May 1, 2024

Anticipated Awards: ~35-40 awards, \$75K per award

Stage 1 timeline: October 2024 - March 2025

Planning grants will enable teams to strengthen collaborations with relevant partners and stakeholders, solidify their deliverables and the academic and civic partner team members' roles, and refine the vision and plan for executing the research-centered pilot project.

Stage 2 Full Awards

Proposals due: Feb 10, 2025

Anticipated Awards: ~15-20 awards, \$1M per award

Only Stage 1 Awardees can submit proposals for Stage 2

Full awards will enable teams to execute a research-centered pilot project in either one of the two tracks specified in this solicitation and develop pathways for scaling and sustaining the outcomes of their pilot beyond the period of the NSF award.



PROPOSAL PREPARATION

Key parts of a CIVIC Planning Grant proposal:

- Project Summary
- **Project Description (this is primary section of the proposal with various subcomponents; 7 pages maximum for planning grants)**
 - Vision for a Research-Centered Pilot Project
 - Civic Partnerships and Engagement
 - Broader Impacts (must include content described in PAPPG)
 - Results from Prior NSF support (must include content described in PAPPG)
- Facilities --- may describe further information about facilities and resources available to the team (including physical and personnel)
- Project Personnel and Partner Institutions
- Biographical sketches
- Letters of Collaboration --- some may be NSF standard letter; others may be descriptive --- they are both ok
- Data Management Plan
- Post-doctoral Mentoring Plan (only required if funding support is requested for post-doctoral researchers)
- Current and Pending Support



PROPOSAL PREPARATION (cont.)

Proposers will describe their project ideas, goals, and activities in the “**Project Description**” section of their proposals.

As stated in [section V.A of the solicitation](#), teams can refer to these questions as they get started with formulating their ideas:

- **Vision for a research-centered pilot project** that would be carried out within a real-world context in Stage 2
 - In what ways does the envisioned Stage 2 pilot project go beyond the state-of-practice and state-of-the-art?
 - Is the envisioned Stage 2 pilot project suitable for the fast-paced timeline of CIVIC?
 - Who are the members of the team, including academic and civic partners, and why is each relevant for the project? Are there gaps in expertise that will be addressed during the planning period?
 - What are the activities to be undertaken during the Stage 1 PG to prepare the team to propose a competitive Stage 2 proposal?
- **The strength of the project’s civic-academic partnerships and engagement** with the pilot community;
 - Do the civic partners adequately represent the perspective of the community and enable the project to achieve its desired impact?
 - What combination of civic partner(s), civic engagement activities, and research outputs will enable the project team to "close the loop" and achieve significant impact with their proposed activities?
 - How will the project collaborate across academia, community organizations, and local/state government?



MERIT REVIEW CRITERIA

Proposals will be reviewed for intellectual merit and broader impacts following NSF's general review process.

Intellectual Merit: The Intellectual Merit criterion encompasses the potential for the proposed project to advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields.

Broader Impacts: The Broader Impacts criterion encompasses the potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes.

In addition to assessing a proposal's intellectual merit and broader impacts, the following elements are considered for both review criteria (in context of the unique CIVIC solicitation and program goals):

1. To what extent do the proposed activities suggest and explore creative, original or potentially transformative concepts?
2. Is the plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well-organized and based on a sound rationale? Does the plan incorporate a mechanism to assess success?
3. How well qualified is the individual, team or organization to conduct the proposed activities?
4. Are there adequate resources available (either at the proposer's home organization or through collaborations) to carry out the proposed activities?

Information about the NSF merit review process can be found in section VI.A of the solicitation.



MERIT REVIEW CRITERIA (cont.)

Additional solicitation-specific review criteria:

- Is it evident that the envisioned CIVIC project is:
 - (a) addressing a community priority with an impactful pilot that has the potential to be scaled and sustained, and
 - (b) driven by strong partnerships between the necessary set of civic institutions and organizations, researchers, and other partners and other community partners?
- Is the proposed pilot project well-suited for execution in the fast-paced 12-month timeframe of the CIVIC program, including a rapid start-up at the onset of Stage 2?
- Does the proposal clearly articulate the desired impact of its planning activities or envisioned pilot, with well-defined metrics and benchmarks for evaluating progress and success?

Information about the NSF merit review process can be found in section VI.A of the solicitation.



GUIDANCE FOR ORGANIZATIONS NEW TO NSF

- The proposal submission process to NSF can take time and teams that have not previously submitted to NSF are strongly encouraged to initiate it early in the proposal submission window.
- As a starting place, teams may refer to the following:
 - Refer to the section titled “Proposal Preparation and Submission Instructions” in the solicitation for guidance on submission requirements
 - NSF’s Proposal and Award Policies and Procedure Guide (PAPPG):
https://nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=pappg
- Teams are also strongly encouraged to visit the [CIVIC FAQ webpage](#) and refer to question 11 in the “Proposals” section for additional detailed guidance on the submission process for organizations new to NSF.

Questions regarding [research.gov](https://www.research.gov) and [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) submission process or getting set up to propose to NSF **should not be directed** to NSF Program Director’s for CIVIC.



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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Serve on an NSF Review Panel

Sign up at this link to be considered as a reviewer for the CIVIC program and please share with others who may be interested.

CIVIC Webinar Recording

A recording of webinars and slides are available at the NSF program page for CIVIC.

CIVIC Office Hours

CIVIC Program Directors are available for 1-1 calls with prospective proposers to answer questions regarding the program and proposal ideas. **Meetings can be scheduled using this link.**

Additional Resources

Sign up for the CIVIC mailing list to receive further updates about the program, including, future webinars, information on program office hours, and ways to participate as a reviewer

Visit nscivinnovation.org to learn more about the program, including previous awards

For questions about the program email civic@nsf.gov

