



U.S. NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
2415 EISENHOWER AVENUE  
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

NSF 24-127

## Dear Colleague Letter: Request for Information on the CHIPS and Science Act Section 10343. Research Ethics

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September 9, 2024

Dear Colleagues:

The U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) is an independent federal agency that supports research at the frontiers of current knowledge, across all fields of science, engineering and education in all 50 states and U.S. territories. NSF is issuing this Request for Information (RFI) to seek input to inform the development of the agency's response to **Section 10343. Research Ethics** in the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022 ([Public Law 117-167](#)). NSF welcomes feedback from interested parties. This includes representatives from non-profit organizations, philanthropies, industry, local, state, and tribal government offices/agencies, K-12 schools and districts, institutions of higher education, trade, and/or vocational schools.

While the NSF has funding opportunities in the area of ethical and societal risks such as [Ethical and Responsible Research \(ER2\)](#) and [Responsible Design, Development, and Deployment of Technologies \(ReDDDoT\)](#), this Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) does not itself invite research proposals nor is it a funding opportunity. However, the submission of collective input to this RFI spanning different perspectives from multiple constituent communities may be used to inform, refine, and catalyze future NSF investments, policies, and programs.

### BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE

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Section 10343 ("Research Ethics") of the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022 directs NSF to incorporate ethical, social, safety, and security considerations into the merit review process that is used to evaluate research projects or other activities for funding. Section 10343 notes that "a number of emerging areas of research have potential ethical, social, safety, and security implications that might be apparent as early as the basic research stage." In addition, Section 10343 states that "the incorporation of ethical, social, safety, and security considerations into the research design and review process for Federal awards may help mitigate potential harms before they happen." Moreover, Section 10343 states that "The

Foundation should continue to work with stakeholders to promote best practices for governance of research in emerging technologies at every stage of research."

***Through this Dear Colleague Letter (DCL), NSF seeks input on ways to incorporate ethical, social, safety, and security considerations into the agency's merit review process and to develop strategies for mitigating the potential harms of scientific research and amplifying societal benefits from such research.***

The Federal Register notice of this Request for Information is available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/08/27/2024-19245/request-for-information-on-the-chips-and-science-act-section-10343-research-ethics>.

## HOW TO RESPOND TO THIS RFI

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To respond to this Request for Information, please use the official submission form available at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ResearchEthicsRFI>.

Respondents only need to provide feedback on one or more questions of interest or relevance to them. Each question is voluntary and optional. The response to each question has a 4,000 character limit, including spaces.

## ETHICAL, SOCIAL, SAFETY, AND SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS

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**Question 1:** Describe ethical, social, safety, and/or security risks from current or emerging research activities that you believe might be of concern to the community, profession, or organization with which you are connected.

**Question 2:** Which products, technologies, and/or other outcomes from research do you think could cause significant harm to the public in the foreseeable future?

**Question 3:** Describe one or more approaches for identifying ethical, social, safety, and/or security risks from research activities and balancing such risks against potential societal benefits.

**Question 4:** Describe one or more strategies for encouraging research teams to incorporate ethical, social, safety, and/or security considerations into the design of their research approach. Also, how might the strategy vary depending on research type (for example, basic vs. applied) or setting (for example, academia or industry)?

## NSF'S APPROACH TO ETHICAL, SOCIAL, SAFETY, AND SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS

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**Question 5:** How might NSF work with stakeholders to promote best practices for governance of research in emerging technologies at every stage of research?

**Question 6:** How could ethical, social, safety, and/or security considerations be incorporated into the instructions for proposers and into NSF's merit review process? Also, what challenges could arise if the merit review process is modified to include such considerations?

**Question 7:** What other measures could NSF consider as it seeks to identify and mitigate ethical, social, safety, and/or security risks from research projects or other activities that the agency supports?

## TIMELINE

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Responses to this DCL must be received on or **before 11:59 P.M. Eastern time on Friday, November 15, 2024.**

## WHAT WILL NSF DO WITH THIS INFORMATION?

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NSF, at its discretion, will use the information submitted in response to this RFI to help inform future program directions, new initiatives, and potential funding opportunities. The information provided will be analyzed, may appear in reports, and may be shared publicly on agency websites. Respondents are advised that the government is under no obligation to acknowledge receipt of the information or provide feedback to respondents with respect to any information submitted. *No proprietary, classified, confidential, or sensitive information should be included in your response submission.* The government reserves the right to use any non-proprietary technical information in any resultant solicitation(s), policies, or procedures.

For questions concerning this RFI and submission of input, please contact:  
[CHIPSEthicsRFI@nsf.gov](mailto:CHIPSEthicsRFI@nsf.gov)

Sincerely,

Susan Marqusee, Assistant Director  
Directorate for Biological Sciences (BIO)

Gregory Hager, Acting Assistant Director  
Directorate for Computer and Information Science and Engineering (CISE)

Susan Margulies, Assistant Director  
Directorate for Engineering (ENG)

James L. Moore III, Assistant Director  
Directorate for STEM Education (EDU)

Alexandra R. Isern, Assistant Director  
Directorate for Geosciences (GEO)

C. Denise Caldwell, Acting Assistant Director  
Directorate for Mathematical and Physical Sciences (MPS)

Kendra Sharp, Office Head  
Office of International Science and Engineering (OISE)

Alicia Knoedler, Office Head  
Office of Integrated Activities (OIA)

Kaye Husbands Fealing, Assistant Director  
Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE)

Erwin Gianchandani, Assistant Director  
Directorate for Technology, Innovation and Partnerships (TIP)