

NASA Science Mission Directorate

Period of Performance: January 15, 2016– September 30, 2020

This Task Order is pursuant to contract NNH15C048B between National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Universities Space Research Association (USRA).

The contractor shall provide administration, recruitment, and evaluation services for the NASA Postdoctoral Program (NPP), as defined in the Statement of Work (SOW), to the NASA Science Mission Directorate program.

For purposes of recruitment and evaluation, the contractor shall assume the following schedule for each application period. The application deadlines are defined in Section C, paragraph 2, of the SOW.

After receipt of applications, the Centers will perform the initial screening for research topics that match the Centers' interests and facilities. After the peer review and initial ranking of the applications, the Centers will make final selection decisions (see Section C, paragraphs 6-10 of the SOW). To support the Centers and NASA Headquarters in the overall process, the following activities are required by the Contractor:

1. Within 60 calendar days before the applications due date: Working with the Mission Directorates and the Centers, the Contractor shall post and update research opportunities. The Contractor shall make the lists of research opportunities and Advisors available at an NPP-dedicated website and update it within one business day, when needed. The Contractor shall present on the website the NASA provided standards for Advisors, so potential candidates understand the competencies of the Advisors with whom they would work (see Section C, paragraph 1 of the SOW).
2. Within 90 calendar days before the applications due date: Announce the solicitation for research and management opportunities from the Centers and Mission Directorates; prepare and distribute informational material through the websites and various other media; pursue recruitment activities at selected major science meetings, such as the American Geophysical Union (AGU), American Astronomical Society (AAS), etc., to announce the NPP to the widest possible community; initiate special efforts to attract women and underrepresented minorities (see Section C, paragraphs 3 and 4 of the SOW).
3. Respond to program inquiries concerning the NPP within two business days of receipt of the inquiry (see Section C, paragraph 5 of the SOW).
4. Within 10 calendar days of receipt of applications: Receive and process applications and supporting documents, refer the applications to the Center Advisors for initial review of applicant's applications, and work with Advisors to ensure availability of funding and the Center's current interest in supporting the proposed research. Process recommendations from Advisors in a timely manner to meet the schedule of the Peer Review Panel (see Section C, paragraph 9 of the SOW).
5. Within 30 calendar days from the due date of applications: Assemble Peer Review Panels of national and international prominence in NASA-related research and development in Earth and space science, human space exploration, space operations, space technologies, aerospace, and aeronautics. The Contractor shall identify and recruit a body of talent and experience for membership on the NPP Peer Review Panel selected from the above communities on the basis of their prominence in the field (see Section C, paragraph 7 of the SOW).

6. Notify the Centers, within five business days of receipt of all the reviews, of the results of the peer review, including the ranking of the applicants (see Section C, paragraph 10 of the SOW).
7. Prepare letters of selection and nonselection, and notify the applicants within 7 calendar days of receipt of selection decisions from the Centers and NASA Headquarters (see Section C, paragraph 10 of the SOW).
8. Provide a statistical analysis of the application and evaluation process, such as U.S. and non-U.S. applicants, applications from Fellows and Senior Fellows, gender of applicants, and applicants from underrepresented populations in a written report to NASA Headquarters within 15 calendar days after the end of each application period.

Assumptions:

. The current set of fellows being supported by the contract will continue as normal without any break. Future announcements are expected to yield ~125 selections per year for new Fellows who are expected to have an initial tenure of one year, but it should be assumed that they will stay for two years on average. All applications shall be submitted electronically and shall include the NPP Candidate application form; a research proposal of no more than 15 pages including figures, references, and citations (double-spaced [excluding captions], 12-point font); and any other requested material, e.g., reference letters. NPP Candidates may be permitted to edit application documents until the application deadline.

Each application shall be assigned to no less than three Subject Matter Experts Reviewers with the science or technical background matching the proposed research topic. The Reviewers return their evaluations in the format stated by the Contractor. The Contractor, upon receipt of the evaluations, decides whether additional evaluations are needed.

Reviewer identities are kept confidential. Once a year the list of Subject Matter Experts Reviewers utilized shall be provided to the COR.

NASA Centers or the participating NASA-affiliated institutions will do the initial vetting of the applications and make the final selection decisions.

Key Deliverables:

1. Applications to NASA Centers, the participating NASA-affiliated institutions, or NASA Headquarters
2. Application evaluation forms and instructions for Reviewers
3. Evaluations from Subject Matter Experts Reviewers
4. List of rank-ordered application
5. Statistics of submissions and selections
6. Offer Letters (Selection and Nonselection)
7. Announcement of selections
8. Monthly reporting
9. Annual reporting

For purposes of supporting the day-to-day administration of the program, the contractor shall provide the services defined in Section D of the SOW.