

National Aeronautics and
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Inclusion Plans in NASA's Science Mission Directorate for ROSES-2024

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Inclusion is a core NASA value and SMD is committed to fostering a more inclusive community.

NASA defines **inclusion** as “the full participation, belonging, and contribution of organizations and individuals.”

Inclusion Plans are designed to raise awareness of barriers to creating and sustaining positive, inclusive working environments and to get proposers actively thinking about ways to foster inclusive practices for their research teams.

Inclusion Plans are to be tailored to inclusion of all members of the proposal team and NOT to the broader STEM community.

Inclusion Plans are NOT diversity plans. You do not need to (nor should you) attempt to classify any of your team members along various axes of diversity. Inclusive practices are relevant for all, regardless of team members' diversity dimension(s).

(Brief) History of the Inclusion Plan Pilot Program

- The main goal of the original Inclusion Plan Pilot Program was to determine if SMD could assess whether R&A proposals would further NASA's inclusion goals and whether such assessments could be factored into future selection decisions.
- SMD is slowly rolling out this pilot:
 - 12 ROSES-2022 program elements required Inclusion Plans.
 - 100 solicited programs in ROSES-2022
 - 9 ROSES-2023 program elements required Inclusion Plans.
 - 93 solicited programs in ROSES-2023
 - 14 ROSES-2024 program elements plan to have required Inclusion Plans.
 - 112 total possible programs solicited in ROSES-2024
 - 66 programs with due dates or are NoDD (no due date) programs
 - 46 TBD programs

Inclusion Plan requirements are standardized in ROSES-2024

- If the program element to which you are applying requires Inclusion Plans, this will be stated explicitly in the program element text, along with any deviations from the standardized text.
- Inclusion Plan Standardized text is located in the ROSES-2024 Summary of Solicitation (SoS), Section IV. *Proposal and Submission Information*, (e) *Other Submission Requirements*, (ii) *Inclusion Plan Pilot Study*
- See individual program elements for the required location in the proposal and page limits for Inclusion Plans.
- For programs that use dual anonymous peer review, the inclusion plans are generally to be anonymized, but please refer to the specific instructions for the program element.

Requirements: The Inclusion Plan shall...

- clearly state the goals for creating and sustaining a positive and inclusive working environment for the investigation team and describe activities to achieve such an environment;
- identify barriers to creating a positive and inclusive working environment that are specific to the team carrying out the proposed investigation;
- address ways in which the investigation team will work to attenuate or reduce these barriers;
- describe roles, responsibilities, and work efforts for Inclusion Plan activities for team members with specific tasks in said activities;
- include a timeline for completing or carrying out proposed activities;
- and contain a plan for evaluating progress towards achieving the proposed Inclusion Plan activities or goals.

Requirements

- Inclusion Plans shall focus on inclusion, not diversity, accessibility, or equity.
- Proposers shall tailor their Inclusion Plans specifically to the proposal team rather than to generic issues in the broader STEM community surrounding inclusion.
- If volunteers/citizen scientists are among the proposed investigators, the inclusion plan should apply to those team members as well.
- Inclusion plans should be distinct from, and not solely focus on, public engagement efforts.

Optional Items

- Proposers are encouraged to leverage institutional resources when available.
 - The plan should not include a restatement of policies of the host institution; rather, it shall provide a clear discussion of how these policies connect to the proposed investigation and proposal team.
 - Proposers are not required to use institutional resources
- Unless prohibited by the program element, teams may request funding for the hiring of IDEA experts and/or those familiar with inclusion best practices to join the team, advise on, or oversee the proposed Inclusion Plan efforts.
 - Any funding requested for Inclusion Plan-related activities shall be explicitly identified and justified in the Inclusion Plan section and clearly identified in the proposal budget.

Expectations

- It is the proposal team's responsibility to carry out the proposed activities rather than fully outsource them.
- All team members are expected to contribute to fostering an inclusive and positive work environment, regardless of their involvement with specific Inclusion Plan activities.
- The Inclusion Plan and any associated activities are expected to reflect the size of proposal team, scale, and complexity of the proposed research project, and the available budget.
 - In other words, we expect an IP for a three-person team to look different than one for a fifteen-person team.

Review of Inclusion Plans will be standardized in ROSES-2024

The assessment of the Inclusion Plan will not be part of the adjectival rating for the proposal and will not inform the selection of proposals.

- The assessment of the Inclusion Plan will be led by individuals with practical and/or research expertise in IDEA topics and may include scientists from the "regular" review panel.
- Feedback will be provided to proposers in a separate Inclusion Plan evaluation form.
- An SMD Interim Policy Document on reviewing Inclusion Plans in ROSES is in review and will be available publicly when complete.

Evaluation factors

- a) The extent to which the Inclusion Plan provided appropriate processes and goals for both creating and sustaining a positive and inclusive working environment for the investigation team;
- b) The extent to which the Inclusion Plan demonstrated awareness of systemic barriers to creating inclusive working environments that are or may be specific to the proposal team;
- c) The extent to which the Inclusion Plan contained appropriate activities for equipping team members to build and maintain inclusive working environments;
- d) The extent to which the roles and responsibilities for those participating in the proposed activities were well described and justified;
- e) The reasonableness of the proposed timeline for the proposed Inclusion Plan activities;
- f) The extent to which the Inclusion Plan provided reasonable and appropriate assessment mechanisms for measuring progress in and success of the proposed activities;
- g) The reasonableness of the resources requested to execute the proposed activities and the quality and appropriateness of the justification for these resources.

Resources

In response to community feedback, SMD has developed a website with resources to support writing and implementations of Inclusion Plans. These resources are intended to provide direction to proposers for whom inclusion activities are new and will also be useful for those that would like to learn more about how to write Inclusion Plans that address the SMD-wide requirements.

- NASA's IDEA Definitions
- Peer-reviewed articles on IDEA-related topics
- Recordings from the first Inclusion Plan Best Practices Workshop, held in November 2022
- SMD Interim Policy Document on review of Inclusion Plans (when complete)
- Evaluation rubric (when complete)
- Materials from the February 20 and prior community townhalls



<https://science.nasa.gov/researchers/inclusion>

Ideas or requests for resources can be sent to amanda.l.nahm@nasa.gov.

