

New NSF Requirements for Safe and Inclusive Field Work

Directorates for Biological Sciences (BIO) and Geosciences (GEO) Piloting Use of Supplemental Document, Will Hold Virtual Office Hour Session, February 7, 2:30-3:30 CST.

Register for the session at

https://nsf.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_amsVTq1pTDCE8S2FZU7mJQ?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

Several solicitations from BIO and GEO will soon require the submission of a Safe and Inclusive Work Environments Plan (list of solicitations to date below) that will be considered as part of the Broader Impacts criteria during the review process.

This 2-page supplementary document must address the following four sections:

1. a brief description of the field setting and unique challenges for the team;
2. the steps the proposing organization will take to nurture an inclusive off-campus or off-site working environment, including processes to establish shared team definitions of roles, responsibilities, and culture, e.g., codes of conduct, trainings, mentor/mentee mechanisms and field support that might include regular check-ins, and/or developmental events;
3. communication processes within the off-site team and to the organization(s) that minimize singular points within the communication pathway (e.g., there should not be a single person overseeing access to a single satellite phone); and
4. the organizational mechanisms that will be used for reporting, responding to, and resolving issues of harassment if they arise.

Solicitations Involved in the Pilot and Timeline for Requirement

The solicitations that are part of the pilot effort to date are:

- BIO core solicitations:
 - Division of Environmental Biology (NSF 23-549)
 - Division of Integrative Organismal Systems (NSF 23-547)
 - Division of Molecular and Cellular Biosciences (NSF 23-548)
- Biodiversity on a Changing Planet (BoCP, NSF 23-542)
- Pathways into the Geosciences (GEOPATHs, NSF 23-540)
- Cultural Transformation in the Geosciences Community (CTGC, NSF 23-539)

For solicitations with a due date (*i.e.*, BoCP, GEOPATHs, and CTGC), the supplementary document is required upon submission.

For solicitations without a due date (*i.e.*, the BIO core solicitations), a date after which proposals must include the supplementary document is included in the solicitation. That date is generally 90 days after the publication of the solicitation. Prior to that date, any proposal with off-campus or off-site research must include a certification from the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) as outlined below.

Broader NSF Requirement on Safe and Inclusive Fieldwork

It is NSF policy to foster safe and harassment-free environments wherever science is conducted. NSF's policy recognizes that a community effort is essential to eliminate sexual and other forms of harassment in science and to build inclusive scientific climates where people can learn, grow, and thrive.

Accordingly, for each proposal that proposes to conduct research off-campus or off site to programs not including those listed above, the AOR must complete a certification that the organization has a plan in place for that proposal that describes how the following types of behavior will be addressed:

- a. Abuse of any person, including, but not limited to, harassment, stalking, bullying, or hazing of any kind, whether the behavior is carried out verbally, physically, electronically, or in written form; or
- b. Conduct that is unwelcome, offensive, indecent, obscene, or disorderly.

More information on this certification is available in Chapter II Section E.9 of the new PAPPG.