

A Message from the Director of the National Science Foundation

The oceans are an important source of food, commerce, medicine, and recreation. They also shape our weather and are critical to our national security. The oceans provide much benefit, yet many aspects of them are not understood, and are even unexplored.

To better understand the oceans, the National Science Foundation (NSF) invests in a range of research projects and equipment. From probing hydrothermal vents on the seafloor to mapping the dynamics of coastal processes, continental shelves and air-sea interfaces, NSF support enables scientists and engineers to unlock the mysteries of the deep.

To aid researchers in their studies, NSF has four oceanographic research vessels and provides support to all 18 ships and three submersibles in the U.S. Academic Research Fleet. They serve as laboratories, launches for deep-sea submersibles and stations for collecting everything from sediment samples to images of deep-sea marine life. Because of their unique capabilities, NSF-supported research vessels encourage study across the globe, from the ice-tested *Sikuliaq* to the deep submersible *Alvin*. NSF-funded researchers are also developing smaller, autonomous submersibles, which provide an unprecedented level of access to oceans, lakes, rivers, and other waterways.

The Earth's oceans are dynamic, living laboratories. NSF encourages continued ocean research and discovery so that we can learn more about worlds below the surface.

For more on NSF's research vessels, please read the NSF special report "[The Deep](#)" on the agency's [website](#) and stay tuned to NSF social media channels.

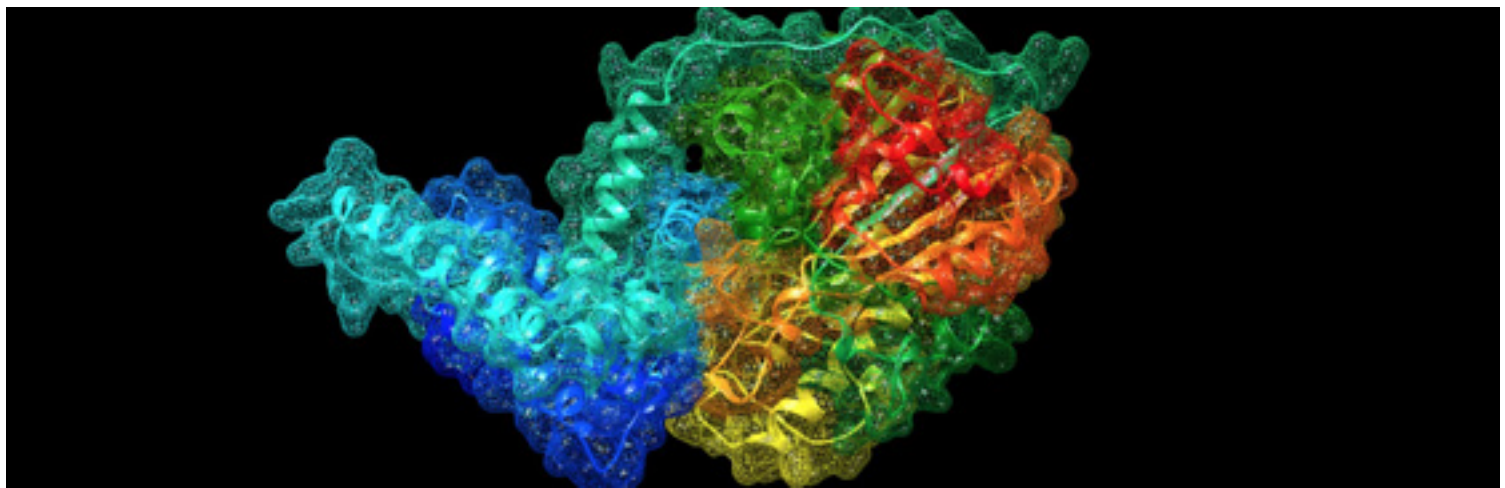


Where Discoveries Begin...



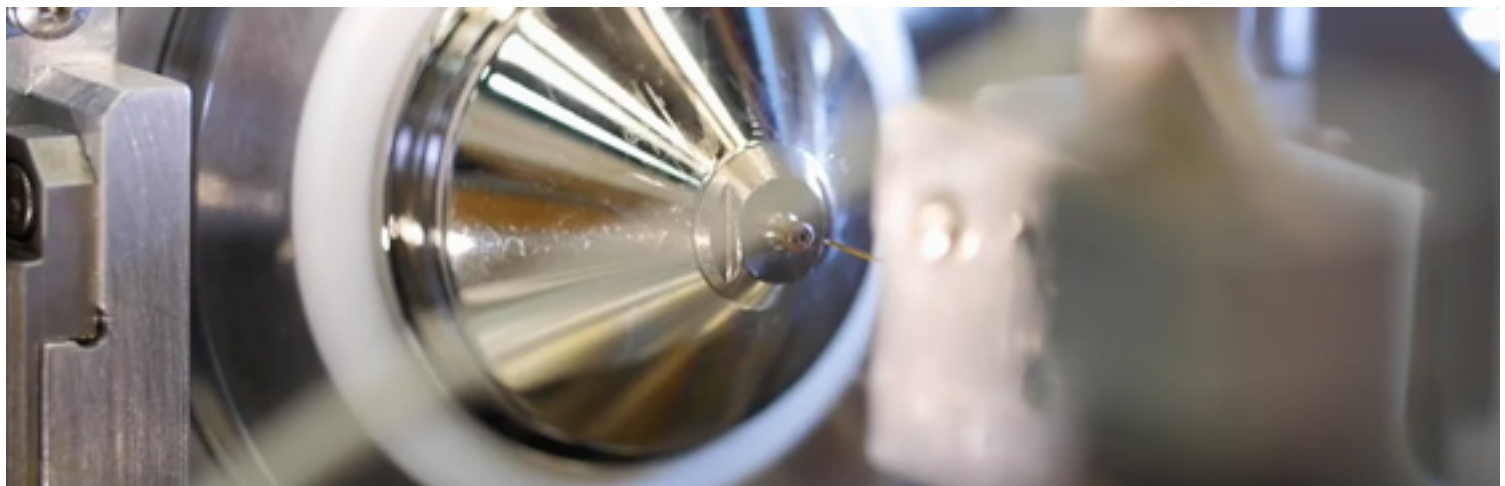
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What's Next

July 10 -- [Secrets of the Universe](#), an NSF-funded film, premieres.

July 17 - 18 -- National Science Board [meeting](#) at NSF headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia.

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