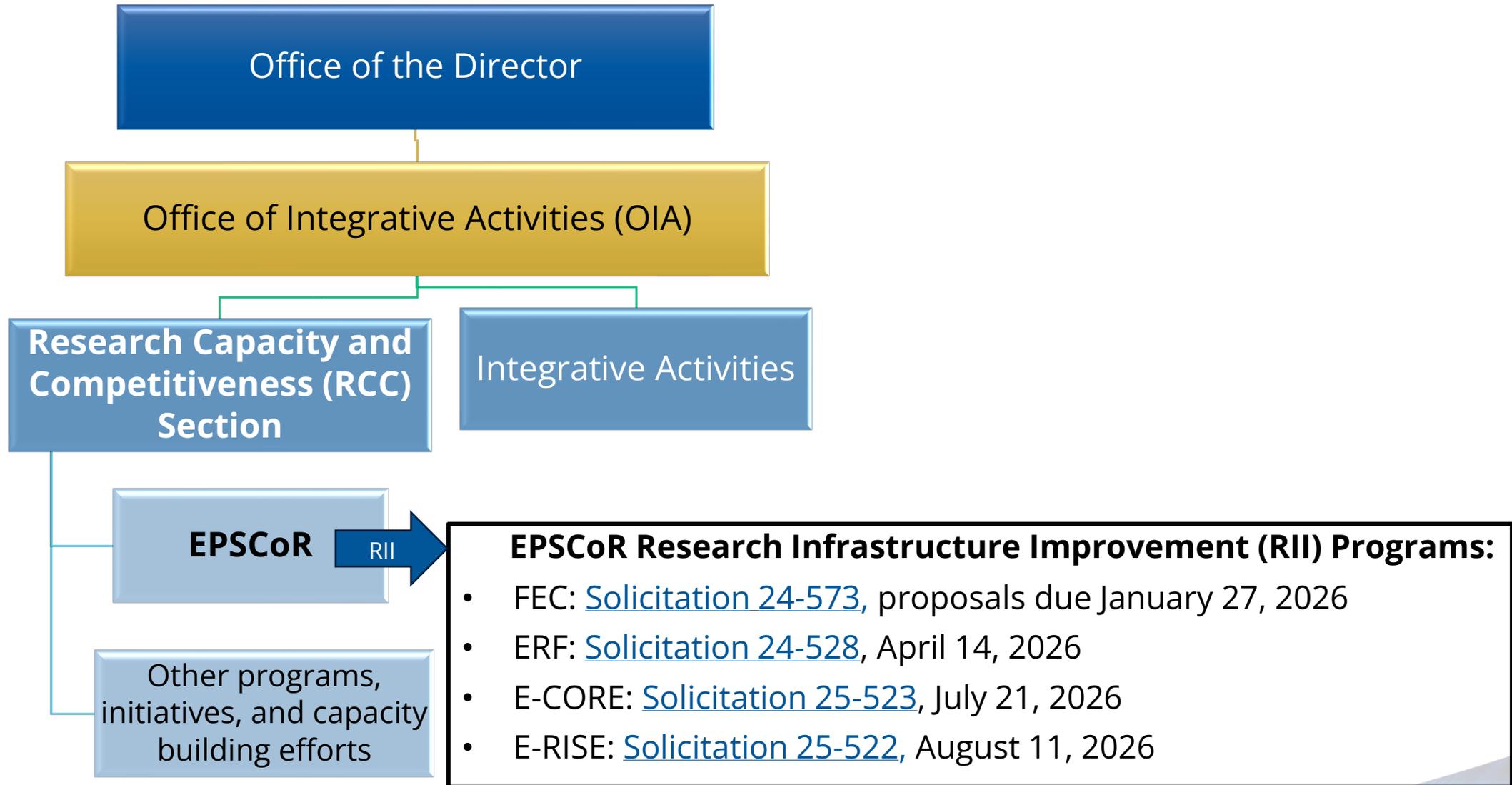# Webinar Overview

- The US NSF EPSCoR Program

- The EPSCoR Research Fellows Funding Opportunity

- Proposal Best Practices and Requirements

- Merit Review Criteria

- Closing Remarks and Q&A

Organization Structure and EPSCoR RII Programs

Office of the Director

Office of Integrative Activities (OIA)

Research Capacity and Competitiveness (RCC) Section

Integrative Activities

EPSCoR → RII →

Other programs, initiatives, and capacity building efforts

EPSCoR Research Infrastructure Improvement (RII) Programs:

- FEC: [Solicitation 24-573,](#) proposals due January 27, 2026
- ERF: [Solicitation 24-528](#), April 14, 2026
- E-CORE: [Solicitation 25-523](#), July 21, 2026
- E-RISE: [Solicitation 25-522,](#) August 11, 2026

EPSCoR: Building Jurisdiction-wide Research Capacity

Discovery & Innovation

Education & Workforce

Economic Development

NSF EPSCoR Eligibility: 28 EPSCoR Jurisdictions

AL	Alabama
AK	Alaska
AR	Arkansas
DE	Delaware
GU	Guam
HI	Hawaii
IA	Iowa
ID	Idaho
KS	Kansas
KY	Kentucky
LA	Louisiana
ME	Maine
MS	Mississippi
MY	Montana
NE	Nebraska
NH	New Hampshire
NM	New Mexico
ND	North Dakota
NV	Nevada
OK	Oklahoma
PR	Puerto Rico
RI	Rhode Island
SC	South Carolina
SD	South Dakota
VI	U.S. Virgin Islands
VT	Vermont
WV	West Virginia
WY	Wyoming
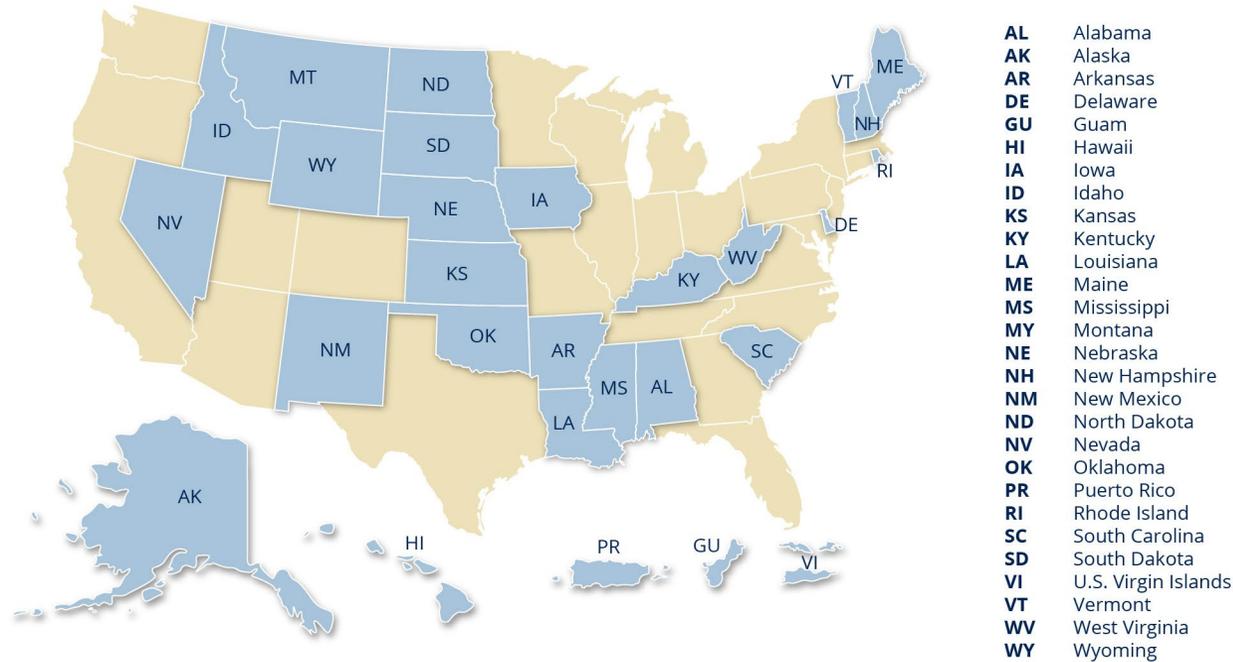
- States, Commonwealths, and Territories are eligible for funding if their most recent 5-year level of total NSF funding is equal to or less than **0.75%** of the total NSF budget.
- Eligibility table updated annually and publicly available:
  https://www.nsf.gov/od/oia/programs/epscor/nsf_oiia_epscor_eligible.jsp

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EPSCoR Investment Strategies - Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) | NSF - U.S. National Science Foundation

EPSCoR Research Fellows: Key Information

- Funding opportunity that supports PIs from EPSCoR-eligible institutions in the development of research collaborations

- For Early- and Mid-Career Investigators, up to $300,000 for up to 2 years

- Deadline: **April 14, 2026**, by 5 PM submitting institution's local time

- Two tracks: ERF: NSF and ERF @NASA

- Solicitation **NSF 24-528**: https://beta.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/epscor-research-infrastructure-improvement-track-4-0

  (specific requirement for the Project Title, the Project Summary...)

EPSCoR Research Fellows Opportunity

- Provides opportunities for non-tenured (or equivalent) and tenured, early and mid-career investigators to further develop their individual research potential through extended visits to the nation's premier private, federal, or academic institutions.

- Fellows will be able to:
  - learn new techniques
  - benefit from access to state-of-the-art equipment and facilities
  - strengthen collaborative partnerships
  - extend their research toward transformative directions

- Experiences gained through fellowships are intended to provide:
  - Time to develop new or extend current research directions
  - A pathway to strengthen research connections with partners nationwide
  - benefits that will impact the PI's career in years to come

- Fellowship outcomes are also expected to in turn enhance the research capacities of their home institutions and/or jurisdictions.
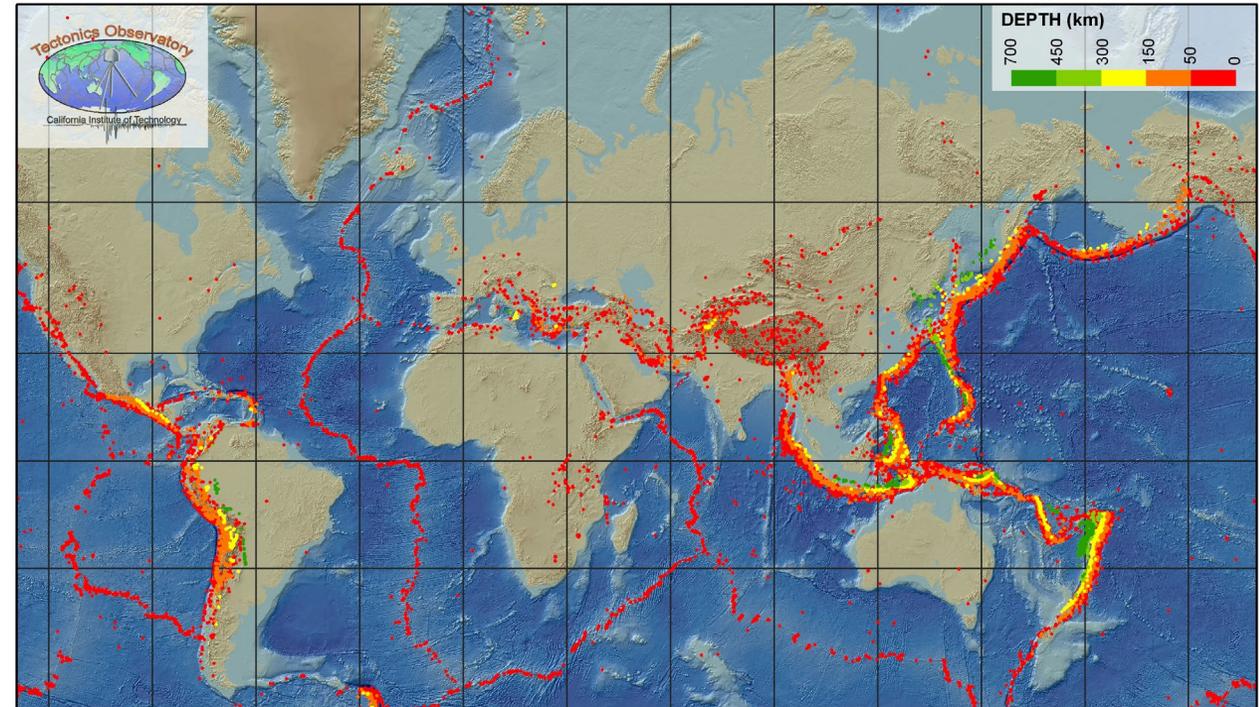
EPSCoR Research Fellows: NSF

- EPSCoR Research Fellows: NSF, host sites may be **any** research institution **within the United States or its territories/possessions.**

  Generally expected to be beyond easy commuting distance from the home institution.
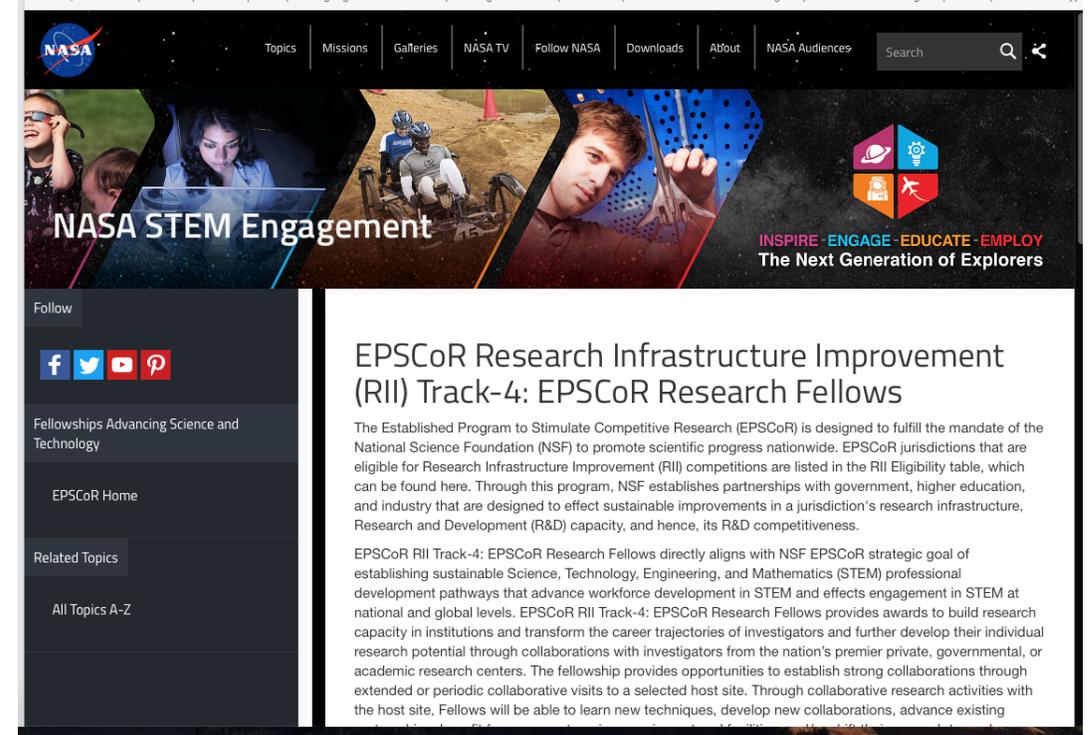
- Any topic that NSF funds is eligible.

Global Map of Earthquakes Credit: Lisa Christiansen, Caltech Tectonics Observatory

EPSCoR Research Fellows: @NASA

- EPSCoR Research Fellows: @NASA is a collaboration between the NASA EPSCoR and NSF EPSCoR programs.

- Host sites are NASA Research Centers.

- Specific Institution types are eligible.

- Specific topics are eligible based on the NASA Research Center (links to these topics are available in the solicitation).
  - Research Focus Areas:
  - EPSCoR RII: Research Fellows - NASA
  - https://www.nasa.gov/learning-resources/established-program-to-stimulate-competitive-research/research-fellows/

NASA Research Focus Areas:
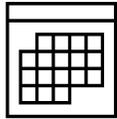
nasa_research_focus_areas-01-09-2023.xlsx

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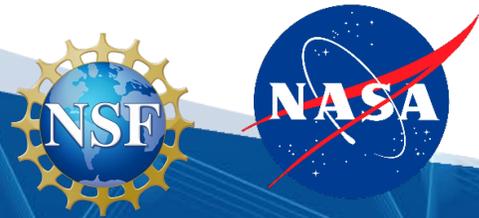
EPSCoR Research Fellows:@NASA Funding Information

Planning to fund up to 10 proposals.

Access to NASA facilities starting as early as Q1 2027.

Teams can visit NASA facilities for 4-24 weeks during the two-year timeline.

The **NASA Subject Matter Expert**, serves as research collaborator and mentor to the PI and Technical Monitor for the project; will provide site visits and annual reports.

U.S. citizenship is required for research opportunities at specified NASA Centers. Lawful permanent residents are eligible for research opportunities at specified NASA Centers.

EPSCoR Research Fellows: Finding NASA Collaborator

- For this track, PIs email their CVs, contact information, and research interest to the NASA EPSCoR manager, through the email Agency-EPSCoR-RII-Track-4@mail.nasa.gov

- Once a matching research topic is identified, the NASA EPSCoR manager will facilitate research discussions and collaborations with a NASA collaborator.

- In some cases, PIs may have prior research collaboration with NASA Scientists/Engineers, this information should be shared with the NASA EPSCoR manager to proceed.

- For additional information, including NASA's research interests, go to:

    - https://www.nasa.gov/learning-resources/established-program-to-stimulate-competitive-research/research-fellows/

- Be sure to justify the choice of host site and collaborator in your proposal.

- NASA EPSCoR manager will provide a letter of support for proposal submission.

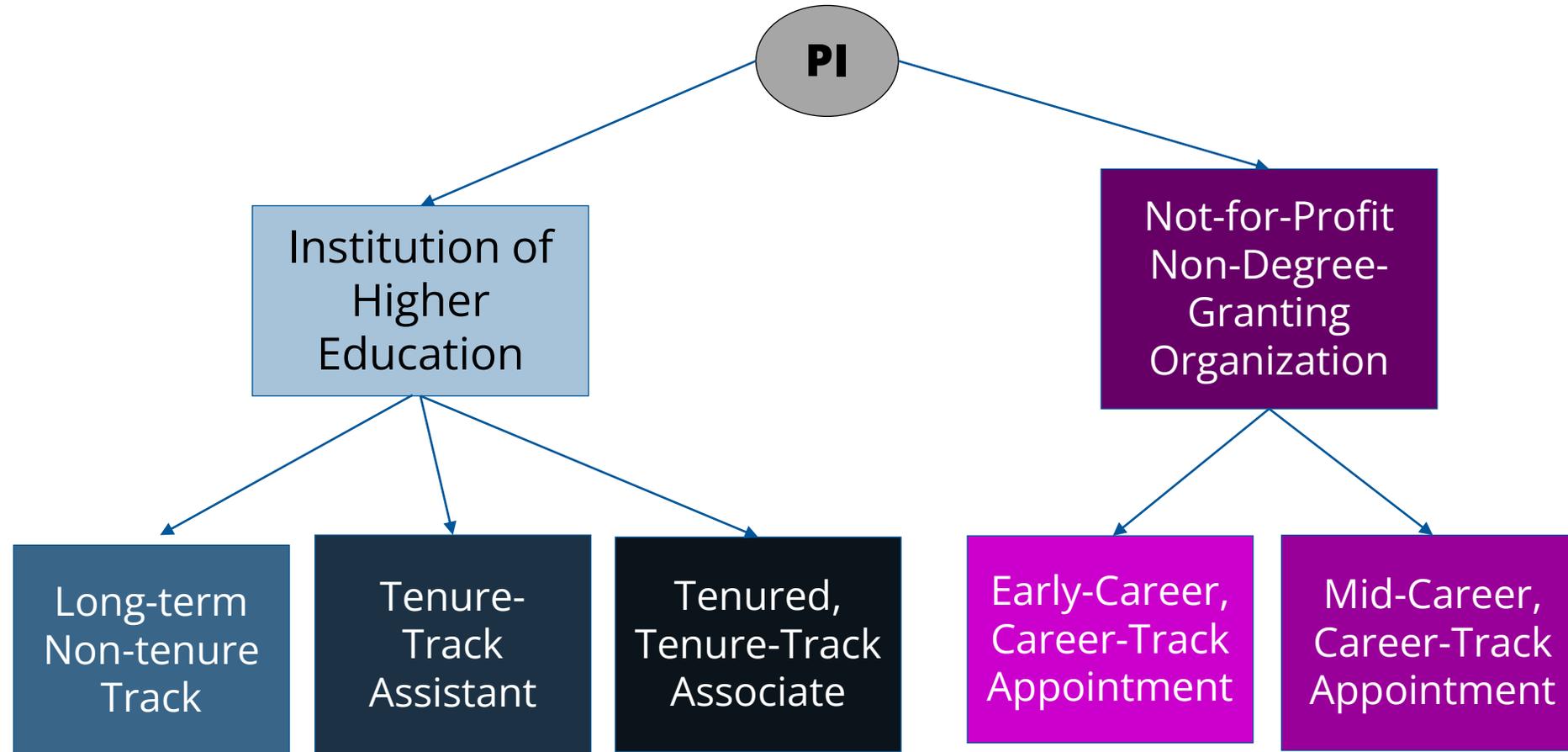**David Berger (Agency-EPSCoR-RII-Track-4@mail.nasa.gov)**
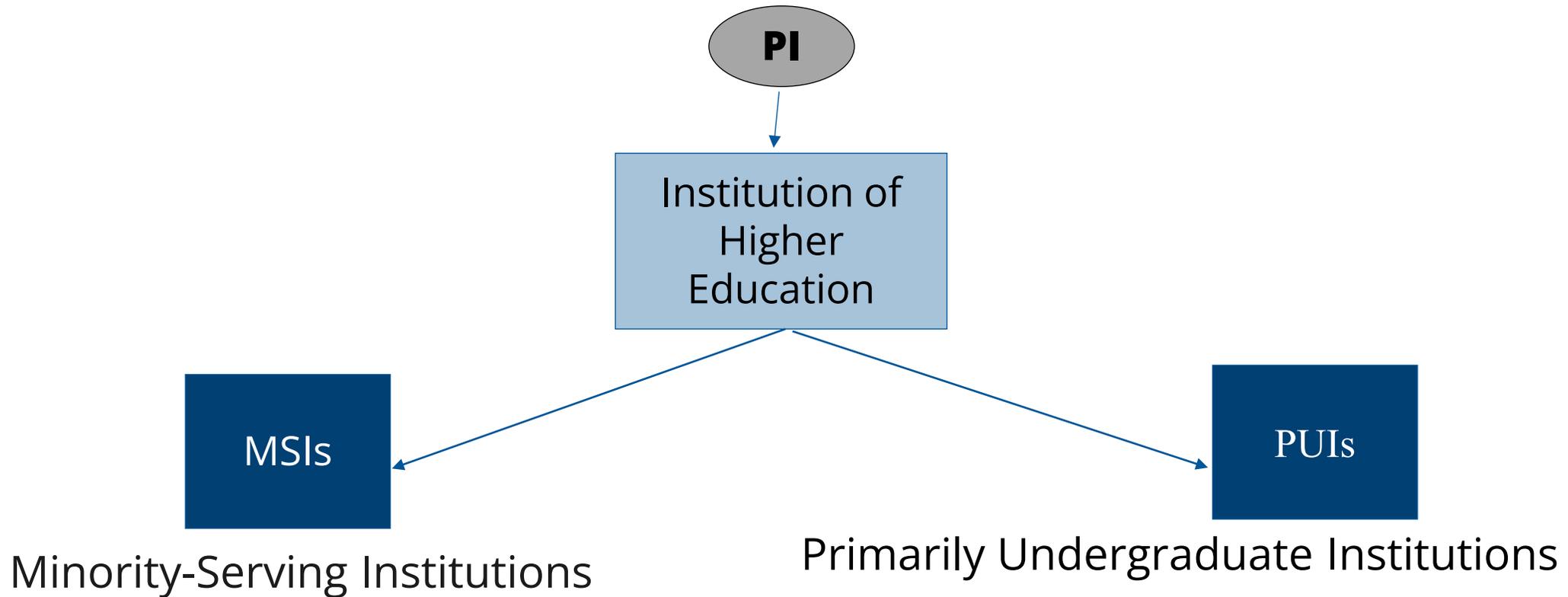
ERF Budget Request Overview

- For both tracks, NSF budget requests may be **up to $300,000** for duration **up to 24 months**.
  - 1-6 months of salary support for the PI and **one** trainee-level participant.
    - It is expected that the PI will complete a **minimum of a one month** extended visit to the host institution, or an equivalent of several periodic visits totaling one month.
- There are no budget caps on travel, lodging or other direct costs.
  - PIs are not allowed to split their fellowship period between two or more host sites.
- Up to $10,000 may be requested for the collaborator for travel related to the fellowship project which includes visits to the PI's home institution and/or participation in conferences where the collaborative work is presented.
- For EPSCoR Research Fellows: @NASA, an additional $60K Research Infrastructure Development (RID) grant from NASA EPSCoR at home institution is available (after award from NSF).
  - Please do not include this request in budget requests to NSF.

EPSCoR Research Fellows Eligibility

EPSCoR Research Fellows:@NASA Eligibility

PI → Institution of Higher Education → MSIs / PUIs

Minority-Serving Institutions

Primarily Undergraduate Institutions

- Long-term, non-tenure track; or tenure-track, tenured Assistant or Associate Professors
- Those schools are also eligible for ERF: NSF track

Required Letters

Please provide all letters as supplementary documents

- ERF: NSF: **3 letters** (home institution, collaborator, host site)

- ERF @NASA from MSIs: **2 letters** (home institution, NASA host)

- ERF @NASA from PUIs: **3 letters** (2 home institution, NASA host)

  - PUIs including two-year colleges, that awards Associates degrees, Bachelor's degrees, and/or Master's degrees in NSF-supported fields,
  - and has awarded 20 or fewer PhD/DSci degrees in all NSF-supported fields during the combined previous two academic years

  David Berger (Agency-EPSCoR-RII-Track-4@mail.nasa.gov)

What Goes in the Proposal?

- Successful EPSCoR Research Fellows proposals will present exciting, vibrant fellowship ideas that will positively impact and potentially **transform** the PI's individual career trajectory and more broadly impact his/her research field, institution, and/or jurisdiction.

- All proposals should include:
  - Motivation and research context for the work to be conducted
  - Well Defined, reasoned, and organized research objectives which could be driven by specific research questions or hypotheses
  - PI's specific plans for the fellowship period; and
  - Discussion for how the benefits gained from the fellowship would be sustained beyond the award;
  - Clear specifications of fellowship goals, performance metrics, and a timetable

- Explain how/why the EPSCoR Research Fellows award will advance the PI's research program – what specific opportunities will be made possible via the PI's extended visit(s) to the host site?
  - The parameters for the partnership should be clearly established

- Describe how the activities will lead to long-lasting impacts for both the PI's career **and the home institution and /or jurisdiction.**

Merit Review Criteria

All NSF proposals are evaluated through use of two National Science Board approved merit review criteria:

- Intellectual Merit—the potential to advance knowledge

- Broader Impacts—the potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes

The NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG) for important updates (NSF 24 -

1) : https://www.nsf.gov/policies/pappg

Current policy change document (NSF 26-200).

Merit Review Criteria cont.

For each of these criteria, the following elements are considered as part of the merit review process:

1. What is the potential for the proposed activity to:

    a. Advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields (Intellectual Merit); and

    b. Benefit society or advance desired societal outcomes (Broader Impacts)?

2. To what extent do the proposed activities suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts?

3. 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?

4. How well qualified is the individual, team, or organization to conduct the proposed activities?

5. Are there adequate resources available to the PI (either at the home organization or through collaborations) to carry out the proposed activities?

—From NSF PAPPG 24-1

Merit Review Criteria cont.

ERF Solicitation-Specific Criteria:

- What evidence is presented to demonstrate that the proposed research outcomes can be achieved within the constraints of the fellowship period, with the work being performed primarily at the host site?

- How will the fellowship have a transformative impact on the trajectory of the PI's research career both during the period of the award and beyond?

- How will the fellowship yield tangible benefits to the home institution and/or jurisdiction beyond the individual benefits to the PI?

- What evidence is there that the home institution and the host site are each committing the necessary resources, both scientific and administrative, to lend confidence that the fellowship project will be successful in achieving its intended outcomes?

In Summary

1. Read the solicitation.

2. Consult with your sponsored research office regarding internal competitions.

3. Identify a collaborator at a host site or NASA Center*

   * For EPSCoR Research Fellows:@NASA: Review the research <u>focus areas</u> to find alignment with available opportunities and contact the NASA EPSCoR Manager.

4. Write the proposal narrative and obtain letters of support.

5. Contact NSF and NASA manager regarding questions, attend ERF Office Hours.

6. Submit your proposal through <u>Research.gov</u> **well before** the deadline of April 14, 2026.

If you are interested in reviewing for this opportunity, please send your CV to an NSF PO and you will be asked to complete a reviewer survey in advance of the deadline.