

NASA Postdoctoral Program

Policies and Procedures

Introduction

The NASA Postdoctoral Program (NPP) offers unique research opportunities to highly talented national and international individuals to engage in ongoing NASA research projects at a NASA Center, NASA Headquarters, or a NASA-affiliated research institute. These one- to three-year Fellowship appointments are competitive and designed to advance NASA's missions in space sciences, Earth sciences, astrobiology aeronautics, space technology, human exploration, and space operations.

As a postdoctoral or senior scientist, the Fellow will be conducting research of national importance and collaborating with distinguished scholars from the United States and the international community. The research of NPP Fellows has made significant contributions and advancements in the scientific efforts of NASA and in the body of scientific knowledge as a whole.

This document provides information on the conditions of the Fellowship award, the responsibilities of a NPP Fellow, and the procedures and practices to be followed during the NPP appointment. NASA and Universities Space Research Association (USRA), the administrator of the program, are pleased to support this valuable Fellowship program.

Program Overview

The NPP consists of two components: the NASA Postdoctoral Research Program and the NASA Postdoctoral Management Program. The NASA Postdoctoral Management Program is an adjunct to the NASA Postdoctoral Research Program and is designed to provide valuable research management experience for interested NASA Postdoctoral Research Program Fellows. Generally, a Fellow must have at least one year of experience as a NASA Postdoctoral Research Program Fellow before he/she can apply to the NASA Postdoctoral Management Program.

NPP appointments are available as Postdoctoral Fellows or Senior Fellows.

- Postdoctoral Fellowships are available for those applicants who have held a doctoral degree for less than five years at the time of application.
- Senior Fellowships are available for those applicants who have held a doctoral degree for five or more years at the time of application.

The NPP is a resident program; therefore, NPP Fellows are located at NASA Centers, at NASA Headquarters, or at NASA-affiliated research institutes during their appointment.

USRA Staff for the NPP

NPP Director

USRA operation of the NASA Postdoctoral Program is led by Dr. Joan Schmelz. Dr. Schmelz is the current Associate Director for Science and Public Outreach for the Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA) at NASA Ames and the former deputy director of the Arecibo Observatory in Puerto Rico. She served as the program officer at NSF for the Astronomy and Astrophysics Postdoctoral Fellows program. She was a professor at University of Memphis and a former (then NRC) NASA postdoc at Goddard. She is a current Vice President of the American Astronomical Society and a former chair of the Committee on the Status of Women in Astronomy. She was honored in 2015 as one of Nature's top ten people who made a difference in science for her work fighting sexual harassment.

USRA NPP Team

The NPP Team is available to assist you. For answers to your questions, please contact the NPP Team via the email addresses listed below.

NPP Inquiry

Stipend Payment

Health Insurance

Visa/Immigration

Relocation and Programmatic Travel

General Questions

Contact

npppayments@usra.edu

npphr@usra.edu

npphr@usra.edu

npptravel@usra.edu

npphelp@usra.edu

Notification and Terms of Appointment

Notification of an Award

An applicant who has been selected by NASA for an NPP award will receive a formal offer from USRA. The offer consists of an Offer Letter, Terms of Appointment, and supporting materials.

The USRA Offer Letter and Terms of Appointment state the conditions of the Fellowship award and provide information on appointment start and end dates; stipend; professional and programmatic travel support; relocation assistance, if applicable; conditions, obligations, and responsibilities of the appointment; appointment facility; health insurance; taxability of stipends and other payments.

The appointment start date is the first day the Fellow will be at the appointed facility to begin the research or management program, and the completion date is the last day the Fellow will be at that facility. The time frame of the appointment is approved by the NPP Advisor, but can be amended, if necessary, with approval by the Advisor and the NASA Postdoctoral Program Center Representative at

the appointed facility. The Fellow's completion date may be amended for a variety of reasons, including early departure, appointment renewals, etc.

The Fellow's NPP Advisor and NPP Center Representative will verify the start date by providing USRA with a *Certification of Start Date* form on the first day the Fellow reports to the NASA (or affiliated) facility to begin the appointment. USRA must have proof of the doctorate research degree and all other required USRA forms and/or requested documents no later than the official start date of the appointment, before the stipend can begin.

Role of the NASA Advisor

The USRA Offer Letter identifies the NPP Advisor for the Fellow's appointment. Research Advisors are scientists and engineers at NASA Centers or NASA-affiliated research centers. Management Advisors are managers in a NASA Mission Directorate located at NASA Headquarters.

During the application process, the Fellow communicates with a NASA Advisor to develop the chosen research or management topic. During the fellowship, the Advisor serves as a mentor and professional colleague, but does not act as a supervisor. The Advisor guides the Fellow in all aspects of their research or management activities, helps the Fellow to acquire office space and equipment, and provides information on security, safety, expected attendance schedules, and other requirements of the assigned facility.

For Senior Fellows, the NPP Advisor functions in a collegial relationship, and assists with securing office space, lab space, equipment, and/or technical and clerical support.

NPP Center Representative

The NPP Center Representative is responsible for coordinating the NASA Postdoctoral Program for their facility. The Center Representative assists Fellows with administrative aspects of the appointment, including the authorization/approval process related to all aspects of the appointment, including required clearances, orientations and safety briefings, access to the facilities, travel approval, appointment renewals, Center termination procedures, etc.

Maintaining Communications Before and During the Appointment

Relocation to the Appointed Center

Before the Fellow makes any arrangements to relocate, he/she should inform USRA NPP staff as soon as possible of the relocation travel plans. Relocation travel arrangements must be approved by USRA and adhere to Federal Travel Regulations and USRA Travel Guidelines. USRA staff will provide information, approvals, and assistance with relocation travel arrangements.

First Day at the Center

On the day that the Fellow arrives at the facility to begin the appointment, he/she must report to the NPP Center Representative. The NPP Center Representative will assist the Fellow with security and badging procedures, orientations, safety briefings, logistical arrangements, and other aspects of the appointment. The Fellow must also submit a "Certification of Start Date" form, which must be also certified by the Fellow's Advisor and NPP Center Representative to verify that the Fellow has begun their appointment at their center or institute.

Change in Address/Contact Information

The Fellow must notify USRA, the NPP Center Representative, and the NPP Advisor if there is a change in his/her current address, permanent address, phone number, or E-mail address.

Commitment to NPP Appointment Activities

During the NPP Fellowship appointment, NASA requires the Fellow to commit to resident participation at an approved NASA site for the duration of the appointment and avoid obligations that will interrupt the research during the appointment. **NPP Fellows are not allowed to supplement their stipends through simultaneous employment, grants, or other sources of income that compete with the Fellowship research or management position.**

A Fellow may take a prolonged break from NPP research activities for up to 12 weeks during the appointment period for a serious health condition, birth or adoption of a child, parental care, or other special circumstances. Prior to the absence or as soon as possible thereafter, the Fellow should notify the NPP Advisor, NPP Center Representative, and USRA of the absence. The Fellow and NPP Advisor must assess the impact on the NPP research activities and milestones, if any.

Publications, Copyrights, and Patents

Guidelines and procedures for publications, copyrights, and patents should be discussed with the NPP Advisor and NPP Center Representative at the start of the appointment.

Publications

Fellows are strongly encouraged to publish research findings in the peer-reviewed open literature. Fellows are required to adhere to the host institution's requirements for prior review and approval of all material, whether written or prepared for oral presentation. All publications must include appropriate acknowledgment of the NASA Postdoctoral Program appointment, the host institution, and USRA. For more information, please see the *Reports and Publications Acknowledgement* section of this document.

Publication charges are not a part of the NPP award budget. Publication costs are usually borne by the NPP Advisor or host institution. When preparing for publications, Fellows are encouraged to discuss

the host institution's publication policy with the NPP Advisor and the NPP Center Representative in advance.

Copyrights

USRA does not assert any rights to copyrights made during the appointment. If a Fellow asserts copyright in the written works that arise from his/her research activities, the Federal Government and others acting on the Government's behalf will obtain a paid-up license to reproduce the copyrighted work, distribute copies, prepare derivative works, perform publicly the copyrighted work, or display publicly the copyrighted work. Joint works will be owned by the Fellow and the Federal Government. In the case of copyright agreements for journal publications, the Fellow must conform to the host institution's procedures for review and approval.

Patents

USRA does not assert any rights to inventions made during the appointment. The Fellow is required, however, to report all inventions made as a result of the appointment promptly to the director or patent counsel of his/her host institution and also to USRA. In cases where an invention is made jointly with an employee of the host institution, the Fellow may be asked to assign ownership rights to the host institution. In those cases, in consideration for his/her assignment of rights, the Fellow may be offered a share of any royalties that may result from the use or licensing of the invention.

For each invention to which a Fellow retains title, the federal government will obtain, at a minimum, a non-exclusive, non-transferable, irrevocable, paid-up worldwide license to practice, or to have practiced for or on behalf of the United States.

This information will be superseded by any requirements of the individual host institutions, and also is subject to applicable federal laws. The Fellow should discuss the host institution's patent policies and procedures with the NPP Advisor and NPP Center Representative before beginning the research.

Non-Employment Status

An NPP Fellow is not an employee of NASA, USRA, the host facility, or any other office or agency. Instead, a Fellow is affiliated with USRA for the administration of the appointment through the USRA Offer Letter and Terms of Appointment, and has a guest appointment at the NASA-designated facility.

When accepting the Terms of Appointment, a Fellow agrees that the receipt of stipend payments from USRA shall not be construed as an employment relationship and that no employment-related benefits (such as paid vacations, sick pay, maternity leave, or unemployment compensation) are appropriate or applicable to the appointment.

As a guest at a NASA facility, a Fellow is expected to devote full time and effort in pursuing the activities of the research or management program, publishing in the open scientific literature,

presenting at appropriate scientific conferences and meetings, and participating in technical activities at the NASA facility.

Conditions of Award

Requirements Prior to Appointment Start

Before the Fellow may begin the NPP appointment, he/she must have completed the requirements for a Ph.D. or doctorate research degree. If the Fellow has fully completed the degree requirements, but has not received the actual degree, the Fellow's graduate dean, registrar, or recorder must provide a signed statement directly to USRA verifying that all requirements for the doctorate degree have been met before the Fellow may begin the appointment.

If the Fellow is not a United States Citizen, he/she must provide evidence to USRA of an acceptable J-1 visa status as a Research Scholar, Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) status, or Employment Authorization Document (EAD) with pending LPR status, before beginning the appointment. Non-U.S. Citizens must have a visa status that allows them to participate in the program for at least two years.

Some NPP facilities may require a security or visitor clearance before the Fellow can start the appointment (see *Access to NASA Facilities* below). The Fellow will be notified in advance by the NPP Center Representative if a clearance is required and will be provided instructions for meeting this requirement.

The Fellow may not begin the NPP appointment until all education and/or prior employment obligations have been met. USRA will not issue an advance stipend check or start stipend payments until all required forms have been returned and prior obligations have been met.

Appointment Start Date

The Fellow's appointment start date should normally be within six (6) months of the date of the USRA Offer Letter. The Fellow's official USRA Offer Letter will include the approximate start date that he/she has provided for the appointment. If the Fellow has special circumstances, including visa requirements, which require the start date to be changed, the Fellow must notify the NPP Advisor, NPP Center Representative, and USRA immediately. Any change to the Fellow's start date must be approved by the NPP Advisor and the NPP Center Representative, and USRA must be notified of the change.

Change of Advisor

If the Advisor associated with the Fellow's research opportunity must be changed because of illness, loss of project funding, retirement, change in research area, etc., the NPP Center Representative must notify USRA and provide the name of the new Advisor. A Fellow's request to change research Advisor must be justified and discussed with the NPP Center Representative. The new Advisor must be in the

same research area. The NPP Center Representative will have the final approval of any change to the Advisor, and must notify USRA of any change.

Change in Research or Research Management Program

If the Fellow believes that they need to change their approved research or management program, the Fellow must provide justification and receive written approval from the NPP Advisor and the NPP Center Representative. The NPP Center Representative must immediately provide the written approval and a written description of the revised program to USRA.

Non-Compliance with Terms of Appointment

If, for any reason, the Fellow becomes unable or refuses to comply with the terms or objectives of this appointment, USRA and/or NASA will withdraw or terminate the appointment upon such basis, as it deems proper.

Inaccurate or Missing Application Information

USRA and/or NASA reserves the right to withdraw or terminate an appointment that was offered as a result of misinformation given by the candidate or any reference, or as a result of any person withholding information that could have prevented the appointment.

Access to NASA Facilities

The Fellow must meet all requirements regarding the policies of the assigned facilities during the appointment. A Fellow shall, at all times, observe and conform to all applicable rules, regulations, and requirements of the facility to which he/she is assigned, including, but not limited to, those with respect to environment, safety, and health (ES&H) and ES&H training requirements; security; operating procedures; drug-free workplace requirements; and appropriate conduct. Failure of the Fellow to follow these requirements shall result in termination of the appointment.

In some cases, access to restricted areas or restricted data may be necessary. In these cases, neither the appointment nor its acceptance by the Fellow shall become effective until NASA and the facility have granted the appropriate access authorization (security clearance) to the Fellow in accordance with the provisions of existing laws and regulations.

Obligations of the Appointment

Since Fellows are not employees, they do not accumulate annual leave or sick leave. The Fellow's NPP research activities and milestones should be planned to allow for brief or prolonged absence(s) from the appointment.

Brief Absence from the Appointment

A Fellow may be excused from NPP research activities for brief periods due to illness, personal emergencies, or other unforeseen circumstances. The Fellow should communicate with the NPP Advisor and NPP Center Representative during these absences to discuss the impact, if any, on the NPP research activities and milestones. The monthly stipend will not be impacted and the Fellow's appointment will not be extended by the period of absence.

A Fellow may also take brief breaks from NPP research activities for vacation. The Fellow's NPP research activities and milestones should be planned to allow for such breaks. The fellow should communicate these plans with the NPP Advisor and NPP Center Representative. The monthly stipend will not be impacted and the Fellow's appointment will not be extended by the period of absence.

Prolonged Absence from the Appointment

A Fellow may take a prolonged break from NPP research activities for up to 12 weeks during the appointment period for a serious health condition, birth or adoption of a child, parental care, or other special circumstances. Prior to the absence or as soon as possible thereafter, the Fellow should notify the NPP Advisor, NPP Center Representative, and USRA of the absence. The Fellow and NPP Advisor must assess the impact on the NPP research activities and milestones, if any.

Option A: The Fellow may continue the monthly stipend during this prolonged absence. In this case, the Fellow's appointment will not be extended by the period of absence.

Option B: The Fellow may choose to suspend their stipend during this prolonged absence. In such cases, the appointment period will be extended by the period of absence. NASA will continue to pay its share of the health insurance, if the Fellow is already enrolled in the insurance through USRA. The Fellow, however, must continue to pay their out-of-pocket portion of the premium during the unpaid absence. Premium payments may be deducted from stipend payments.

Jury Duty

A Fellow who is called for jury duty during the appointment will continue to receive a stipend during the period of absence. Thus, a Fellow may receive from the courts only reasonable incidental expenses, such as those covering transportation and meals.

Responsibility for Property and Equipment

A Fellow has access to special facilities and property and, in most cases, is issued instruments or equipment by the host facility in connection with the appointment. A Fellow has the responsibility to protect, properly care for, and safeguard such property, facilities, instruments, or equipment. If any property, facilities, instruments, or equipment are damaged, destroyed, stolen, or lost as a result of the negligent actions or inactions of the Fellow, the Fellow is liable for the damage or loss, up to the fair

market value of the property or equipment. If necessary, the monetary amount for the damage or loss may be deducted from stipend payments.

Financial Support

The NPP Fellowship appointment provides a stipend (paid monthly); limited reimbursement for relocation expenses, if applicable; limited reimbursement for professional conferences, meetings, and programmatic travel (see Section 10, *Travel During Appointment*); and partial payment for health insurance, if the Fellow selects the USRA insurance option (see Section 11, *Health and Accident Insurance*).

Stipend

The Fellow's stipend amount is indicated in the USRA Offer Letter. The stipend amount for Postdoctoral Fellows is determined by NASA and is based on the location of the appointment. Stipends for Postdoctoral Fellows are typically increased by \$1500 if the appointment is renewed. The stipend amount for a Senior Fellow is based on academic achievement, defined by academic rank; experience, defined by the number of years past PhD (5 or more); and is adjusted for location, based on the OPM locality table. Stipends for Senior Fellows increase by 3% each year after the first year if the appointment is renewed.

Before any stipend payments can be made, the Fellow must provide USRA with a United States Social Security Number (SSN) or a Tax Identification Number (TIN). If the Fellow does not have a U.S. SSN or TIN, he/she must apply for one in the United States at a local office of the Social Security Administration.

If the Fellow's appointment begins after the first day of the month or terminates before the final day of the month, the stipend for that month will be prorated based on the number of days of participation in that month.

Fellows can decide whether to have the stipend payments deposited electronically to a bank account or mailed to a home or other address. Direct deposit to a bank account is recommended to avoid delays.

USRA will provide the Fellow's final stipend payment **after** he/she has submitted the Final Report (see Section 16, *Required Reporting by Fellows*) and a request for reimbursement of any outstanding travel expenses.

Stipend Advance

The Fellow may request an advance of up to 50% of the first month's stipend. USRA must receive a written request for the advance at least 30 days prior to the starting date. A check for the advance stipend payment will be given to the Fellow by the NPP Center Representative on the day the

appointment officially begins and he/she is in residence at the facility. A stipend advance is an interest-free loan of a portion of the monthly stipend payment. To recover the amount of the stipend advance payment, USRA will reduce the stipend payment by a fixed amount each month for the number of months specified by the Fellow (up to ten months) beginning with the second month of the appointment. If the Fellow chooses to terminate the appointment before the stipend advance has been repaid, the Fellow must repay the stipend advance in full before the final stipend check will be released.

Relocation

When allowed by Federal regulations and NPP guidelines, a limited allowance will be provided for the reimbursement of expenses associated with relocating to the appointment location. USRA NPP staff will provide the Fellow with information regarding the policy and guidelines for the reimbursement of allowable expenses for inbound travel from the current address to the appointment location. Any reimbursement is contingent upon the Fellow's acceptance of the NPP offer and approval by USRA. Relocation expenses can only be reimbursed after the Fellow has officially started the appointment. **Effective 2018, relocation expense reimbursements are considered taxable income by the IRS. Prior to 2018, relocation expense reimbursements are not taxable.**

Inbound Travel

U.S. Citizens

If a U.S. Citizen Fellow resides more than 50 miles from the assigned NASA facility, limited reimbursement of expenses for relocating from the Fellow's current residence address to the area of the assigned NASA facility will be provided, when allowed by the Federal Travel Regulations and USRA/NPP Travel Guidelines, as applicable. The relocation allowance may include only the following:

- Movement of household goods and personal belongings by a commercial moving company or U-Haul; if applicable, movement of one personal vehicle by a commercial moving company, unless it is less expensive for movement of a second personal vehicle by a commercial moving company than it is to pay the current mileage rate for travel by personal vehicle for the most expeditious and direct route as verified by Rand McNally, MapQuest, Google, etc.;
- The least expensive airfare for the Fellow and immediate family (spouse and legal dependents), if applicable; or the current mileage rate for travel by personal vehicle for the most expeditious and direct route as verified by Rand McNally, MapQuest, Google, etc.;
- Up to 12 nights of temporary lodging, either en route or at the relocation destination, while locating permanent housing;
- Up to 12.5 days of per diem for meals and incidentals (reduced rates for family members);
- Up to 7 days for a rental car at the relocation destination, if required and pre-approved by USRA; no optional insurance coverage such as Loss Damage Waiver (LDW), Personal

Accident Insurance (PAI), Collision Damage Waiver (CDW), Safe Move on U-Hauls, etc., will be reimbursed;

- Ground transportation to/from the airport(s), if needed.

Expenses for 'house hunting' prior to the inbound move are not included in the relocation allowance. If a Fellow chooses to make a house hunting trip, however, he/she may request reimbursement from the relocation allowance, if approved in advance by USRA. The total number of days used for lodging, per diem, and rental car for 'house hunting' and inbound move combined may not exceed the maximum numbers of days referenced above.

USRA staff will provide additional information regarding commercial moves and allowable expenses for relocation. USRA must provide pre-approval for the use of a rental car at the relocation destination. Fellows should contact USRA before any relocation plans are made to ensure that proposed travel expenses meet all the guidelines and are reimbursable.

Non-U.S. Citizens Residing Outside the U.S.

If a non-U.S. Citizen Fellow resides outside the United States, Canada or Mexico, limited reimbursement of expenses for relocating from the Fellow's current residence address to the area of the assigned NASA facility will be provided, when allowed by the Federal Travel Regulations and USRA/NPP Travel Guidelines, as applicable. The relocation allowance includes only the following:

- The least expensive airfare for the Fellow and immediate family (spouse and legal dependents), if applicable, for the most direct route on a U.S. flagship carrier (required by the federal Fly America Act);
- Ground transportation to/from the airport(s), if required;
- Shipment of up to 200 pounds of unaccompanied baggage per adult and up to 100 pounds of unaccompanied baggage per child (unaccompanied baggage is in addition to the suitcases/baggage associated with the Fellow's airfare and includes small personal items such as clothing, linens, dishes, cooking utensils, books, toys, etc., that are packed in boxes or crates and shipped by air or sea freight.);
- Up to 12 nights of temporary lodging while locating permanent housing;
- Up to 12.5 days of per diem (includes travel time to U.S.; reduced rates for family members);
- Up to 14 days for a rental car at the relocation destination, if required and pre-approved by USRA; no optional insurance coverage, such as Loss Damage Waiver (LDW), Personal Accident Insurance (PAI), Collision Damage Waiver (CDW), Safe Move on U-Hauls, etc., will be reimbursed, unless it is required by the rental car agency (the coverage is not 'optional' and cannot be 'declined'). If the rental agency requires the insurance as a requirement to rent a car to a non- U.S. Citizen Fellow, the Fellow must provide USRA with the appropriate documentation from the rental car agency in order to receive reimbursement for the cost of the insurance.

There will be no reimbursement for costs incurred for the shipment of household goods (furniture, appliances, automobiles, etc.) from a foreign country to the United States.

USRA staff will provide additional information regarding allowable expenses for inbound relocation and preapproval for the use of a rental car at the relocation destination. Fellows should contact USRA before any relocation plans are made to ensure that proposed travel expenses meet all the guidelines and are reimbursable.

Non-U.S. Citizens or Lawful Permanent Residents Residing in the U.S., Canada, or Mexico

If a non-U.S. Citizen Fellow or Lawful Permanent Resident Fellow resides in the United States, Canada, or Mexico at the time the USRA offer is made and has a residence address that is more than 50 miles from the assigned NASA facility, limited reimbursement of expenses for relocating from the Fellow's current residence address to the area of the NASA facility will be provided, when allowed by the Federal Travel Regulations and USRA/NPP Travel Guidelines.

The relocation allowance may only include only the following:

- Movement of household goods and personal belongings by a commercial moving company or U-Haul; if applicable, movement of one personal vehicle by a commercial moving company, unless it is less expensive for movement of a second personal vehicle by a commercial moving company than it is to pay the current mileage rate for travel by personal vehicle for the most expeditious and direct route as verified by Rand McNally, MapQuest, Google, etc.;
- The least expensive airfare for the Fellow and immediate family (spouse and legal dependents), if applicable; or the current mileage rate for travel by personal vehicle for the most expeditious and direct route as verified by Rand McNally, MapQuest, Google, etc.;
- Up to 12 nights of temporary lodging, either en route or at the relocation destination, while locating permanent housing;
- Up to 12.5 days of per diem (reduced rates for family members);
- Residents of the United States only: Up to 7 days for a rental car at the relocation destination, if required and pre-approved by USRA; no optional insurance coverage such as Loss Damage Waiver (LDW), Personal Accident Insurance (PAI), Collision Damage Waiver (CDW), Safe Move on U-Hauls, etc., will be reimbursed;
- Residents of Canada and Mexico only: Up to 14 days for a rental car at the relocation destination, if required and pre-approved by USRA; no optional insurance coverage such as Loss Damage Waiver (LDW), Personal Accident Insurance (PAI), Collision Damage Waiver (CDW), Safe Move on U-Hauls, etc., will be reimbursed;
- Ground transportation to/from the airport(s), if needed.

Travel for 'house hunting' prior to the inbound move must be approved by USRA. Expenses incurred are considered part of the relocation allowance. The total number of days used for lodging, per diem, and rental car for 'house hunting' and inbound move combined may not exceed the maximum

numbers of days referenced above. USRA staff will provide additional information regarding commercial moves and allowable expenses for relocation and provide pre-approval for the use of a rental car at the relocation destination. Fellows should contact USRA before any relocation plans are made.

Outbound Travel

US Citizens

There is no relocation allowance for US citizens at the end of their tenure. However, Senior Fellows on sabbatical may qualify for limited reimbursement, to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Non-U.S. Citizen Fellows Who Relocated from a Foreign Country

Non-U.S. Citizen Fellows who relocated from outside the United States will be provided a limited allowance for outbound relocation expenses to return to their home city and country when their appointments terminate. The allowance for outbound relocation will be the balance of funds that remains **after** the inbound relocation expenses have been deducted. The outbound relocation allowance includes the following:

- The least expensive airfare for the Fellow and immediate family (spouse and legal dependents) on a U.S. flagship carrier (required by the federal Fly America Act) for the most direct route;
- Ground transportation to/from the airport(s), if required.
- Shipment of up to 200 pounds of unaccompanied baggage per adult and up to 100 pounds of unaccompanied baggage per child (unaccompanied baggage is in addition to the suitcases/baggage associated with the Fellow's airfare and includes small items such as clothing, linens, dishes, cooking utensils, books, toys, etc., that are packed in boxes or crates and shipped by air or sea freight);
- Per diem for the travel days (reduced rate for family members).

There will be no reimbursement for costs incurred for the shipment of household goods (furniture, appliances, automobiles, etc.) from the U.S. to a foreign country. The Fellow will have up to 30 days to complete the outbound move. The Travel Expense Report and original receipts should be submitted to USRA within five (5) days of the arrival in the home country.

Non-U.S. Citizen Fellows or Lawful Permanent Residents Who Resided Within the U.S.

Non-U.S. Citizen Fellows who were already residing in the United States when the USRA offer was made and accepted will not be reimbursed for outbound moving expenses to another destination in the U.S. or to their home countries upon completion of their NPP appointments.

Duplicate Receipt of Benefits Prohibited

NASA requires that the Fellow be fully involved in the research and educational opportunities available in the NPP appointment. During the appointment, the Fellow may not provide services for compensation to a third party. Awards, prizes, review panel honoraria, scholarships, Veterans Administration benefits, sabbatical compensation, and any other payments may be accepted by an NPP Fellow, provided these payments do not represent dual payment for the same activity.

NPP Fellows are not allowed to supplement their stipends through simultaneous employment, grants, or other sources of income that compete with the Fellowship activities. During their appointments, NPP Fellows shall perform the research work stated in the proposal submitted with the NPP application and approved by the Advisor and Center Representative.

Travel during Appointment

Professional and Programmatic Travel

The NPP Fellowship appointment provides \$10,000 per appointment year for travel to professional meetings and conferences. The primary purpose of attending conferences and professional meetings is to present the results of the Fellow's NPP research through a poster or paper, or by making an oral presentation. A secondary benefit is networking with colleagues and experts in the Fellow's research area.

Travel funds **cannot** be used for the following:

- Payment of membership fees in professional societies
- Purchase of equipment
- Payment for publication charges or abstract fees
- Printing or laminating posters or handouts
- Purchase of other materials and supplies.

Travel funds **may** be used for the following:

- Travel to field sites or observatories to collect samples or research-related data
- Required training (including registration fees) related to the research.

Any books, workbooks, software, equipment, or other materials required for training, which are not included in the registration fee, must be provided by the NPP Advisor. Any unallowable expenses that may be necessary to accomplish the purpose of the professional or programmatic travel must be covered by the NPP Advisor or the host institution.

If the Fellow combines personal travel days with business travel (i.e., travel in support of the NPP research), the number of personal travel days cannot exceed the number of business travel days. In

addition, a cost comparison must be obtained of the estimated expenses for the business-only travel versus the business-personal travel. If the addition of personal travel increases the overall cost of the trip, the Fellow will be responsible for paying the difference.

USRA provides an on-line travel system that the Fellow must use to request the following:

- Authorization for travel arrangements related to research, and
- Reimbursement for travel expenses.

The Fellow must complete an *Expense Authorization* (EA) that includes all destinations, dates, and justifications for travel and provides estimated costs of all expenses that may be incurred. Personal travel dates and destinations must be included on the EA. USRA will contact the NPP Advisor and NPP Center Representative for their approval prior to travel. USRA requires **at least three (3) weeks in advance of domestic travel** and **four (4) weeks in advance for foreign travel**. The Fellow will be notified electronically when USRA has approved the EA. Once the electronic notification is received, the Fellow is approved to travel.

In order to receive reimbursement for travel expenses, the Fellow must complete an electronic *Expense Report* (ER) and upload copies of all receipts within five (5) days of travel conclusion. Receipts must include the Fellow's name, date, and amount of the expense and must indicate that full payment has been made. Credit card statements are not acceptable in lieu of original receipts. Reimbursement of all travel expenses will be based on the Federal Travel Regulations and the USRA's travel guidelines.

Personal Travel

All personal travel must be pre-approved by the NPP Advisor and NPP Center Representative at the assigned facility. The NPP Center Representative must notify USRA of any personal travel that will result in an unpaid absence from the Center at least two weeks in advance of the Fellow's departure date. In case of unexpected emergencies that necessitate sudden travel, the Fellow should notify their Advisor, Center Representative and USRA as soon as possible.

Travel outside the United States

Foreign Travel Reports

All NPP Fellows (US Citizens and non-US Citizens) engaged in programmatic travel outside of the United States during the appointment period must complete and submit a Foreign Travel Report for each international trip no later than 30 days after the conclusion of travel. On the Main Menu of the NPP Fellow Portal, select My Travel Requests to access and submit Foreign Travel Reports.

Visa Documents for Travel outside the United States

In addition to a valid passport, travel outside the United States may require a travel visa for the country the Fellow will be visiting. The Fellow must allow enough time before travel to obtain the appropriate visa.

Non-U.S. Citizens and Travel outside the United States

If the Fellow is a non-U.S. Citizen planning to travel outside the United States, he/she must have the following documents to re-enter the United States:

- Valid passport containing a valid United States J-1 entry visa;
- DS-2019 forms, endorsed for travel by a USRA Responsible Officer (or Alternate);
- Letter from USRA, signed by a USRA Responsible Officer (or Alternate), stating that the Fellow is in good standing in the program.

Travel Notes:

- Foreign visitors entering the United States are entered into the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Non Immigrant Information System (NIIS) by a CBP Officer at the port of entry. Arrival and departure information records of nonimmigrant aliens entering and departing the United States are maintained in the CBP's NIIS. If you want more information or to print your I-94 date record, please visit the Customs and Border Protection's I-94 webpage at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home>.
- If the Fellow's J-1 entry visa in his/her passport has expired at the time of travel abroad, the Fellow must obtain a new visa at a United States embassy or consulate in the country visited. Recently, security checks for all visa applicants have caused delays in visa issuance of up to three (3) months.
- Visitors to Canada, Mexico, or parts of the Caribbean, who will be there for less than 30 days, are exempt from this requirement and may return to the United States, as long as they hold valid documentation.
- Citizens from certain countries may be subject to additional security checks before a new visa can be granted. Allow adequate time for this process to take place. Travel day(s) to obtain a new J-1 entry visa (travel visa) are considered personal days; therefore, associated lodging, per diem, and other expenses are not reimbursable.
- If the Fellow's J-2 spouse or family travels, they must also have travel endorsement on their DS-2019 forms and a letter from USRA in order to be re-admitted in J-2 status.

Health and Accident Insurance

Fellows are required to have health insurance coverage during the term of the appointment. If the Fellow already has health insurance, the name of the policyholder, name of the insurance company and insurance contract number must be included on the signed Terms of Appointment. The Fellow must also provide a copy of his/her insurance card to USRA before the appointment can begin.

Health Insurance available through USRA

The Fellow may select individual or family health insurance coverage (see *Insurance*) through USRA. The cost of this health insurance is shared by the Fellow and NASA. Information about the health insurance available through USRA will be provided with the Fellowship offer.

Insurance Requirement for Exchange Visitors

While in the United States, all exchange visitors and their dependent families are required to have health insurance that meets U.S. Department of State requirements for exchange visitors, including coverage for repatriation and medical evacuation. This information will be provided to non-U.S. Citizens with the Fellowship offer.

Worker's Compensation-Type Insurance

During the term of appointment, USRA provides the Fellow with accident and death/dismemberment insurance (worker's compensation-type insurance), which provides coverage while the Fellow is engaged in normal research or research management activities related to the appointment. This insurance covers allowable expenses that are not covered by a personal health insurance policy. This insurance also covers relocation of remains for non-U.S. Citizens up to a maximum amount of \$7500.

Fellows must immediately report **any** injury received while engaged in appointment- related research or research management activities to the NPP Advisor, the NPP Center Representative, and the USRA NPP Director. When necessary, the Fellow should seek emergency treatment immediately by using his/her personal health insurance card and notify the NPP Advisor, NPP Center Representative and USRA of the injury and treatment. USRA will initiate the procedure to cover any allowable medical expenses under the appropriate worker's compensation-type insurance.

Taxability of Stipends and Other Payments

This section is provided for information purposes only. It is not intended as legal or tax advice, or a definitive interpretation of the law.

Fellows in the NASA Postdoctoral Program administered by USRA receive award payments from USRA. Awards paid to Fellows will be reported to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) by USRA as "Miscellaneous Income-Prizes and Awards", as defined in IRS Code Section 74. To be consistent with USRA reporting, all payments by USRA should be reported on the Federal income tax return, Form 1040, as "Other Income" and be identified as a "Fellowship Award".

U. S. Citizens

Since NPP Fellows are not employees, and since Fellows receive awards (not wages), USRA does not withhold state or Federal taxes, social security, workers compensation, or Medicare taxes from award payments for U.S. Citizens. Travel expense reimbursements for Fellows are not reported to the IRS by USRA. The NASA portion of the premium for health insurance obtained through USRA, however, is part of the Fellowship award and, therefore, is taxable. Effective 2018, relocation expense reimbursements are also taxable. Prior to 2018, relocation expense reimbursements are not taxable.

All U.S. Citizen Fellows should consider consulting a tax professional and filing Form 1040-ES on a quarterly basis to pay estimated Federal income taxes, in order to avoid late payment penalties.

Non-U.S. Citizens

USRA may be required to withhold Federal taxes from the stipends of non-U.S. Citizen Fellows, who have non-immigrant visa status, and report this deduction to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) annually. The amount withheld is determined by the treaty between the country of citizenship and the U.S., stipend level, visa status, and other factors. Travel expense reimbursements for Fellows are not reported to the IRS by USRA. The NASA portion of the premium for health insurance obtained through USRA, however, is part of the Fellowship award and, therefore, is taxable. Effective 2018, relocation expense reimbursements are also taxable. Prior to 2018, relocation expense reimbursements are not taxable.

All non-U.S. Citizen Fellows should consider filing Form 1040-ES on a quarterly basis to pay estimated Federal income taxes in order to avoid late payment penalties.

Information for Non-U.S. Citizens

Non-U.S. Citizens with the Exchange Visitor J-1 status (research scholar only), Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) status, or Employment Authorization Document (EAD) with adjustment of status (AOS) are eligible to receive an NPP Fellowship. The immigration status must allow participation in the program for at least two years.

An H1-B status is not acceptable, because that status is for employment only. Non-U.S. Citizens selected for an appointment must contact USRA concerning their immigration status and provide evidence that they have a valid and appropriate authorization before they can begin an NPP appointment.

USRA can provide information regarding U.S. visas but cannot apply for a visa or permanent residency on the Fellow's behalf. All costs in connection with a passport, visa, or their renewals are the Fellow's responsibility.

Exchange Visitor Visa (J-1)

A non-U.S. Citizen who has been awarded an NPP appointment may apply for an Exchange Visitor visa as a J-1 Research Scholar under the sponsorship assigned to USRA by the U.S. Department of State. Upon written request, a DS-2019 Form (Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor J-1 Status), will be issued by USRA. USRA cannot issue the DS-2019 form until the Fellow has provided written acceptance of the NPP appointment offer and proof of the doctorate degree.

- If the Fellow is outside of the United States, he/she may apply for an Exchange Visitor J-1 visa at a United States embassy or consulate.
- If the Fellow is in the United States on a valid status under **Other Sponsorship**, he/she must transfer the status to USRA sponsorship. Transfers require that the research field remain the same and that the Fellow has the agreement of the current J-1 sponsor. Once a transfer is requested, USRA and the Fellow's current sponsor will complete the transfer process.

- If the Fellow is in the United States on any other status, he/she may apply to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for a change of status.
- The Fellow may begin or continue the NPP appointment only after written USCIS approval has been received.

All exchange visitors are subject to strict legal limitations on the length of stay in the United States. Currently, research scholars may stay up to 60 months.

By law, all exchange visitors are required to hold health insurance and repatriation and medical evacuation insurance for themselves and their dependents throughout their appointment. Health insurance may be obtained through USRA (see *Health and Accident Insurance*). J-2 dependents may hold other health insurance, as long as it meets U.S. Department of State requirements for exchange visitors.

Immigrant Visa

If the Fellow is currently in the United States as a Lawful Permanent Resident (immigrant visa), and holds a valid green card without restrictions on length of stay and employment, the Fellow may continue in that status. If the Fellow has applied for and expects to receive the green card, the Fellow must provide USRA with evidence of this authorization for employment before beginning or continuing the appointment.

Reporting Change in Status

All Exchange Visitors, Lawful Permanent Residents (LPR), and Fellows with EAD-AOS must immediately provide USRA with any changes in the following:

- Home or appointment facility address
- Immigration
- Dependents (spouse and/or/children)
- Marital status
- Health insurance coverage

All non-U.S. citizens who move to a new home address must notify the USCIS within ten (10) days or be subject to severe penalties.

U.S. Social Security or Tax Identification Number

Before any stipend payments can be made, the Fellow must provide USRA with a United States Social Security Number (SSN) or a Tax Identification Number (TIN). If the Fellow does not have a U.S. SSN or TIN, he/she must apply for one in the United States at a local office of the Social Security Administration.

Domestic and International Travel

All travel by non-U.S. Citizen Fellows, research-related or personal, either within or outside the United States, must be **pre-approved** by the NPP Advisor and NPP Center Representative and coordinated through USRA before the Fellow is authorized to travel. The NPP Center Representative must provide USRA with approval of the Fellow's research-related travel at least three (3) weeks in advance of the departure date for domestic travel and four (4) weeks for foreign travel.

All non-U.S. Citizen Fellows who plan to travel outside the United States, must have the following documents in order to re-enter the United States:

Exchange Visitors:

- Valid passport containing a valid United States J-1 visa;
- DS-2019 forms, endorsed for travel by a USRA Responsible Officer or Alternate. (If the Fellow's J-2 dependents travel, they also must have a travel endorsement on their DS-2019 forms);
- Letter from USRA, signed by a USRA Responsible Officer (or Alternate), stating that the Fellow is in good standing in the program.

EAD-AOS:

- Valid passport with applicable admission stamps
- EAD card with advance parole

LPR:

- Green card

Other Travel Notes

Please refer to the Travel Notes in Section 10 above.

Income Tax Withholding on Stipend Payments

If the Fellow has a non-immigrant status, USRA may be required to withhold income tax from the monthly stipend and to report this deduction to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) annually. The amount withheld, if any, depends on stipend level, country of citizenship, immigration status, tax treaty, etc. USRA will notify any Fellow that is included in an IRS required withholding category when the first stipend check is issued.

Early Resignation of Appointment and J-1 Exchange Visitors

USRA is required to notify the U.S. Department of State when an exchange visitor leaves the program earlier than 30 days before the ending date on the current DS-2019 form.

Reports and Publications Acknowledgement

Fellows are strongly encouraged to publish reports and articles in scientific and engineering peer-reviewed literature. All publications related to the Fellow's appointment should include an appropriate statement of the Fellow's NASA Postdoctoral Program appointment, including the facility at which the research was conducted. For example, "(insert fellow name)'s research was supported by an appointment to the NASA Postdoctoral Program at the (insert name of the NASA Center or facility; e.g., NASA Ames Research Center), administered by Universities Space Research Association under contract with NASA."

Depending on the journal, editors will allow different kinds of acknowledgements. The Fellow may edit the language as necessary, but all publications related to the NPP appointment should include a statement acknowledging the NASA Postdoctoral Program appointment, including the NASA Center at which the research was conducted.

Some journals ask authors to provide their affiliation/address directly after the author's name or as a footnote, depending on the journal style (for example, "Doe, John, NASA Postdoctoral Program Fellow, NASA Ames Research Center, P.O. Box xxx, Moffett Field, CA 94035"). This option provides additional recognition for NASA, as well as for the Fellow.

Proposals

During the first year of the NPP appointment, NASA expects Fellows to focus on the research proposed in their application. The highest priorities should be to complete analysis and obtain results to present at scientific meetings and publish in peer-reviewed journals. In general, Fellows should not write or submit proposals during this first year, but exceptions may be made for special circumstances, e.g., the timeliness or cycle of a particular research opportunity, the singular expertise of the Fellow, etc. The Fellow should discuss any possible exception to this general rule with their NPP advisor and Center Representative well in advance of the proposal deadline.

During the second year of the NPP appointment, NASA grants more flexibility. Fellows may write and submit research proposals. The first step is to discuss the proposal research topic, funding opportunity, and submission details with the Fellow's NPP advisor and Center Representative well in advance of the proposal deadline. Outcomes of these discussions will determine the next steps of the proposal process. Note: if the proposal is successful, the funds cannot be used to increase the NPP second-year stipend but can be used to support the NPP third-year stipend.

Proposal Support for Year 3 of NPP

Fellows need an institutional affiliation for proposal submission and funds administration; hence, Fellows are encouraged to affiliate with their host NASA Center (or affiliated institution). Different NASA Centers (or affiliated institutions) have different rules about proposal submission, so it is

important to discuss these options with the appropriate center representative well in advance of the proposal deadline.

Some NASA Centers allow the Fellow to submit a proposal as a Principal Investigator or a Co-Investigator with Center affiliation. Others require that the NPP Advisor (or other civil servant) serve as the official Principal Investigator. In the latter case, the Fellow may be named as the Co-Investigator (Co-I)/Science Principal Investigator (Science PI) to ensure scientific credit for the proposal. For further information, please refer to the ROSES FAQ on this topic:

<https://science.nasa.gov/researchers/sara/faqs#9>.

Fellows must notify the relevant Program Officer at NASA Headquarters that third year funding should be applied directly to the NPP contract with USRA via the "format two" process (not awarded to the Fellow's NASA Center or affiliated institution). Program Officers are listed here:

<http://science.nasa.gov/researchers/sara/program-officers-list/>

Post NPP Proposal Support

Fellows may only remain in the NPP for a total of three years, so those who propose for funds post NPP cannot use the NPP contract as described above. USRA may consider allowing Fellows applying for grant funding beyond their NPP fellowship to affiliate with USRA. Salary, overhead, and total costs for the years past NPP year 3 will be determined according to USRA corporate policy. Fellows who have obtained a position with another organization after the termination of their Fellowship can affiliate with that organization; the budget for support after the end of the Fellowship would be determined by that organization.

If a proposal will provide support for both third-year NPP funding and post-NPP funding at another organization, the proposal budget should note that Year 1 is to fund the third year of the NPP appointment (and be put on the NPP contract with USRA – see above), while the remaining years are to provide support during the appointment at the new organization.

Fellows who want to remain physically located at their NASA Center must seek approval from their Center. NASA Centers usually require researchers working at the Center to pay fees or other overhead. Fellows may need to budget for this amount. Some Centers have restrictions on the organizations that may pay the scientists who are physically located on Center, and may have other restrictions as well regarding office space. Please consult the Center Representative for more information.

Required Reporting by Fellows

Each NPP Fellow must submit a Final Report prior to the completion of the appointment. The Final Report should summarize the research accomplishments during the Fellowship appointment. The Final Report is submitted by completing a brief Web-based form that includes sections for listing all publications, papers presented, conference participation, and other aspects of the appointment.

Fellows who participated in a research program will be asked to provide the major findings and contributions to scientific and technological knowledge. Fellows who participated in a research management program should address the objectives of their research management activities as they relate to NASA's mission and to science and technology advances in general.

The release of the final stipend payment is contingent upon receipt of the Final Report by USRA.

Research Data Agreement

By accepting the NPP appointment, a Fellow must agree to the following:

1. A Fellow must agree to provide NASA or the host facility, in written form, any and all technical data produced or generated during the course of the appointment in whatever format it may be recorded. If not recorded or written, the Fellows shall (upon request) provide NASA or the host facility a written report of any technical data generated by the Fellow during the course of his/her appointment. NASA, the host facility, and/or the Government of the United States shall have the right to use, duplicate or disclose such technical data, in whole or in part, in any manner and for any purpose and to permit others to do so.
2. The Fellow agrees to respect any and all limitations to access to any restricted data or other classified information, proprietary information or any other technical data that are privileged or confidential, which he/she receives, or in any way obtains access to, during or as a result of the appointment. The unauthorized disclosure of, or failure to safeguard, such information may subject the Fellow to civil and/or criminal liability under applicable laws of the United States.
3. "Technical data" means recorded information, regardless of form or characteristic, of a scientific or technical nature. Technical data does not include financial reports, costs analyses, or other information incidental to contract administration. Examples of technical data include research and engineering data, engineering drawings and associated lists, specifications, standards, process sheets, manuals, technical reports, catalog item identification, and related information.

Appointment Renewal

The standard appointment period for an NPP Fellowship award is one (1) year. In most cases, appointments may be renewed for up to a total of three (3) years; however, not all NASA facilities renew appointments for a third year. Renewals are contingent on available funding and the continued relevance of the research to NASA's goals and missions. The renewal of the appointment requires the Fellow to continue his or her existing research or research management program and is not for the purpose of undertaking a new research or research management program (unless the Fellow is transitioning from a Research Fellowship to a Management Fellowship).

The Fellow should begin discussions with the NPP Advisor about renewing the appointment well in advance of the appointment end date. The renewal of the appointment is based on available funding,

evaluation of the Fellow's performance to- date, the status of his/her program, and its continued relevance to NASA's research goals.

An appointment renewal requires the submission of an Application for Renewal form, the Advisor Evaluation of Fellow form, and written approval by the NPP Advisor and the NPP Center Representative, as well as authorization of funding from NASA. The procedure and required forms are available on the *NPP Appointment Renewals* Web page. USRA will remind the Fellow of his/her upcoming appointment end date and provide guidance on the appointment renewal process.

Resignation of Appointment

If the Fellow decides to terminate the appointment before the official end date, the Fellow must immediately inform the NPP Advisor, the NPP Center Representative, and USRA. This notification must be submitted in writing, preferably at least 30 days before the early termination date. The Fellow's final stipend payment will be calculated and pro-rated through the last day he/she will be physically at the appointment facility.

If the Fellow chooses to terminate the initial appointment with less than twelve (12) months of participation, the Fellow must repay in full any relocation expenses for which he/she was reimbursed and any stipend advance that he/she may have received. The Fellow must also provide a Final Report (see *Required Reporting by Fellows*). The Final Report and repayments must be received by USRA before the final stipend payment can be released.

J-1 Exchange Visitors

USRA is required to notify the U.S. Department of State when an exchange visitor leaves the program earlier than 30 days before the ending date on the current DS-2019 form.

U.S. Federal Government Shutdown

This policy will be in effect during a Federal Government Shutdown due to Absence of Appropriations. Except as provided herein, all other NPP Policies and Procedures remain in full force and effect.

Communication

NASA sites may be closed and NASA email may be inaccessible during a government shutdown. Therefore, Fellows are strongly encouraged to ensure their NPP profile includes a personal email address and cell phone number. This information can be updated at any time, but it will be required for ongoing communications prior to a potential government shutdown. USRA's communication with Fellows (including incoming Fellows) occurs via Fellow's personal email and cell phone numbers on file with the NPP. USRA communicates program-wide information; Center Representatives communicate Center-specific direction to Fellows.

Appointment Start Date

New Fellows should not start during a government shutdown, unless specifically authorized by the Center Representative and Advisor.

Renewals

Fellows are very strongly encouraged to submit renewal applications well in advance of a potential government shutdown as NASA Advisors and Center Representatives may not be able to take action during a shutdown period.

Appointment Terminations

Fellows ending their appointment during a government shutdown should contact NPPHR@usra.edu well before their end date.

Stipends

Fellows' stipends are issued during a government shutdown as long as NPP funding is available. If funds are not available to issue stipends, US Citizen and Permanent Resident Fellows are reminded that auxiliary employment considerations are limited to those which do not compete with NASA Research. Foreign National Fellows, please refer to Foreign Nationals section of the Government Shutdown policy.

If authorized by the government, Fellows (including those that left the program during the shutdown) will receive back stipend payments for the NPP appointment period after funding was exhausted.

Health Insurance and Benefits

Fellows enrolled in the NPP health insurance program will continue uninterrupted while the NPP is funded. If NPP funds are exhausted, USRA will issue guidance regarding the status of health insurance.

Fellows should direct any question regarding eligibility for unemployment benefits to their state unemployment office. Note that NPP Fellows receive stipends, not wages, and are not employed by USRA or NASA.

Research Progress

Fellows whose work schedule was significantly affected by the government shutdown can petition for an extension to their NPP appointment based on the number of days needed to complete their fellowship obligation OR extend their fellowship by the number of days a Fellow was unable to work. This petition is evaluated on a case-by-case basis and must be approved by NASA. Fellows seeking such an extension should contact their Center Representative for guidance.

Travel

Fellows are very strongly encouraged to submit travel expense authorizations (EAs) well ahead of a potential government shutdown because NASA Advisors, Center Representatives, and the Contracting Officer may be furloughed and not able to take action during a shutdown period.

Fully approved travel will be permitted as long as funding is available.

Access to Computing Resources

Computing access will vary and depends on current government and Center policy.

Foreign Nationals

The rules governing Foreign National (FN) J-1 visa holders are set by the US Department of State, not NASA or USRA. State Department staff members may be furloughed during a government shutdown. The USRA visa specialist will provide guidance to fellows when specified instructions from the Department of State are received.

FNs must ensure they have enough personal funds to maintain their health and welfare. They may remain in the U.S. for up to 30 days once they are no longer receiving funds.

In a government shutdown scenario in which NPP funding is exhausted, FN NPP Fellows may consult or lecture for pay with consent from the USRA visa specialist and the NPP program. The FN may not obtain a job such as in retail or the restaurant industry as the Fellow does not have the proper visa designation; USRA has neither the power nor the authority to adjust this designation.

To obtain consent to consult or lecture for pay, the FN should request from the USRA visa specialist the form: "Request to permit reimbursement/compensation from a source other than USRA". This document facilitates an application by a USRA J-1 FN, as provided for in Title 8 of the Code of Federal Regulations, part 514.20(g). The regulations at 514.20(g)(2)(i)(A) require that the entity offering the reimbursement or compensation set forth the terms and conditions of the offer to lecture or consult. The authorization, if granted, is in the form of a letter signed by USRA's Visitor Program Alternate Responsible Officer. The letter represents the full extent to which USRA can extend such authorization.

Disclaimer of Liability

USRA, the Fellow's host facility, NASA, and any persons acting on their behalf, are not responsible for the following types of occurrences.

1. Any alleged or actual liability, cost or expense incurred as a result of personal injury to or death of persons, including the Fellow, or damage to or destruction of property, or for any other loss, damage, or injury of any kind whatsoever, except where such death, injury, loss, or damage is the result of willful negligence or intentional misconduct of an officer, agent, or employee of USRA, the host facility, or NASA.
2. Any claims, losses, expenses (except as otherwise provided in the official *USRA Offer Letter and Terms of Appointment*) or damages, including but not limited to, bodily injury, death, or property damage, caused by the negligence or misconduct of the Fellow.
3. Any claims, losses, expenses, or damages, including, but not limited to, bodily injury, death, or property damage, arising out of, or resulting in any way from, the use or misuse of information acquired by the Fellow during the NPP appointment.

Neither USRA, the host facility, NASA, NASA contractor, nor persons acting on their behalf, makes any warranty, express or implied, (i) with respect to the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information acquired by the Fellow during the appointment, (ii) that the use of any such information may not infringe upon privately owned rights, (iii) that the information acquired by the Fellow during the appointment will not result in injury or damage when used for any purpose, or (iv) that information acquired by the Fellow during the appointment will accomplish any particular results or are safe for any purpose, including the intended purpose.