



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
2415 EISENHOWER AVENUE  
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

**NSF 20-036**

## Dear Colleague Letter: Competition for Future Research Center(s) to Coordinate Research in Fundamental Earthquake Processes

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January 17, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

The Division of Earth Sciences (EAR) in the Directorate for Geosciences (GEO) at the National Science Foundation (NSF) is preparing for a competition for future support of one or more research centers focused on coordinating research in fundamental earthquake processes. NSF currently supports a research center for earthquake processes through the *Southern California Earthquake Center: Research Program in Earthquake System Science, 2017-2022* (SCEC) at the University of Southern California. With this planned competition, NSF will seek to support research center(s) to enable transformative research in earthquake science. The center(s) will meaningfully improve the national welfare through bold and creative activities to expand the impact of earthquake research to a wide range of stakeholders and broaden participation of underrepresented groups in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The planned competition will be held via a merit-based, external peer-review process in accord with best practices for open competition and will be consistent with the *NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide* (PAPPG). EAR is currently preparing the solicitation for this competition, which is expected to lead to one or more cooperative agreement(s) for one or more research centers following the end of the current SCEC cooperative agreement on 30 April 2022.

This letter provides general information regarding the upcoming competition and invites any interested members of the academic community to contact designated NSF representatives to provide non-proprietary input that they believe is important for the planned competition. This notice does not constitute a solicitation. Proposals are not yet sought, and no award of any kind will result from this notice.

### **MOTIVATION**

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Earthquakes are complex processes that pose a significant hazard in the United States, and it is critical for NSF to support fundamental research to advance understanding of fault

systems and earthquake processes. Earthquake science is inherently interdisciplinary, involving scientists from geophysics, geology, tectonics, geomorphology, engineering, computer science and other allied fields. Further progress in understanding fault behavior and earthquake processes will require convergent approaches and greater collaboration to enable systems-level insights on fault behavior and seismic hazards. Thus, NSF seeks to support research center(s) to enable transformative research in earthquake science. The center(s) will meaningfully improve the national welfare through bold and creative activities to expand the impact of earthquake research to a wide range of stakeholders and broaden participation of underrepresented groups in STEM.

## REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

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NSF invites any members of the academic community to provide non-proprietary input on this planned competition. NSF is interested in responses focused on the aspects of earthquake science that a center would coordinate, potential center capabilities and infrastructure, and possible center organizational structures. In addition, input that describes a vision for a future earthquake center or centers regarding how the center(s) would advance the frontiers of earthquake science is encouraged. Contributions are welcome on how to enable new modes for community engagement and/or the establishment of partnerships with critical stakeholders in federal, state, and local governments, as well as with the public. NSF is particularly interested in community feedback on opportunities and needs for broadening participation in earthquake science and educating the next generation of scientists, and the role a center can play in this effort.

**The Deadline for submission of written comments to NSF is April 1, 2020.** NSF will consider comments received by this date when developing the final solicitation for this anticipated competition. Comments should be submitted as a PDF document not to exceed 3 pages in length, as an attachment to an email to the Primary Contacts listed below. NSF will not respond directly to any specific written submission. NSF will share information submitted in response to this Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) with other federal agencies and the GEO Advisory Committee. All inquiries regarding this DCL and the anticipated competition should be directed in email to the Primary Contacts listed below.

## PRIMARY CONTACTS

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Sincerely,

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Directorate for Geosciences