

Future Investigators in NASA Earth and Space Science and Technology (FINESST)
 (Earth, Helio, Planet, Astro, and Biological/Physical Sciences)

Important Information

Link to solicitation: [NNH25ZDA001N-FINESST](#)

*Link to CU OCG forms: [NASA Fellowships](#)

		Comments
Proposals due	Tuesday, July 14, 2026	PI releases to OCG by 5 PM local time. OCG will submit via NSPIRES by CU Boulder close-of-business in advance of the 9:59 pm MT deadline.
Start Date	No earlier than 1/1/2027; No later than 7/14/2027. Proposers may request an earlier start date, subject to NASA's 90-day pre-award spending policy.*	*If the award for a selected FI is not received by the NASA approved start date, the department must follow standard procedures for pre-award spending . CU Boulder supports NASA's automatic approval of 90 days of pre-award spending per section 5.1.2.6 in the solicitation.
Max Duration	36 months	Must demonstrate annual satisfactory progress.
Max Award	\$50K/year; \$150K max.	Submit a budget for the anticipated grant period. Note: Students funded by a FINESST grant may receive funding from other sources for any expenses not covered by this award.
Eligibility Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future Investigator (FI) is or will be pursuing a Master's and/or Ph.D. degree in a FINESST-relevant discipline. International students at CU are eligible. • FI has never previously accepted a FINESST or NSSF award OR if FI did receive support, the original grant + this new request may not exceed 36 months OR if FI replaced another student on an award, the original grant + this new request may be 36 months, provided the FI received less than \$50K from the previous award. • An FI may be listed on only 1 FINESST proposal per year. A PI has no limit on submissions. • If project falls under ITAR or EAR restrictions, then only U.S. persons may be PI and FI. • A PI may have FINESST and other (e.g., NASA, NSF, DoD) proposals with overlapping SOW submitted at the same time. If so, this should be acknowledged in the budget justification or noted in the current & pending support section that funds are requested elsewhere. 	
OCG Submission Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PI must submit an online Proposal Submission Request (PSR) and must accept the <i>NASA China Assurance of Compliance</i> within the PSR. • FI and PI must sign an OCG NASA FINESST Assurance Form* to acknowledge NASA required post-submission notifications to the OCG proposal analyst or grant officer. 	

Summary of Application Procedures

STEP	Completed By	Required Action
1	FI & PI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register with NSPIRES - Affiliate with CU Boulder (UEI: SPVKK1RC2MZ3; CAGE code: 4B475). To receive funding, PIs, FI, and Co-Is must provide their digital persistent identifier (e.g., ORCID) via NSPIRES under Account Management → Personal Profile.
2	PI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create the Nspires proposal and grant the FI (<i>Role: Graduate/Undergraduate Student</i>) view and edit permissions. • Complete Nspires Proposal Team and Business Data pages. A non-PI mentor need not be located at CU, but if named in proposal must be assigned as a Co-I. • Request HEC resources, if applicable; send request receipt to FI for uploading. • Complete and submit a Proposal Submission Request (PSR) and Assurance Form.

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3	FI (student)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Nspires Anonymized Summary (do not explicitly identify the names of the team members or their institutions) and Program Specific Data cover pages. • Coordinate budget* and budget narrative* with DRA and/or Proposal Analyst. *link to FINESST budget templates: https://www.colorado.edu/ocg/fellowships • Upload 2 proposal PDFs to Nspires. Upload HEC request PDF, if applicable.
4	PI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nspires “Release to Organization” and notify PA
5	University AOR (Proposal Analyst)	<p>Complete Budget cover page. Review proposal for compliance. Submit application.</p>

Proposal Documents

Notes:

1. The FI (student) must be the primary author of the project description and research readiness statement.
- *2. **Format:** Main body text of proposal and captions - no more than 15 characters per horizontal inch (typical of 12-point Times New Roman) and no more than 5.5 lines per vertical inch (i.e., single-spaced). At least one-inch margins on all sides; must be sized for 8.5x11 paper. No technical content may be put in the margins; page numbers and anonymous disclaimers are permitted.
3. **Do not include a Table of Work Effort or a separately uploaded “Total” Budget pdf.**
4. **If the proposal contains information subject to export control (e.g., EAR, ITAR), add a front page clearly indicating the page numbers, sections, figures, etc., which contain the information.**

Proposal Document #1 – Anonymized – 1 pdf - No names or gendered pronouns of team members or their institutions. Ensure any PDF bookmarks are anonymous, and the document properties do not reveal names of author or organization. Additional dual anonymous peer review (DAPR) guidelines: DAPR		
Sections – Include in this Order	Pages	Requirements
i. Table of Contents	1	Anonymous
1. Science/Technical/Management (S/T/M) Section - anonymized <i>(authored by the FI)</i>	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-defined problem, justification of scientific significance. • Relevance to Science Mission Directorate division/program. • Description of approach to address problem. • Period of performance, major milestones, planned publications, differentiation from ongoing research. • Reference callouts in the proposal text must be in numerical format (e.g. [1], [2], etc.). It is recommended that the callouts appear in numerical order in the text. • Must conform to format requirements (see above**).
2. References – ensure proposer identity is not obvious, i.e., order by callout number, e.g., [1], [2].	No limit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easily understandable, standard abbreviations for journals and complete names for books. Full citations should include names of authors. URLs OK, but reviewers may not review.
3. Open Science and Data Management Plan (OSDMP) - anonymized	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe how data created will be made public or explain why an OSDMP is not needed given the nature of the work. • Templates: https://science.nasa.gov/oss-guidance
4. Mentoring Plan or Agreement – anonymized <i>(no required template)</i>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepared by FI, PI, and any other mentor team members. • Sets expectations for collaboration between Mentor and FI. • <i>CU Grad School mentoring guidelines: Advising Agreement</i>

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Proposal Document #2 – Expertise and Resources – Not Anonymized – 1 pdf		
Sections – Include in this Order	Pages	Requirements
1. Research Readiness Statement <i>(authored by the FI)</i>	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How the degree program & mentor prepare FI for project. Graduate study timeline, including est. graduation date. Other relevant experience. Must conform to format requirements (see above**).
2. Biosketches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PI Biosketch FI Biosketch Additional mentor(s) CV 	No Limit	<p>Use NASA format: NASA Biosketch template DO NOT use SciENcv to create.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandatory Mandatory Optional; don't include for non-mentor Co-I/collaborator.
3. Current and Pending Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PI current & pending FI current & pending 	No limit	<p>Use NASA format: NASA C&P template DO NOT use SciENcv to create.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PI must list support for all ongoing and pending projects and proposals (regardless of salary support) in which they are performing or will perform any part of the work. List other pending FINESST proposals (zero FTE) and “this” proposal. FI must identify any external-to-CU funding, e.g., from U.S. federal, U.S. non-federal, and non-U.S. sources or active applications for grants, fellowships, etc. (including NSTGRO), particularly those that have overlap with the proposed work. This also may include teaching assistance funding that provides stipend. List “this” FINESST proposal as pending. FI working as a contractor for NASA may list the applicable dates, briefly describe the nature of the work, identify any potential conflicts or overlaps with the FINESST work.
4. Statements, Letters, and Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources	No limit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe any special facilities & equipment required to complete the proposed project. Letters Only if applicable, e.g., demonstrate facility/resource is available; team member commitment not made in Nspires.
5. Acknowledgements <i>(authored by the FI)</i>	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statement of up to 150 words; affirm that the proposal is the work of the FI. Describe any other team member roles in preparing the proposal. Editorial and/or graphic support from a writing center, copy editor, colleagues, and peers to improve the proposal should be acknowledged. If the FI desires to identify the proposal as a resubmission, then put that information here. Note: If Generative AI is used in the preparation, then that use shall be cited in the references section. The citation shall include (1) the name of the program used, (2) the version number of the Generative AI used, (3) the date and time the Generative AI was used to generate proposal text, and (4) a statement on how the Generative AI was used.
6. Budget and Narrative <i>(See OCG templates)</i>	~2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget: \$ by cost categories, broken down by year. Narrative: Justifications of the requested amount in each category. Specify FI cost option (e.g., participant support)

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Document #3 (optional) - High-End Computing (HEC) – Not Anonymized - 1 pdf		
NASA Center for Climate Simulation (NCCS) at the Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC) or the NASA Advanced Supercomputing (NAS) facility at the Ames Research Center (ARC).	No limit	<p> PI submits HEC request in NASA’s Request Management System (RMS) - https://request.hec.nasa.gov/ - on behalf of the FI and saves as a PDF. FI or PI uploads the HEC PDF to Nspires separately from the proposal PDF files (“Appendix”). </p> <p> Note 1: Proposers to Earth Science requesting NCCS high-end computing must include \$0.09/Standard Billing Unit in their budget per the instructions provided in Section 7.3 of A.1 Earth Science Research Overview. Coordinate with your OCG Proposal Analyst. </p> <p> Note 2: Briefly outline requested or planned HEC resources in anonymized S/T/M section. </p>

Budget Details

OCG has templates for the FINESST budget and FINESST budget narrative on the CU website:
<https://www.colorado.edu/ocg/fellowships>

FINESST student research grants are similar to what 2CFR200.1 Definitions calls a "Fixed Amount Award," a type of grant under which the Federal awarding agency provides a specific level of support without regard to actual costs incurred under the Federal award. This type of Federal award reduces some of the administrative burden and record-keeping requirements for both the non-Federal entity and Federal awarding agency. Accountability is based primarily on performance and results.

OCG encourages the “participant support” cost option for Nspires proposal budget entry. At award phase departments administratively assign an account code for the fellowship stipend that is not subject to indirect costs. Departments who have reason to deviate from this approach in the application should coordinate with their Proposal Analyst.

- **Maximum amount: \$50,000 per 12-months; up to \$150,000 total for 36 months.**
- Propose partial years (less than 12 months) by prorating the stipend and allowance costs.
- NASA suggests a \$40K/\$10K allocation between stipend/allowance. If valid justification is provided, then amounts may be adjusted as long as the total amount requested does not exceed \$50,000 annually.
- If an FI’s compensation will be less than \$40,000, then the amounts in the other budget categories may be adjusted/exchanged up to \$50,000. Proposers who request no stipend nor salary nor other direct compensation for the FI may request up to \$10,000 annually for travel and other allowable costs, including any allowable indirect costs.
- No salary, travel, or other costs shall be requested for the PI’s, Co-I’s, or Collaborator’s use. Exceptions are made for joint publications.
- The purchase or lease of equipment or services in excess of \$10,000 for the entire period of performance is not permitted through FINESST awards.
- FIs may receive funding from other sources for expenses not covered by this award (e.g., to purchase equipment).
- The allowance may include the following: tuition/fees, health insurance, FI travel and registration fees, textbooks or other instructional supports, expendable laboratory supplies, page charges for journal articles, printing of a thesis, computers, digital devices, and materials.