



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
2415 EISENHOWER AVENUE
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

NSF 22-122

Dear Colleague Letter: Planning Proposals to Catalyze Innovative and Inclusive Wildland Fire Science through Diverse Collaborations

September 19, 2022

Dear Colleague:

Wildland fire is becoming an increasingly prevalent and pressing phenomenon nationally and globally. In May 2021, the National Science Foundation (NSF) supported a five-day [Wildfire and the Biosphere Innovation Lab](#) to generate creative strategies and new research collaborations aimed at improving understanding of different types and impacts of wildland fires over time — from the local to the global scale. Five emergent themes were identified during the Innovation Lab as critical needs for advancing wildland fire knowledge: (1) to assess the mechanisms underlying a variety of Earth's system feedbacks involving fire, (2) to study fire across temporal and spatial scales, (3) to improve representation of fire in modeling and forecasting, (4) to incorporate social dimensions into wildland fire science research, and (5) to develop innovative and convergent education to generate the researchers and practitioners of the future. Participants articulated the need to accelerate the effectiveness of translational research by supporting both short- and long-term applications and solutions. The Innovation Lab also emphasized the inclusion of diverse perspectives and knowledge systems around wildland fire as essential to advancing our ability to understand, manage, and live with fire.

With this Dear Colleague Letter (DCL), NSF is calling for planning proposals focused on catalyzing innovative and inclusive wildland fire science through collaboration among diverse stakeholders and rights holders. A planning proposal is a type of proposal used to support initial conceptualization, planning and collaboration activities that aim to formulate new and sound plans for large-scale projects in current and emerging research areas for future submission to an NSF program.

In the context of this DCL, planning proposals should present innovative ideas and visions for advancing wildland fire research *via* diverse knowledge systems, including strategies for

building human capital and organizational capacity in wildland fire knowledge and management. Identification of activities to catalyze strong collaborations that have high potential for significant societal impacts are encouraged. It would also be advantageous for proposals to articulate action plans for developing a deeper understanding of wildland fires as integrated social-cultural-ecological-technological systems and that improve education across multiple levels, in informal settings and/or formal settings, spanning pre-college through postsecondary levels. Proposals that describe translation of foundational knowledge about wildland fire into helpful solutions are also encouraged.

Proposals are encouraged to address themes of relevance to a wide variety of communities interacting with wildland fire. The proposal should describe activities that bring together an appropriate group of researchers, engineers, educators, and practitioners from academia, industry, government (e.g., Tribal, federal, state, local), and/or nonprofit organizations. Planning proposals must draw participants from diverse sectors. Participants may include Tribal Nation and Tribal College and University (TCU) representatives, local community members, Indigenous researchers, and/or cultural knowledge holders. Planning proposals may propose to use diverse work formats, including alternative and/or culturally responsive formats to foster diverse engagement. Examples include in-person or virtual meetings, gatherings, multi-day conferences, workshops, or other forms of engagement. All gatherings supported by a planning proposal must have a policy or code-of-conduct that addresses sexual harassment, other forms of harassment, and sexual assault, and that includes clear and accessible means of reporting violations of the policy or code-of-conduct.

Proposals should identify an Organizing Committee composed of members drawn from multiple disciplines and stakeholder and rights holder groups. The Organizing Committee must be engaged in formulating, conducting, and reporting on the planning proposal. Adequate resources should be provided to those people involved in catalyzing, contributing to, and supporting the proposed scope of the proposal. Planning proposals may touch on themes of an international nature if potential benefits for the U.S. are made clear.

The Project Description of a given planning proposal must articulate the desired outcomes of the planning proposal in terms of its vision for **creative strategies and new collaborations aimed at bringing together diverse perspectives for building fire science research capacity and improving understanding of the use, causes and consequences of future wildland fires**. In addition to listing the confirmed Organizing Committee, the proposal must articulate how attendees for activities will be selected, including strategies for recruiting a diverse set of participants. Proposers are advised to consider the timing of proposed activities to accommodate potentially conflicting events, seasonal subsistence activities, and the schedule of the academic year. Proposals should describe specific approaches for activities in the planning proposal that will lead to the formulation of an action plan.

Planning proposals submitted in response to this DCL must follow the instructions for the

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planning proposal type specified in Chapter II.E.1 of the *NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG)*. Planning proposals must be submitted via [Research.gov](https://www.research.gov). Budget requests must not exceed \$100,000 per year (including indirect costs) for a total of \$200,000, with a duration of up to 24 months. The title of proposals submitted should begin with "FIRE-PLAN:" after the prepended text "Planning". An individual may appear on a maximum of two planning proposals in response to this DCL in a senior role (PI, co-PI, or Senior Personnel). Planning proposals can be submitted at any time but should be submitted no later than May 31, 2023 for consideration during Fiscal Year 2023.

Prior to submission of a proposal, prospective investigators must submit a two-page description of the proposal concept to ascertain its suitability in responding to this DCL wildlandfire@nsf.gov. This inquiry should also indicate any programs to which a normal core proposal could be submitted in any directorate at the NSF, if possible. If approved, PIs will receive an email indicating the suitability of the concept and, if applicable, the designated program for proposal submission. As per the PAPPG, this email confirming approval to submit a planning proposal must be uploaded as a supplementary document as part of the proposal submission. Review of planning proposals will be conducted consistent with the PAPPG guidelines.

NSF's Tribal Colleges and Universities Program (TCUP) is a participating partner in this DCL, but submissions to TCUP in response to this DCL are limited to Tribal Colleges and Universities, Alaska Native-serving institutions, and Native Hawaiian-serving institutions¹.

Questions on planning proposal preparation or this DCL may be sent to wildlandfire@nsf.gov.

Sincerely,

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¹ Executive Order 13021 defines Tribal Colleges and Universities ("tribal colleges") as those institutions cited in section 532 of the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 301 note), and other institutions that qualify for funding under the Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act of 1978, (25 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.), as well as Navajo Community College as authorized in the Navajo Community College Assistance Act of 1978, Public Law 95-471, Title II (25 U.S.C. 640a note). The term "Alaska Native-serving institution" means an institution of higher education that is an eligible institution under section 1058(b) of the Higher Education Act; and that, at the time of submission, has an undergraduate enrollment that is at least 20 percent Alaska Native students. The term "Native Hawaiian-serving institution" means an institution of higher education that is an eligible institution under section 1058(b) of the Higher Education Act; has a Carnegie classification of baccalaureate or associates college; and has, at the time of submission, an undergraduate enrollment that is at least 10 percent Native Hawaiian students. Eligibility may be verified by consulting the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) or other certified federal government data sources.