

2024 NASA OFFICE OF PROCUREMENT  
**Vendor Communication Plan**

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# ACRONYM LIST

<b>CAO</b>	Chief Acquisition Officer
<b>CFR</b>	Code of Federal Regulations
<b>CO</b>	Contracting Officer
<b>COR</b>	Contracting Officer Representative
<b>DEIA</b>	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility
<b>DOC</b>	Department of Commerce
<b>EO</b>	Executive Order
<b>FAR</b>	Federal Acquisition Regulation
<b>FDP</b>	Federal Demonstration Partnership
<b>GCAM</b>	Grant and Cooperative Agreement Manual
<b>GPC</b>	Grants Policy and Compliance
<b>GAB</b>	Grant Activities Branch
<b>GO</b>	Grant Officer
<b>HBCU</b>	Historically Black Colleges and Universities
<b>MSI</b>	Minority Serving Institution
<b>NASA</b>	National Aeronautics Space Administration
<b>NAIL</b>	NASA Acquisition Innovation Launchpad
<b>NSPIRES</b>	NASA Solicitation and Proposal Integrated Review and Evaluation System
<b>NFS</b>	NASA FAR Supplement
<b>NOFO</b>	Notices of Funding Opportunities
<b>NSSC</b>	NASA Shared Services Center
<b>OMB</b>	Office of Management and Budget
<b>OP</b>	Office of Procurement
<b>OSBP</b>	Office of Small Business Programs
<b>PO</b>	Procurement Officer
<b>RFI</b>	Request for Information
<b>RFP</b>	Request for Proposals
<b>STEM</b>	Science Technology Engineering and Math
<b>SB</b>	Small Business
<b>SBA</b>	Small Business Administration
<b>SBIR</b>	Small Business Innovation Research
<b>SDB</b>	Small Disadvantaged Business
<b>SPE</b>	Senior Procurement Executive
<b>STTR</b>	Small Business Technology Transfer
<b>TO</b>	Technical Officer



# COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR CONTRACTORS AND GRANT RECIPIENTS

## OVERVIEW

The NASA Office of Procurement (OP) oversees acquisition and grant policies and processes to support successful accomplishment of the agency’s current and future missions.

*Note: The name of NASA’s Vendor Communication Plan has been updated to Communication Plan for Contractors and Grants to reflect that the plan provides guidance for both contractors and grant recipients on communicating with NASA’s contracting and grant officials.*

For more than 60 years, NASA has led the world in human and robotic exploration of the solar system, scientific discoveries, and advancements in technology and flight that benefit us here on Earth. While growing our own portfolio, we have fostered a new economy in low-Earth orbit and are doing the same with our commercial partners as we return to the Moon under Artemis. NASA is at the forefront of pushing the most challenging missions to explore the Moon, Mars, and beyond, and will ensure the U.S. maintains global leadership in exploration by continuously evolving the way we work.



NASA and SpaceX Crew-8 roll-out for launch.  
Photo credit: SpaceX

NASA spends approximately 86% of its budget on acquiring goods and services required to meet the agency’s mission and issues approximately 5% of its budget on grants and cooperative agreements supporting scientific research, education, and training for the benefit of the American public. The agency’s contracts and grants activity have direct impacts on the national economy across all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

In February 2011, the Office of Management and Budget’s (OMB) Office of Federal Procurement Policy issued a memorandum, [“Myth-Busting”: Addressing Misconceptions to Improve Communication with Industry during the Acquisition Process.](#)” requiring federal agencies to develop a high-level vendor communication plan outlining efforts to reduce unnecessary barriers, publicize communication opportunities, and prioritize engagement opportunities for high-risk, complex programs or those that fail to attract new vendors (new entrants) during re-competitions. NASA’s plan outlines the agency’s engagement with industry and though not required by OMB, also includes information on how to engage with the agency on grants and cooperative agreements.

OMB has issued additional memoranda to improve agency outreach to industry to include: M-23-11, Creating a More Diverse and Resilient Federal Marketplace through Increased Participation of New and Recent Entrants ([February 17, 2023](#)); M-23-01

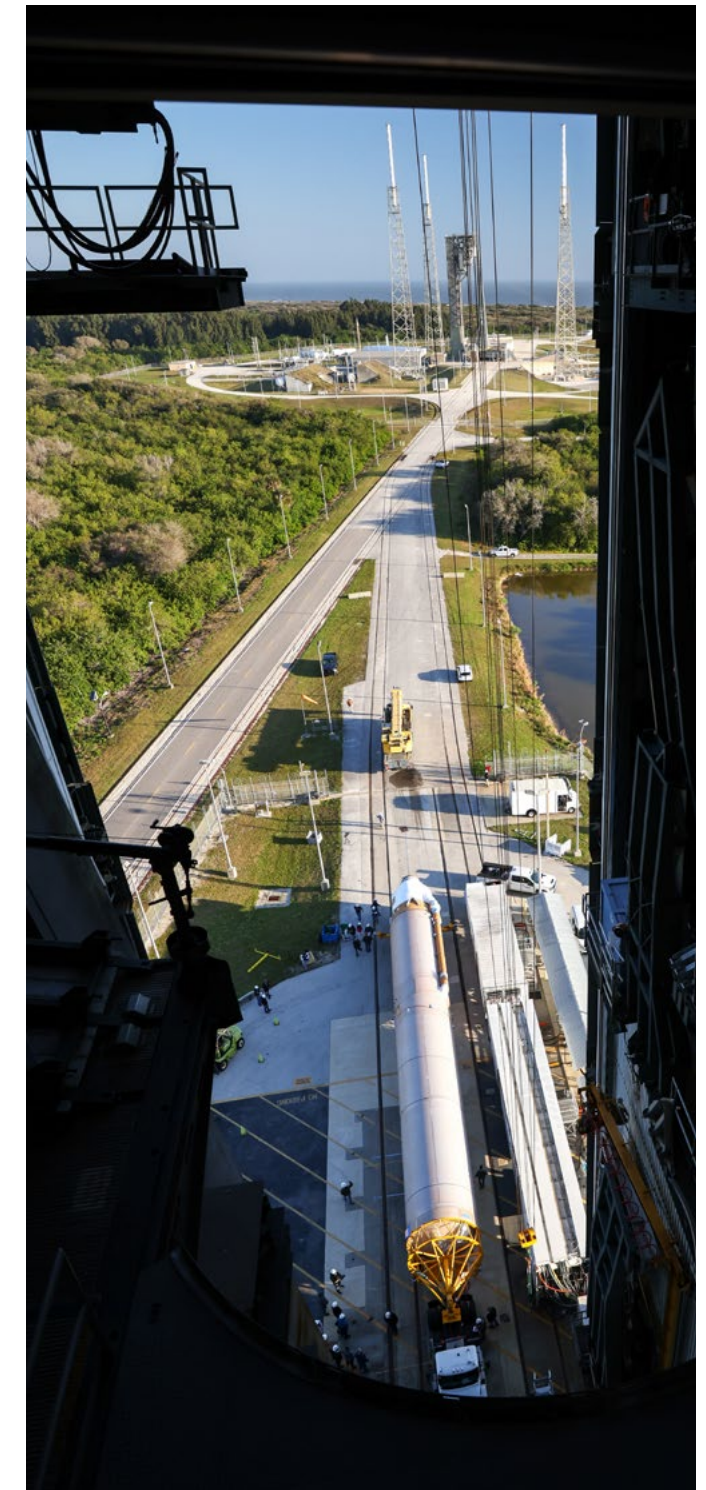
Increasing the Share of Contract Dollars Awarded to Small Disadvantaged Businesses ([October 4, 2022](#)); and M-22-03 Advancing Equity in Federal Procurement ([December 2, 2021](#)). The Administration has also issued Executive Orders (EO) [13985](#) and [14091](#) to reduce barriers for underserved communities. Section 3 of the plan discusses OP’s action in response to these EOs.

NASA recognizes that early engagement with vendors and grant recipients can add significant value and create efficiencies within the process. NASA is not only committed to the requirements of OMB’s 2011 memo, but also to a transparent process and engaging vendors and grant recipients in an increasingly innovative manner throughout all phases of the contracts and grants lifecycle.

This plan represents NASA’s commitment to continued and increased dialogue and exchange of information. It outlines the framework NASA uses to communicate with industry (including members of underserved communities (as identified in E.O. 13985 and 14091)), and new or recent recipients of federal contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements. The plan also includes an overview of resources for viewing upcoming contract, grant or cooperative agreement opportunities.

The NASA Office of Procurement Industry Liaison is responsible for plan currency and coordinating information updates with the Grants Policy and Compliance Team and other stakeholders as needed. Questions regarding this plan or related topics may be directed to Ms. Cheryl Robertson at [hq-procurement@mail.nasa.gov](mailto:hq-procurement@mail.nasa.gov).

To ensure that inquiries are properly routed, please include “Vendor Communications Inquiry” in the subject line.



CFT Atlas V Booster LVOS  
Photo credit: NASA / Frank Michaux



# SECTION 1

## KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

[Ms. Karla Smith Jackson](#) is the Senior Procurement Executive (SPE), Deputy Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO), and Assistant Administrator for the Office of Procurement and oversees acquisition, procurement, and grant processes, including implementation of grant and contract policies, regulations, and standards. [Mr. David Mitchell](#) is NASA's Chief Program Management Officer responsible for strengthening the agency's oversight, management, and implementation of program management policies, processes, and best practices. Ms. Smith Jackson and Mr. Mitchell work cooperatively to promote consistent and timely vendor engagement by NASA acquisition workforce members.

The Office of Procurement and the Chief Program Management Office jointly developed the Industry and Vendor Communication Primer (see Appendix A) that provides general guidelines for engagement. It should be noted that meeting-specific guidance may be provided depending on the nature of the prospective meeting.

In accordance with the EOs referenced herein and OMB M-22-03, Advancing Equity in Federal Procurement, dated December 2, 2021, the performance plans for certain Senior Executive Service managers (e.g., Chief Acquisition Officer, Senior Procurement Executive, heads of contracting activities; and senior program officials who participate in planning acquisitions or selecting contractors to support their projects) measure outreach efforts.

The outreach measurement factor was added to:

1. Achieve agency goals for awards to small businesses and increase new entrants to the federal contracting arena to the maximum extent practicable
2. Maximize participation in outreach events and meetings and communicate with members of underserved communities (as defined in EO 13985 and 14091) to provide increased awareness of NASA acquisitions, procurements, programs and projects.

For grants and cooperative agreements, key roles include Ms. Smith Jackson as NASA's SPE, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Procurement; the Grants Policy and Compliance Office within the Office of Procurement; the Mission Directorates that spearhead grant and cooperative agreement awards; and the NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC) Grants Activities Branch that awards and administers grant and cooperative agreement awards.

- [Grants Policy and Compliance \(GPC\)](#): GPC is responsible for policy development and promulgation for grants and cooperative agreements in accordance with Federal and NASA regulations. GPC communicates with the recipient community through the creation of policy documents, training, consultation, and technical assistance to the NASA grants community to promote best practices and compliance.
- [NASA Grant Activities Branch \(GAB\)](#): Located at the NASA Shared Services Center on the campus of Stennis Space Center (SSC) in Mississippi, the GAB is responsible for the financial aspects of grants management administration at NASA. The GAB is responsible for communicating with recipients once a proposal is selected for funding (an award), performing post-award oversight activities, and throughout the closeout process. The GAB primarily communicates with recipients via email.
- **Grant Officers (GOs)**: The GOs within the GAB are the recipients' first point of contact for issues or questions related to grant administration. The GOs are the officials authorized to enter into, administer, modify, terminate, and close out grants on behalf of NASA. The GO is responsible for ensuring that all communication with grant recipients is conducted in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, policies, and procedures. The GO is also responsible for coordinating communication activities with other NASA personnel involved in the grant process.

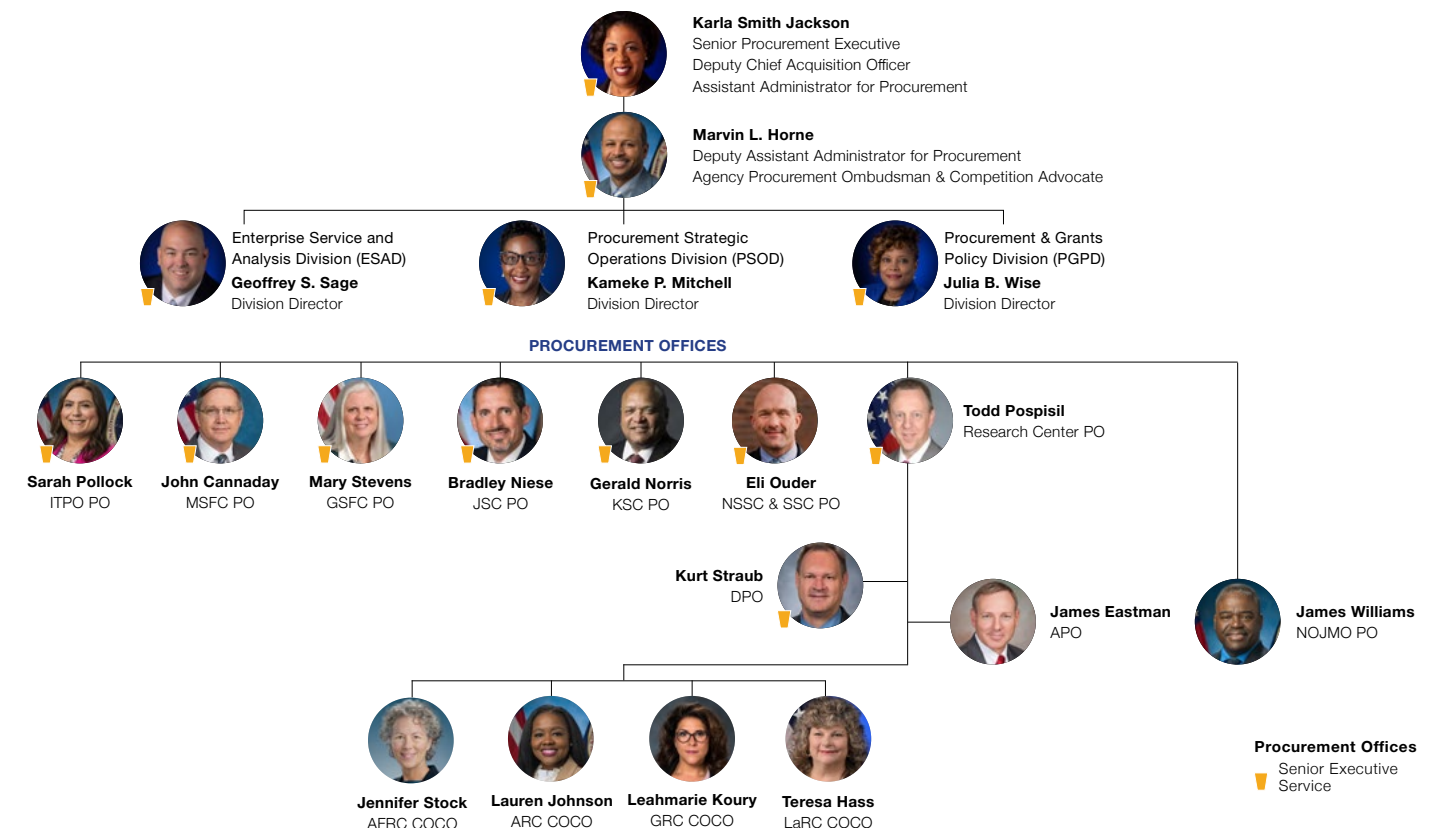
The [NASA Directorates](#) and [Program Office](#) are responsible for communicating with proposers and recipients through their Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) before an award is selected for funding, and to answer technical questions related to the scientific, educational, or research aspects of the NASA grant or cooperative agreement award after an award has been issued.

- **Technical Officer (TO)**: The TO is the recipient's first point of contact for questions or issues related to technical, scientific, educational, or research aspects of the grant award. The TO is

the official who provides technical expertise and support to the recipient in performing various tasks related to the pre-award, award, and post-award phases of the grant lifecycle. The NASA TO will approve project related reports,

In addition to Ms. Smith Jackson, all senior leaders within OP participate fully in engagement activities. The organization chart is provided below and Appendix B provides examples of vendor engagement-related activities for additional contracts and grants team members.

### NASA OFFICE OF PROCUREMENT ORGANIZATION CHART





# SECTION 2

## PROCUREMENT CONTRACT ENGAGEMENT

### PRE-AWARD VENDOR ENGAGEMENT

NASA hosts various vendor engagement events throughout the year to obtain feedback from industry on topics that include, but are not limited to:

- Technical feasibility of a particular requirement
- NASA’s preliminary evaluation of a particular system
- Specific requirements that significantly impact the viability of or are major cost drivers to industry
- Requirements definition and detail in NASA solicitations—is the level sufficient to design, develop, produce, and operate the articles to be procured
- Identification of any unnecessary, overly burdensome, and/or overly prescriptive requirements



OP booth at the National Contract Management Association’s World Congress 2023 in Nashville, Tennessee. Photo credit: OP BOT Team

These events include industry days, small business outreach sessions, pre-solicitation conferences, Request for Proposals (RFPs) question and answer sessions, and issuance of request for information (RFI) to conduct proactive and aggressive market research.

To the maximum extent, events are posted and updated regularly, as required, using the existing “special notices” function in the Opportunities section of SAM.gov as a single portal of information for interested firms.

To provide a fair opportunity to compete for NASA procurements, NASA takes a strategic and intentional approach at targeting the various social economic categories (Small Business, Small Disadvantaged Business, Women-Owned Small Business, Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business and Historically Underutilized Business Zone concerns) that have historically been underrepresented in NASA’s procurement processes.

The following are highlights of key pre-award activities and resources.

#### 1. The Acquisition Forecast

The NASA Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Supplement (NFS) at 1807.72, Acquisition Forecasting, delineates NASA’s policy regarding the preparation of an annual acquisition forecast and semiannual update of expected contract opportunities for each fiscal year to alert the public of upcoming NASA procurements. The anticipated acquisitions included in the forecasts are listed by center at <http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/procurement/forecast/index.html> where they may be viewed by members of the public, industry, and government officials.

NASA recently re-engineered its internal process for maintaining and generating the semiannual forecast. The agency has drastically reduced the cycle time by providing a consolidated approach for identifying and tracking contract opportunities. This helps to ensure that the information presented on the forecast is as up-to-date as possible. In addition, the agency revised and added data fields on the forecast based on feedback from internal and external users, and to ensure NASA’s compliance with OMB’s required Category Management reporting.

NASA’s improved acquisition forecast provides detailed information regarding upcoming contracting opportunities to make it easier to find contracting opportunities across NASA’s 10 centers. With the implementation of these improvements, NASA’s rating on the annual [Professional Services Council’s Federal Business Forecast Scorecard](#) has been raised from Fair to Good. NASA is one of the few agencies with the highest possible rating of “Good” out of the 62 agencies reviewed.

#### 2. NASA Acquisition Innovation Launchpad (NAIL)

The NASA Acquisition Innovation Launchpad (NAIL) covers acquisition and procurement policy and execution techniques, including information technology systems and tools, that fall within OP. The NAIL provides a framework to facilitate the use of innovative acquisition techniques and smart program management tools. This framework will provide avenues for managed risk-taking through the submission, review, prioritization, approval, and measurement of agency testbed efforts submitted by Innovation Champions from across OP.

The NAIL empowers a culture of innovation where big ideas can come from anywhere and any level, and anyone can be an Innovation Champion. The NAIL will instill innovative acquisition practices which will result in achieving better procurement outcomes, improving customer experiences, and meeting or exceeding agency small business and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) strategic goals.

In addition to the internal component of the NAIL, NASA will establish a NAIL industry council to solicit and provide industry input in the form of focus groups. This council will provide open and transparent communication and a source for agency feedback. Participation in these groups will be voluntarily and rotational in nature.

NAIL Press Release: <https://www.nasa.gov/press-release/nasa-launches-new-framework-for-procurement-ideas-solutions>.

Industry participants interested in being a part of future NAIL focus groups should complete the Industry Interest Form: <https://www.nasa.gov/office/procurement/nail-industry-interest>





This rendering shows the area where NASA's Curiosity Mars rover climbed a steep slope to reach a location called Gediz Vallis channel, which it began exploring for several months starting in February 2024.  
Photo credit: NASA / JPL-Caltech / UC Berkeley

### 3. NASA Vendor Database

NASA Vendor Database is open to all vendors, both large and small, who wish to do business with NASA. Vendors can post capability briefs in any format and sign up to receive email notifications concerning business opportunities with NASA such as Source Sought Notices, RFIs, RFPs and the NASA Office of Small Business Programs Newsletter. This database is web-based and available at [NASA Vendor Database – NASA](#).

### 4. NASA Office of Small Business Program's Mobile App

The Office of Small Business Program's (OSBP) official mobile app is NASA OSBP Mobile. This app is designed as a user-friendly tool for contractors and other users to learn how to do business with NASA and have all the required resources at their fingertips. Key features allow users, vendors, and government officials to easily contact NASA Center Small Business Specialists and view active contract listings by product categories such as IT, Engineering, Finance and Accounting, Construction, Facilities, Occupational Health, Office Supplies, Protective Services, and others. The app is available for both iOS and Android devices and offers users current information on upcoming networking events.

### 5. Engagement events

NASA will execute a robust and enhanced outreach and community engagement strategy; including intentional interactions between agency acquisition personnel companies from underserved communities.

Engagement events including industry days, pre-solicitation conferences, RFP question and answer sessions, etc. are posted as "special notices" in the Opportunities section of [SAM.gov](#) for interested firms.

OSBP hosts Quarterly Outreach Events, Center Outreach Events, Learning Series Webinars, and Small Business Listening Sessions with all events posted on the website. Notification is also provided to those with the app and via the NASA social media accounts.

### 6. Draft Request for Proposals

The Contracting Officer (CO) will issue draft RFPS for all competitive acquisitions expected to exceed \$10M except for Broad agency Announcements, Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) solicitations, and architect-and-engineering services, unless the CO determines in writing that a draft RFP is not beneficial to the acquisition (see NFS 1815.201, Exchanges

with industry before receipt of proposals). When a draft RFP is issued, it requests that potential offerors identify unnecessary or inefficient requirements. If the draft RFP contains government-unique standards, prospective offerors are invited to identify voluntary consensus standards that meet the government's requirements as alternatives to government-unique standards ([See FAR 11.101](#)). Comments are also requested on any perceived safety, occupational health, security (including information technology security), environmental, property, quality assurance, export control, and/or other programmatic risk issues associated with performance of the work.

The acquisition planning schedule is structured to provide adequate time for issuance of the draft RFP, prospective offeror review and comment, and NASA evaluation and disposition of the comments. The RFP may be modified as a result of industry questions and comments provided in response to the draft RFP.

### 7. Pre-proposal Conferences and Site Tours

NASA hosts conferences and site tours to facilitate the early exchange of information with prospective offerors before receiving proposals, in accordance with FAR 15.201. Such events provide a means of

exchanging information to improve potential offerors' understanding of the agency's requirements, enhance the government's ability to obtain quality supplies/ services, and increase efficiency in proposal preparation, evaluation, negotiation, and award.

A pre-proposal conference to brief prospective offerors may be conducted after a solicitation has been issued, but before proposals are received, in accordance with FAR 15.201. NASA COs, in coordination with management and the Source Evaluation Board, decide, prior to issuance of the RFP, whether a pre-proposal conference is required. These conferences benefit both the government and prospective offerors in acquisitions where it is necessary to explain or clarify specifications and requirements. Prospective offerors have expressed appreciation for the opportunity to network with other industry representatives.

### 8. Regional Outreach Events


OP and the OSBP hosts conferences to promote industry awareness of upcoming agency programs and requirements. Participants can leverage the opportunity to network, exchange innovative ideas, and benefit from the discussion of contracting best practices.



## POST-AWARD AND ONGOING VENDOR ENGAGEMENT

NASA takes a strategic approach to finding innovative, cost-effective ways to procure its science, aeronautics, and space exploration requirements with continuing industry engagement after award to remove barriers, enhance innovation, and maximize the business relationship between industry and government.

Several post-award and ongoing vendor engagement activities are described below.



Ebb and flow in the Chausey Islands.  
Photo credit: Landsat 8 - OLI

### 1. Oral Debriefings

Face-to-face debriefings give offerors a better understanding of the source evaluation board findings and how the source selection authority reached their decision. NASA Debriefing Policy is found at NFS 1872.504 and requires a debrief if requested by unsuccessful proposers (in accordance with FAR 15.5).

### 2. OP Industry Engagement

As the Senior Procurement Executive, Deputy Chief Acquisition Officer, and Assistant Administrator for the Office of Procurement, Ms. Karla Smith Jackson proactively meets with industry partners currently supporting NASA programs or projects at least twice monthly to discuss and address issues or concerns they may have in doing business with the agency.

Companies should not request a meeting to provide a capability presentation. For sharing company capabilities, we encourage companies to sign up for the [NASA Vendor Database](#). This database is open to all vendors, both large and small, who wish to do business with NASA. As company representatives, vendors can include capability briefs and sign-up to receive e-mail alerts for NASA procurement notices as posted on [sam.gov/Contract Opportunities](https://sam.gov/Contract Opportunities). More information on signing up for the database can be found at <https://www.nasa.gov/osbp/vendor-database/>.

The link to request a meeting with the Senior Procurement executive is available here: <https://www.nasa.gov/doing-business-with-nasa/submit-a-request-to-meet-with-the-senior-procurement-executive/>. Vendors are also invited to provide feedback via the

[Vendor Executive Feedback](#) page on the OP website. Feedback is sought when/if a company's interest in responding to a NASA request for proposal is impacted or diminished by NASA actions or factors. Questions regarding a specific NASA procurement should be forwarded to the cognizant CO for that procurement; not to this feedback site. The agency Competition Advocate (Deputy Assistant Administrator for Procurement) may engage with commenters after reviewing submittals.

In addition to Ms. Smith Jackson, OP Leadership at Headquarters and each center is available to meet with individual vendors and associations periodically to:

- Forge new networks and build and maintain business relationships with NASA supplier base

- Engage industry collaboratively to drive innovation throughout the acquisition lifecycle
- Communicate sharable information about NASA's mission, programs, projects contracts, and grants
- Gather information and ideas related to key initiatives, such as Made in America and supply chain risks, DEIA, Category Management, Small Business and Historically Black Colleges and Universities/Minority Serving Institutions, mentoring partnerships, etc.
- Create opportunities to educate and reduce barriers to entry for new entrants and underserved communities to NASA procurements
- Communicate/elevate acquisition innovation across NASA, the Federal Government, and industry (e.g., webinars, training, websites)



Links to contact each Procurement Office are provided below. The sites will identify the Procurement Officer and/or Deputy at each location. Note: If seeking to reach a Center Director's office, Center home page links are available on the NASA Organization webpage here: <https://www.nasa.gov/organization/#centers-facilities>.

## PROCUREMENT OFFICES

[Goddard Space Flight Center \(GSFC\)](#) – Procurement Officer: [Mary Stevens](#)

[Information Technology Procurement Office](#) – Procurement Officer: [Sarah Pollock](#)

[Johnson Space Center \(JSC\)](#) – Procurement Officer: [Bradley Niese](#)

[Kennedy Space Center \(KSC\)](#) – Procurement Officer: [Gerald Norris](#)

[Marshall Space Flight Center \(MSFC\)](#) – Procurement Officer: [John Cannaday](#)

[NASA Office of JPL Management and Oversight \(NOJMO\)](#) – Procurement Officer: [James Williams](#)

[Stennis Space Center \(SSC\)](#) – Procurement Officer: [Eli Ouder](#)

[NASA Shared Services Center \(NSSC\)](#) – Procurement Officer: [Eli Ouder](#)

### Research Centers:

Director, Research Centers Procurement Office: [Todd Pospisil](#)

Deputy Procurement Officer: [Kurt Straub](#)

[Armstrong Flight Research Center \(AFRC\)](#) – Associate Procurement Officer: [James Eastman](#)

### Chief of Contracting Offices within the Research Center Procurement Office:

Ames Research Center (ARC) – Chief of Contracting: [Lauren Johnson](#)

Armstrong Flight Research Center (AFRC) – Chief of Contracting: [Jennifer Stock](#)

Glenn Research Center (GRC) – Chief of Contracting: [Leahmarie Koury](#)

Langley Research Center (LaRC) – Chief of Contracting: [Teresa Hass](#)

As a FAR Council member agency, NASA meets with various diverse associations to discuss publicly available information about FAR changes directed by Executives Orders, legislation, and OMB memorandums to implement important policy initiatives, change, update, and clarify acquisition practices. Note: The Office of Federal Procurement Policy Act (41 U.S.C. 421) designated Department of Defense, NASA, and General Service Administration as members of the FAR Council and gives the FAR Council the authority to regulate government-wide procurement policies and regulatory activities.

### 3. The “Doing Business with NASA” Website

The “[Doing Business with NASA](#)” website includes the agency’s Industry Liaison points of contact; Procurement Ombudsman information; and Competition Advocate points of contact. Links to the [NASA Office of Small Business Programs](#), [NASA Small Business Innovation Research/Small Business Technology Transfer \(SBIR\) Programs](#), and the [NASA Partnership Office](#) are also posted on the site.

### 4. NASA Vendor Engagement Meetings

OP and OSBP engagement events include periodic outreach efforts such as virtual meetings, webinars, conference calls, and face to face smaller round-table discussions or larger industry town hall meetings with vendors and industry associations. Topics may include but are not limited to: The Role of the Procurement Ombudsman; Innovations in Supply Chain Management Practices, Novel and Complex FAR and NFS Policy Updates and How They Affect Industry. These events will also serve as listening sessions to foster exchanges between government and industry, as well as industry to industry, on topics that are helpful but rarely discussed in these types of forums.

### 5. Contractor Steering Council

The Council (consisting of on/near site contractors and civil service employees) provides an informal

framework in which contractors with a vested interest and existing business near the hosting center can establish working relationships to enhance the partnership bond that already exists. The council meetings are held monthly or quarterly, depending on the NASA Centers, and provides timely information and advice on center-wide requirements and issues of mutual interest and acts as a forum for ad-hoc communications between the Center and the local contractor community. An executive committee assists and guides the council co-chairs.

### 6. The Small Business Industry Awards Program

The Small Business Industry Awards recognize the outstanding Small Business Prime Contractor, Small Business Subcontractor, Large Business Prime Contractor, and Mentor-Protégé Agreement that support NASA in achieving its mission.

### 7. Small Business Showcase

The small business showcase is hosted quarterly and allows vendors to display their capabilities. In addition to showcasing their talents, vendors also inquire about potential opportunities at NASA. Attendees include, as available, the Small Business Specialists, Small Business Technical Advisor, available COs, and Prime Contractor representatives.

Atlanta, Georgia pictured during nighttime from the International Space Station as it orbited 260 miles above the Peach State.

Photo credit: ISS > Digital Camera



# SECTION 3: NASA GRANT AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT APPLICANT AND RECIPIENT COMMUNICATION PLAN

Evening Glow in the Junggar Basin - The setting Sun illuminates the western faces of sand dunes across this low-lying basin in northwestern China.  
Photo credit: ISS > Digital Camera

## OVERVIEW

According to the Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) NASA Annual Financial Report, NASA spends approximately 5.1% (or \$1.3B) of its annual budget on grants to educational institutions, non-profit organizations, research consortia, museums, science centers, and other entities that support STEM education and outreach activities.

### A. COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

NASA's communication objectives with its grant and cooperative agreement applicants and recipients are embedded in its organizational ethos, aiming to create a seamless, transparent, and supportive grant lifecycle experience for our recipient community. These objectives revolve around establishing clear, proactive, and collaborative communication channels, ensuring that every interaction with applicants and recipients is characterized by transparency, responsiveness, respect, and are done in adherence to compliance. By initiating early and ongoing dialogue, providing accurate and timely information, responding swiftly to inquiries, and fostering a respectful and ethical environment, NASA strives to build a foundation of mutual trust and understanding. This approach not only facilitates the efficient and effective management of grants but also aligns with NASA's broader commitment to advancing scientific knowledge and innovation through strong, cooperative partnerships.

The objectives outlined in this communication plan include:

- Increasing awareness and understanding of NASA's grant opportunities, policies, and procedures among potential and current grant recipients

- Providing timely, accurate, and consistent information to grant recipients throughout the grant lifecycle
- Soliciting feedback and input from grant recipients to improve NASA's grant processes and outcomes
- Fostering collaboration and partnership among grant recipients and NASA's STEM stakeholders

### B. COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES

NASA maintains a robust system for managing and communicating with grant and cooperative agreement recipients. This system embodies a set of core principles that guide interactions throughout all phases of the grant lifecycle. These principles are crucial in establishing a smooth, efficient, and transparent process, and ensuring that both NASA and its grant recipients are aligned in their objectives and expectations. They reflect NASA's commitment to maintaining high standards of communication and collaboration, which are essential for the success of its wide-ranging projects and initiatives.

NASA follows these principles to communicate effectively with grant recipients throughout all phases of the grant lifecycle:

- **Be proactive:** NASA initiates communication with grant recipients as early as possible to share information, solicit feedback, and address issues, and provide assistance
- **Be transparent:** NASA provides clear, accurate, consistent, and timely information to grant recipients on its requirements, solicitations, evaluation criteria, acquisition strategies, award decisions, performance expectations, and administration processes
- **Be responsive:** NASA acknowledges and answers questions or concerns from grant recipients promptly and courteously
- **Be respectful:** NASA treats grant recipients fairly, ethically, and professionally
- **Be collaborative:** NASA engages in constructive dialogue and exchange of ideas with grant recipients to foster mutual understanding and trust
- **Be compliant:** NASA adheres to all applicable laws, regulations, policies, and procedures governing its communication with grant recipients. NASA follows the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards ([2 CFR Part 200](#)), which establishes standards for consistent and uniform management of Federal awards, as adopted by [2 CFR 1800](#)

These principles are not just guidelines but are embedded in NASA's approach to managing grants, reflecting its commitment to excellence, integrity, and collaboration in all its endeavors.

### C. A PHASED APPROACH TO RECIPIENT ENGAGEMENT

NASA's approach to managing and communicating with grant and cooperative agreement applicants and recipients is structured and adapted to each phase of a grant's lifecycle. This communication strategy ensures that every stage, from proposal to closeout, is supported by clear, effective, and responsive interactions. Central to this strategy are the principles of proactivity, transparency, responsiveness, respect, collaboration, and compliance, which NASA applies to foster a constructive and mutually beneficial relationship with its stakeholders. By aligning its communication methods with the specific needs and challenges of each phase, NASA not only enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of the grant process but also nurtures a climate of trust and cooperation with its applicants and recipients. This comprehensive approach underscores NASA's dedication to maintaining the highest standards of communication and collaboration, equal to the vital for the advancement of our recipient's funded projects. NASA uses different communication strategies depending on the purpose, audience, and the phase of the grant lifecycle.

#### i. Pre-Award

NASA Office of Procurement communicates with proposers and potential proposers through the [Proposer's Guide](#). The Proposer's guide provides overall NASA-wide application instructions and pre-award information for both applicants and potential applicants interested in grant and cooperative agreement opportunities for financial assistance from NASA. The information in the Proposer's guide is supplemented by guidance from the NASA Mission Directorates and program offices.



NASA Mission Directorates and program offices communicate primarily through the issuance of notices of funding opportunities (NOFOs) to inform the community that funding is available, provide eligibility criteria, application instructions, evaluation criteria, and points of contact. NASA Mission Directorates and program offices also respond to inquiries from applicants regarding specific questions or issues related to their applications.

Additional communication methods include:

- Posting NOFOs on Grants.gov and the NASA Solicitation and Proposal Integrated Review and Evaluation System (NSPIRES)
- Hosting pre-application webinars or workshops
- Publishing frequently asked questions on websites or email listservs
- Providing email support to applicants

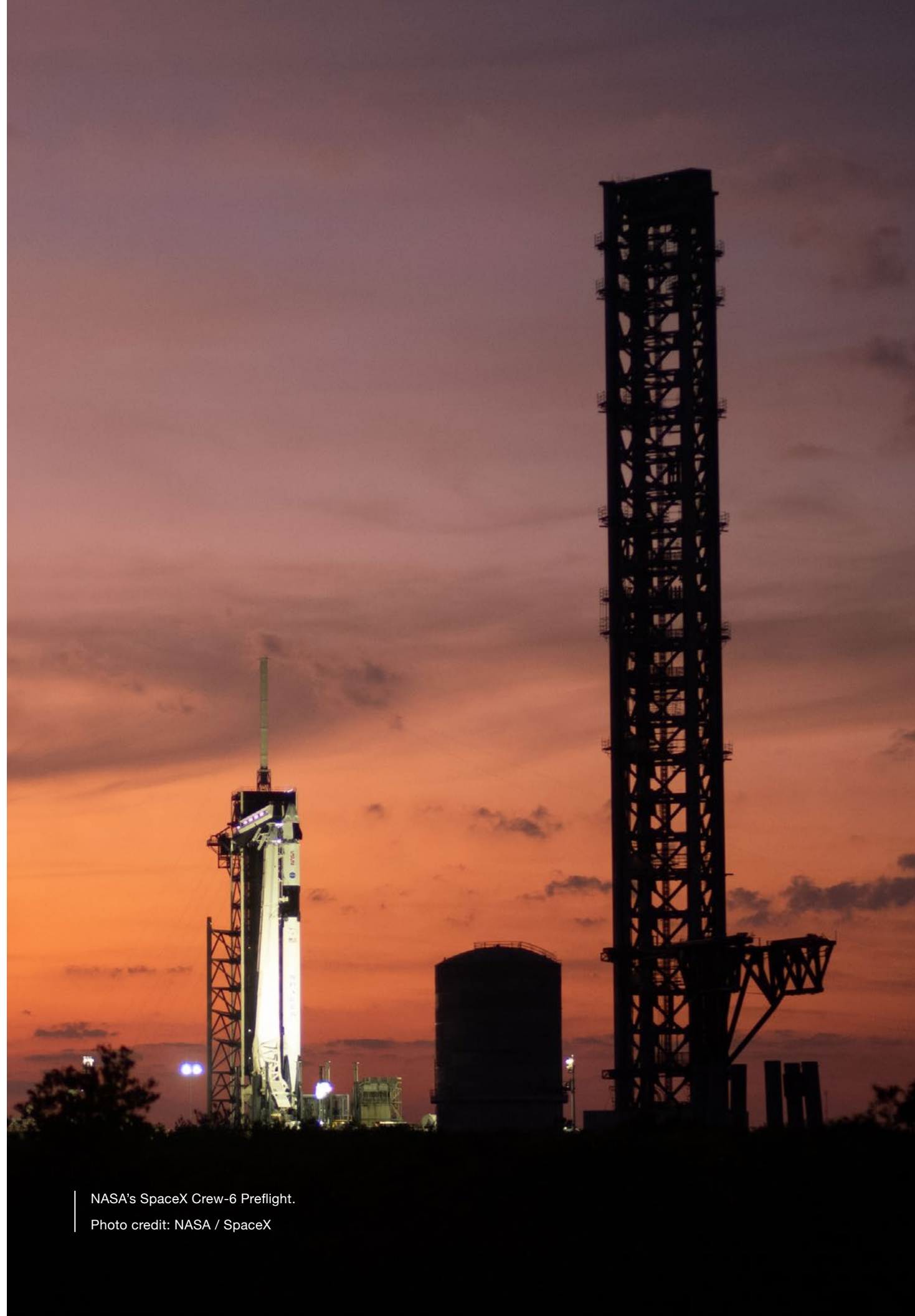
#### ii. Award

OP communicates with successful applicants via email by providing a Notice of Intent to Make a Federal Award or Notice of Award (NF-168) to notify them of their pending or enacted award status, negotiate the terms and conditions of the award, and/or finalize the award documents.

#### iii. Post-Award:

OP publishes the [Grant and Cooperative Agreement Manual \(GCAM\)](#) which provides policy guidance to grant and cooperative agreement recipients on the implementation of government-wide and NASA-specific regulations for administering grants and cooperative agreements with educational and non-profit organizations; State, local, and Indian tribal governments; and for-profit organizations.

NASA communicates with grant recipients to monitor their performance, provide technical assistance or guidance, ensure compliance with Federal requirements, resolve issues or problems, process amendments or modifications, and facilitate closeout activities.



NASA's SpaceX Crew-6 Preflight.  
Photo credit: NASA / SpaceX

Some communication methods include:

- Reviewing performance and financial reports submitted via electronic systems or email
- Conducting site visits
- Offering webinars or workshops on topics such as financial management, reporting requirements, data quality, evaluation methods, etc.
- Participating in meetings or conferences with grant recipients or their representatives
- Sending email alerts on deadlines or actions needed
- Processing requests for changes or approvals via electronic systems or email

OP also ensures that the recipient community is compliant with the requirements of the single audit. The single audit for grants is designed to streamline the auditing process, allowing recipients of multiple federal grants to undergo just one audit covering all their federal funding. This audit assesses the grantee's financial statements, internal controls, and compliance with the requirements of the federal programs they participate in. It aims to ensure the efficient and effective use of federal funds while reducing the administrative burden on grant recipients.

#### iv. Closeout:

The closeout phase also involves resolving any outstanding issues, such as audit findings, property disposition, or unspent funds. The communication that occurs between OP and the grant recipient in the closeout phase is essential to ensure compliance, accountability, and transparency of the grant activities and outcomes.

Some communication methods include:

- Reviewing final performance and financial reports submitted via electronic systems or email
- Sending email alerts on deadlines or actions needed to closeout a NASA grant or cooperative agreement



## D. COMMUNICATION METHODS

NASA uses various methods to communicate with grant recipients through each phase of the grant lifecycle. These methods include:

### i. Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFOs)

NASA publishes NOFOs to announce the availability of funds for grant programs. NOFOs provide general information on the program objectives, eligibility criteria, application instructions, evaluation criteria, award terms and conditions, reporting requirements, and points of contact. NOFOs are updated as needed to reflect any changes or clarifications. NASA NOFOs are posted in two places for access by the public:

- [Grants.gov](#): Grants.gov is a website that allows users to find and apply for federal grants. It is a centralized source of information and access for grant programs across various federal agencies. Grants.gov aims to improve the transparency and efficiency of the grant-making process, as well as to increase public awareness and participation in grant opportunities.
- [NSPIRES](#): NASA Solicitation and Proposal Integrated Review and Evaluation System (NSPIRES): The official NASA system used to receive, evaluate, and select proposals submitted in response to different types of NASA announcements. NSPIRES is an online system that supports the NASA research community in conducting scientific and technical research activities. It allows users to search for funding opportunities, submit proposals, review, and evaluate proposals.

### ii. Requests for Information (RFIs)

RFIs are posted on [federalregister.gov](#) or other platforms to obtain information from potential grant applicants, current recipients, and the general public to provide their perspective on their proposed policies, solutions, or methodologies to address various items of the day. RFIs help NASA refine its policy requirements, solicitations, evaluation criteria, and acquisition strategies with an eye toward customer service and public interest.

### iii. Post-Award Conferences

Post-Award conferences hosted by NASA Mission Directorates or program offices to provide information and guidance on the terms and conditions, reporting requirements, performance expectations, and administration processes of a grant award. Post-award conferences help NASA ensure that grant recipients have a clear and consistent understanding of their roles and responsibilities under the award. Post-award conferences also help grant recipients establish effective communication channels and working relationships with NASA personnel.

### iv. Technical Assistance Workshops

Technical assistance workshops are hosted by NASA to provide training and support on administrative or specific technical aspects of a grant award, such as data management, reporting systems, evaluation methods, or best practices. Technical assistance workshops help NASA ensure that grant recipients have the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their tasks under the grant award. Technical assistance workshops also help grant recipients enhance their technical capabilities and improve their performance outcomes.

### v. Webinars

NASA conducts webinars for potential and current grant recipients to provide information on NOFOs, application processes, award administration, reporting requirements, best practices, lessons learned, success stories, and other topics of interest. Webinars are announced via NSPIRES, social media platforms, and email listservs. Webinars are generally recorded and archived for future reference. Webinars also provide an opportunity for grant recipients to ask questions and interact with NASA staff.

In 2023, GPC released the following webinars:

- [Ask NASA: What to Know Before Applying for a NASA Grant or Cooperative Agreement](#) – provides useful tips and guidance for potential applicants who want to pursue funding opportunities from NASA.
- [Ask NASA: You were awarded a Grant. Now What?](#)

- explains the steps and resources for grant recipients to successfully manage their projects and collaborate with NASA.

## E. EMAIL

NASA uses email to communicate with grant recipients on various matters related to grant opportunities, applications, award issuance, and award administration throughout the award lifecycle. To ensure effective communication with your agency, please ensure your GO has the latest contact information.

## F. RECIPIENT COMMUNICATIONS EXAMPLES

To maintain an open and compliant atmosphere, NASA has implemented several communications strategies for engagement with grant recipients. Some examples are:

### i. Policy Promulgation

NASA OP GPC is primarily responsible for providing leadership and oversight in grants management policy and compliance and internal guidance and training to NASA Technical Officers, Grant Officers, and the Grants Community implementing government-wide and NASA specific regulations for awarding and administering grants and cooperative agreements. The GPC Team also establishes and maintains grant and cooperative agreement policies and regulations through the following means:

- The GCAM. The [GCAM](#) is NASA's definitive policy guide for the implementation of government-wide and NASA-specific regulations for awarding and administering grants and cooperative agreements. The GCAM clarifies the award roles, responsibilities, and requirements, offer a centralized location for award resources, and provide a concise and practical guide for the NASA grant community in the administration of grants and cooperative agreements. Grant and cooperative agreement award recipients should use the GCAM to reference NASA-specific requirements, reference award reporting requirements, and answer questions about processes and procedures associated with the NASA award.

- **Grant Information Circulars:** Grant Information Circulars (GICs) are documents that inform NASA programs, Grant Officers, Technical Officers and recipients about new or revised policies and procedures related to the award and administration of grants and cooperative agreements at NASA. GICs are issued by GPC to effectuate changes to the NASA GCAM, or other relevant guidance.
- **Important Note:** GPC creates agency-wide policy. Missions and programs create supplemental policy to implement and establish processes that are applicable to their grant and cooperative agreement programs.

### ii. NASA Equity Action Plan

The [NASA Equity Action Plan](#) (EAP) outlines NASA's actions to promote equity in its programs and activities, including its grants and cooperative agreements in accordance with EOs: [13985](#), [14031](#), and [14091](#). Additional details are in Section 4, DEIA.

### iii. NASA Grants Fact Sheets

The [The NASA Grants Fact Sheets](#) provide an overview of the landscape of NASA's grants as well as an introduction to the grant programs offered by NASA. The purpose of the fact sheets is to inform potential applicants and the public of the grant-issuing Mission Directorate's program objectives, average award obligations, common grant types, and program resources to help to promote transparency and accountability for NASA's federal grant spending.

### iv. Federal Demonstration Partnership

The [Federal Demonstration Partnership](#) (FDP) is an association of federal agencies, research policy organizations and academic research institutions with administrative, faculty and technical representation. FDP has a longstanding partnership between the federal funding agencies and research institutions that works to reduce the administrative burdens associated with research grants and contracts. The FDP's membership consists of 217 institutions and 10 federal agencies, including NASA.

The FDP conducts surveys, pilots, studies, and recommendations on topics such as subrecipient monitoring,





CLPS PM-1 Astrobotic/ULA roll-out for launch.

Photo credit: NASA / Cory S Huston

prior approval requirements, reporting formats, and data sharing. The FDP meets three times a year and NASA provides policy and program updates on important grant related initiatives at each FDP Federal update session.

**v. Acquisition Forecast Tool for Grants and Cooperative Agreement Announcements**

OP's [Acquisition Forecast Tool](#) has been updated to include financial assistance. The forecast now provides the public with information on upcoming grant, cooperative agreement, and contract opportunities. The tool is updated twice a year, once in the spring and again in the fall to help organizations prioritize resources for applying or managing the opportunities most aligned to the mission of the applicant organization.

**vi. Federal Advisory Groups (OMB/OFFM)**

NASA consults with various Federal advisory groups that provide input and advice on its policies, programs, and activities, including its grants and cooperative agreements. Primarily, NASA receives guidance from the [Office of Management and Budget](#), [Office of Federal Financial Management](#).

**vii. Non-Federal Advisory Groups**

NASA consults with various non-Federal advisory groups representing academia that provide input and advice on its grants policies, programs, and activities.

**G. CONTACT INFORMATION**

NASA's organizational structure includes several Mission Directorates, each with its unique focus and responsibilities, and offers a range of grant and/or cooperative agreement programs. Each directorate plays a crucial role in advancing NASA's goals and missions, contributing significantly to space exploration, scientific discovery, and technological innovation. A brief overview is below, but for more detailed information on NASA's mission directorates, you can visit their official website: [NASA Directorates](#).

**i. Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate**

This directorate is at the forefront of aviation research and development. It works on transforming aviation to make it more sustainable and accessible, continuing



Artemis II Orion Underway Recovery Test 11 (URT-11) - Day 2.  
Photo credit: NASA / Isaac Watson

NASA's long-standing heritage in aeronautical innovation. They oversee programs related to advanced air vehicles, airspace operations and safety, integrated aviation systems, transformative aeronautics concepts, and aero sciences evaluation and test capabilities.

**ii. Exploration Systems Development Mission Directorate**

Focused on the Artemis program and NASA's Moon to Mars exploration approach, this directorate manages human exploration system development for lunar orbital, lunar surface, and Mars exploration. It integrates science into the human system elements and is responsible for developing lunar and Mars architectures.

**iii. Science Mission Directorate**

This directorate is responsible for a broad range of scientific endeavors in astrophysics, Earth sciences, heliophysics, and planetary sciences. It aims to understand and explore the universe, including our own planet.

**iv. Space Operations Mission Directorate**

This directorate manages NASA's space operations, including human space exploration efforts. It is involved in communication, launch services, research capabilities, and crew support for various missions.

**v. Space Technology Mission Directorate**

This directorate focuses on developing innovative technologies to solve the nation's toughest challenges and enable future NASA and commercial missions to the Moon, Mars, and beyond.

**vi. Office of Skilled science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Engagement**

This office strives to increase K-2 involvement in NASA projects, enhance higher education, support underrepresented/underserved communities, strengthen online education, and boost NASA's contribution to informal education. The intended outcome is a generation prepared to code, calculate, design, and discover its way to a new era of American innovation.

If you have any questions or concerns about how NASA communicates to its recipient community, please reach out to NASA in the following ways:

- **GPC Website:** [Grants Policy and Compliance Team – NASA](#)
- GPC's website is used primarily as a repository for the most current agency-wide guidance on grants and cooperative agreements
- **NSSC Website:** [Grants – NASA](#)
- The NSSC's website is used as an avenue for two-way communication between NASA and its recipients. Recipients may perform certain activities on the NSSC website such as check on grant status, submit requests for prior approval, submit no-cost extensions, and more
- **Grants Policy and Compliance Email:** [hq-dl-grants-policy-compliance@mail.nasa.gov](mailto:hq-dl-grants-policy-compliance@mail.nasa.gov)
- **NSSC email:** [Nssc-contactcenter@nasa.gov](mailto:Nssc-contactcenter@nasa.gov)



# SECTION 4: DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND ACCESSIBILITY OUTREACH

Golden Fields in Romania - Agricultural plots are carpeted in yellow when rapeseed or canola plants bloom.  
Photo credit: NASA Earth Observatory / Lauren Dauphin

NASA promotes diversity in contracting efforts. The NASA Administrator’s 2023 Equity Action Plan (EAP) Foreword states:

*“One of our greatest missions lies here at home. In this golden age of space exploration, NASA’s commitment to advancing equity continues unabated. To meet NASA’s potential on Earth, in the air, and in the Cosmos, our Nation’s space agency is reckoning with and addressing the long-standing disparities among underserved communities. Equity must be embedded in all our endeavors, from expanding opportunities for businesses in historically underserved communities to partner with NASA, to leveraging Earth science to help mitigate environmental challenges.”*

The following activities provide insight into actions that specifically seek to expand opportunities for underrepresented and underserved communities consistent with current Executive Orders and other federal guidance. OP partners with NASA mission directorates and the Chief Program Management Officer to support DEIA program and project outreach initiatives as appropriate.

## A. AGENCY EQUITY ACTION PLAN

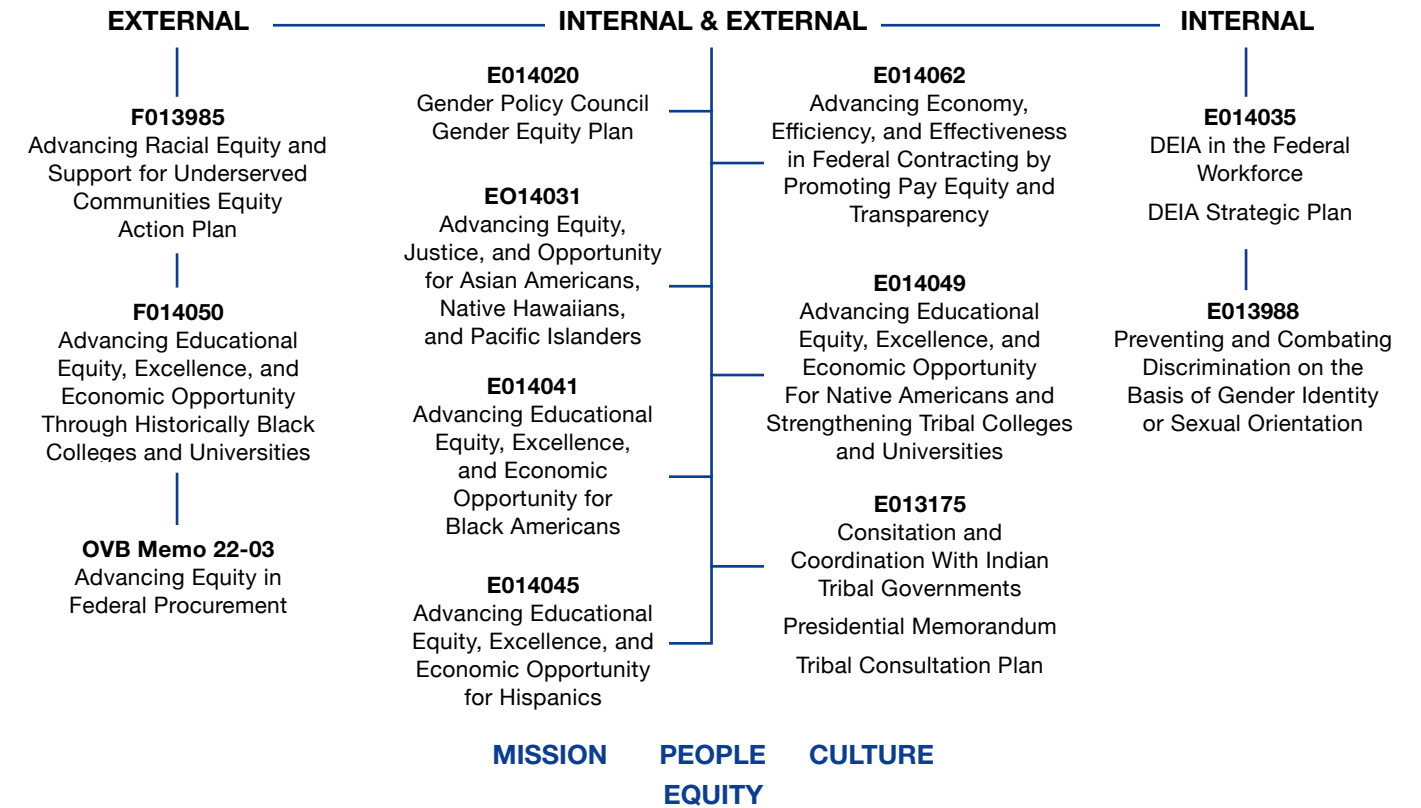
OP and OSBP partner on focus area 1 in the plan which discusses joint efforts to increase engagement in underserved communities by:

- Setting aside all construction requirements from the Simplified Acquisition Threshold (\$250K to \$5M) to the 8(a) Business Development Programs
- Continuing to work throughout the agency to improve processes to ensure NASA’s forecasting tool is as accurate as possible
- Promoting [NASA’s Acquisition Forecast](#) and [Active Contracts Lists](#) to help underserved communities find opportunities
- Developing a Small and Minority Business Enterprise Communication Plan
- Increasing focused outreach, training, and community engagement in underserved communities (SDB, Women-Owned, Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Businesses; Historically

Underutilized Business Zones; Historically Black College and University (HBCU) and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) to meet federally mandated small business goals

- Implementing small business listening sessions
- Utilizing various feedback methods and attendance metrics to assess the effectiveness of outreach efforts to continuously and strategically improve outreach and training to underserved communities
- Developing a Small Business Training Program to expand training for the acquisition workforce to increase knowledge of underserved communities and small business programs, and the specific procurement-related challenges they face
- Developing a dashboard for NASA’s mission offices to track total SB/SDB obligations dollars their organization is obligating (currently this information is only available at the Center level)
- Pursuing statutory/regulatory changes to permit AbilityOne contractors to be considered SDBs

## AGENCY-WIDE DEIA INITIATIVES



The Grants Policy team is responsible for EAP Focus Area 2 with a key focus on increasing the participation of small and minority businesses in NASA grants and cooperative agreements by: (1) making them aware of the opportunities and (2) providing the tools, resources, training, and knowledge needed to partner with the agency. NASA awards about 3,000 grants and cooperative agreements each year, the majority across a range of science disciplines.

Specifically, GPC has committed to:

- **Outreach:** GPC engages with various stakeholders, such as grant recipients, NASA Centers, and external partners, to raise awareness of the equity goals and principles of NASA. GPC also provides guidance and support to ensure that grant activities are aligned with the agency’s mission and values.

- In Calendar Year 2024 (CY24), GPC will participate in outreach events with the following groups and events:

- [US Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [National Society of Black Engineers](#)
- [National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [National Council of University Research Administrators](#)
- [National Grants Management Association](#)



- **Training:** GPC committed to developing and delivering training for NASA grant recipients on a variety of topics related to the grant lifecycle. GPC also monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of these training programs and identifies areas for improvement. These videos provide useful information and guidance for potential and current recipients of NASA grants and cooperative agreements, covering the entire lifecycle of these awards from application to closeout.
- Examples of GPC developed training include:
  - [Grants and Cooperative Agreements 101](#) – This video explains the basic concepts and definitions of grants and cooperative agreements, such as the difference between assistance and acquisition, types of awards, roles and responsibilities, and applicable regulations.
  - [Grants and Cooperative Agreements 102](#) – This video covers the pre-award process for NASA grants and cooperative agreements, including how to find funding opportunities, how to prepare and submit applications, and how to understand the award terms and conditions.
  - [Intro to Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations](#) – This video introduces the Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR), which is the primary source of guidance for grants and cooperative agreements issued by federal agencies, including NASA. It also highlights some of the key sections and subparts of 2 CFR that are relevant for grant recipients.
  - [NASA Awards Closeout](#) – This video describes the closeout phase and why it is necessary, orients the learner to the regulations and policies that govern grant closeout; and discussed the closeout roles and responsibilities of NASA grant recipients.

- The GPC Team hosts these and other training resources for the NASA grants community on the [NASA Grants and Cooperative Agreement Playlist](#) on YouTube.

## B. INCREASED SUBCONTRACTING OPPORTUNITIES

NASA continually works to encourage and ensure that large vendors team with and mentor a diverse population of small vendors for subcontracting opportunities. NASA has a long-standing practice of promoting equal employment opportunity and diversity and will continue to foster diversity in procurement, with a focus on minority-owned and women-owned businesses.

## C. EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATIONS AT HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (HBCUs), MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTIONS (MSIs) AND SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS ORGANIZATIONS

NASA maintains a goal of 1% of total contract value of prime and subcontracting awards to HBCU and MSI, pursuant to 51 U.S.C. 30304 (Pub. L. 111-314). To accomplish this goal, NASA:

1. Hosts Technology Infusion Road Tours three times a year to discuss upcoming requirements and share information on how to do business with the agency.
2. Participates in targeted small group virtual forums with MSIs/HBCUs; and meets with various minority-based associations and organizations, such as the National Society of Black Physicists, National Society of Black Engineers, American Indian Science and Engineering Society, American Indian Higher Education Consortium, Great Minds in STEM, Society of Hispanic Profession Engineers, Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Space, Society of Asian Scientists and Engineers, Women of Color, and Society of Women Engineers.

3. Participates in the Department of Education's National HBCU Week, an annual event providing a forum to exchange information and share innovations among and between institutions. NASA specifically seeks to increase the understanding of federal policies that support higher education institution participation in federal acquisition.

NASA has seen increasing numbers of minority institutions doing business with the agency as a result of outreach efforts. Thirteen Federal agencies/departments have accepted NASA's invitation to participate at Technology Infusion Road Tour events further expanding opportunities for these educational institutions.

## D. INCLUSION SUMMIT

The Office of Procurement participates in the agency's Inclusion Summits and related activities. Past events have included speakers from industry and agency leadership, breakout sessions, sharing of best practices and lessons learned, networking, and more.

## E. NASA OSBP MEETINGS

The Office of Small Business Programs hosts [outreach events](#) aimed at engaging and communicating with industry to ensure the agency has access to new entrants, innovative contractors, and members of the underserved and underrepresented communities.

OP will continue to support OSBP meetings to share information on how to do business with the agency, the current Acquisition Forecast, how to comply with new acquisition practices, and so on.

## F. NASA'S MISSION EQUITY WEBSITE

The Mission Equity website (<https://www.nasa.gov/mission-equity>) shares information with industry about all of NASA's efforts underway to advance equity under programs, projects, contracts and grants, such as the Request for Information on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities in NASA Programs, Contracts and Grants Process, also known as the NASA Equity Request for Information, issued in June 2021. The site also has the Administration's Equity Agenda and a link to learn more about government-wide equity efforts.

## G. ABILITYONE

The Office of Procurement's AbilityOne Representative meets biweekly with SourceAmerica, one of the Central Non-Profit Agencies supporting the U.S. AbilityOne Commission, to discuss and collaborate on opportunities for NASA to expand contracts awarded to non-profit agencies employing individuals with disabilities. NASA pledges a targeted percentage of our total obligations for AbilityOne Program awards (to include subcontracting opportunities) based on a detailed analysis of upcoming acquisitions.



Haze Meets the Sulaiman Mountains - Clouds and haze crash into high-elevation ridges in this oblique photograph, taken by an astronaut on the International Space Station. Photo credit: ISS > Digital Camera



# APPENDIX A: NASA INDUSTRY COMMUNICATION PRIMER

The Manicougan impact crater in Canada's province of Quebec, with the Cygnus space freighter's UltraFlex solar array in the lower right foreground, is clearly visible from the International Space Station as it orbited 264 miles above.

Photo credit: ISS > Digital Camera

NASA Mission Directorate representatives (program project managers, Contracting Officer Representative (COR)) and procurement workforce members are encouraged to talk with representatives of both large and small business so that our acquisitions reflect an understanding of the commercial marketplace and the business environment of the contractors' supporting programs and projects. This exchange of information must take place within a framework that treats all current and potential contractors fairly and impartially. This document provides helpful information to prepare you to meet with industry representatives.

Depending on the nature of the prospective meeting, you should coordinate with the Procurement Office or the CO before meeting with industry. The CO may be able to provide information about their current contracts with NASA, or if they are an offeror on a current solicitation. If the company seeks to meet with staff involved in an ongoing acquisition or to discuss the status of an ongoing acquisition, no communication can occur without the permission and presence of the CO.

## Common rules for these meetings include the following:

- When meeting with contractors, prepare and follow an agenda. This allows NASA to identify specific information to be addressed or discussed. When possible, confirm in advance the number of attendees and the mix of contractor staff attending (e.g., business development or technical staff).
- NASA must conduct its business with integrity, fairness, and openness. Not only must the acquisition process have integrity, but the action of each employee must reflect integrity, fairness, and openness. NASA employees should avoid organizational conflicts of interest or even the appearance of a conflict.
- To the extent practicable, provide a standard information package that provides accurate information about the mission and requirements. Provide information that could be posted publicly on a NASA website or on SAM.gov and avoid discussions about a contractor's business relationship with NASA. You should not provide other-than-public information without prior approval of the CO, in consultation with the Office of General Counsel.
- You should not accept preferential treatment from any party and if you experience concerns related to procurement integrity or ethical conduct, consult with the CO or the Office of General Counsel Acquisition Integrity Program.

## Meeting with Industry "Do's":

- Emphasize that the primary purpose of the meeting is to learn about the industry and marketplace
- Ask questions to get an understanding of the advantages or issues associated with a particular approach or business practice
- Provide general information about our mission needs to seek an understanding of the types of supplies or services the company provides
- Provide information on how the company can be made aware of upcoming procurement actions through the Doing Business with NASA website or through monitoring synopses or other announcements made through SAM.gov

## Meeting with Industry "Don'ts":

- Discuss a NASA or other federal agency procurement action that is active (e.g., after final solicitation release during the "blackout period" through proposal evaluation and award)
- Discuss contract administration matters involving the administration of any current NASA contract
- Nothing in the meeting should be construed to authorize the contractor to work or bill for work. Changes to contracts should be coordinated with the contracting office and only made by the cognizant CO
- Discuss the cost or price of supplies or services
- Discuss any matter regarding potential claims or litigation (pending or threatened), protests, audits, or similar actions
- Accept or exchange gifts
- Accept unsolicited proposals, articles of equipment, material, or written information during informational meetings



- Disclose or discuss sensitive classes of Information including the following:
  - Sensitive procurement information, including contractor bid or proposal information and source selection information;
  - Trade secrets or other proprietary information;
  - Information about a procurement before solicitation is issued; information relating to pending procurement processes;
  - Release of any information that would create an unfair competitive advantage, or the appearance of preferential treatment;
  - Information otherwise requiring protection under FOIA or the Privacy Act;
  - Other controlled, unclassified information
- Avoid unauthorized commitments. An unauthorized agreement is an agreement that is not binding because the agency representative making the agreement lacks the proper authority to enter into an agreement on behalf of the Government. Only a CO can commit the Government. A best practice is to set clear ground rules for the communication including a statement similar to the following: *“Nothing in this meeting authorizes the contractor/company to work, start work, or bill for work”*
- Clarifying questions can be asked, but you should avoid expressing opinions or preferences
- The results of the meeting should be documented by a designated note taker and provided in support of the market research effort. The document should include the date, place, and the names, affiliations, and contact information of all meeting participants

**PLEASE NOTE:** Market research generally consists of two phases: (1) market surveillance; and (2) market investigation. Market surveillance is not tied to a specific acquisition (and not discussed in the Federal Acquisition Regulation) but generally consists of an on-going process used by the Government to surveil and keep up with advances in services, technology, product development, and/or other areas.

By contrast, market investigation involves more specific and comprehensive research in response to definite Government requirements, triggered by the initial description of the Government’s needs in terms that are sufficient to allow procurement officials to conduct market research. As a matter of procurement policy, once this occurs, no communications with industry and potential vendors shall occur after coordination with the cognizant CO.

After the release of a solicitation, the CO is the focal point of all exchanges with potential offerors. No information shall be released after the issuance of the solicitation, except by the CO.



OFFICIAL	COMMUNICATION ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
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<b>Contracting Officer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine the plan - For each appropriate acquisition (especially high-risk, high profile, or complex acquisitions), establish the timing, frequency, and degree of vendor engagement necessary to appropriately develop requirements, acquisition strategy, and performance metrics</li> <li>• Identify and recommend appropriate means of communication (one-on-one meetings, vendor days, draft RFPs, teleconferences, or combination of these methods)           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider methods that would generate new entrants to the market to increase competition</li> <li>• Work with the OSBP to identify the best ways to reach out to small businesses</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Communicate to the agency team - Set expectations with the Program Official (and COR if appropriate) about who will conduct vendor engagement efforts and how these sessions will be conducted           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the Program Official and COR to communicate appropriately for pre-solicitation efforts</li> <li>• Be the focal point for vendor communication after the solicitation is issued</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Document - Document the file as appropriate</li> <li>• Know and share the agency procurement forecast – The forecast is used by many small businesses to determine where to invest bid and proposal costs so be as knowledgeable as possible about the content of the document</li> </ul>
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**Program Official  
(Program/Project  
Manager)**

- Confer with the CO early – As soon as a need is identified, inform the CO about the level of vendor engagement needed to help the Program Official and others conduct effective market research
- Evaluate expected level of competition - Assess the need for introducing new entrants to the market and recommend to the CO ways to do this
- Notify the CO - Discuss vendor engagements activities with the CO prior to the meetings – the CO may or may not attend but should be aware of all communications
- Know the agency procurement forecast for the mission area for which you are a representative

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**Contracting Officer  
Representative**

- Focus on post-award opportunities - Identify ways to improve communication after award, such as award kick-off events, vendor boards (for multiple award contracts)
- Be cautious – Refrain from communications with the contractor that may evolve into constructive changes to the contract, which could cost money and time

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**General Counsel  
& Ethics Officer**

- Advise the CO and other members of the acquisition team so they understand what is considered appropriate communications in terms of content, delivery methodology, etc.

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**NASA Acquisition  
Innovation Lab**

- Act as a catalyst for the testing of new ideas and better ways of executing existing practices
  - Institutionalize innovation and infuse acquisition efficiency across NASA to enable improved mission outcomes
- 

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**Industry Liaison**

- Serve as a conduit among acquisition stakeholders and promotes strong agency vendor communication practices
  - Promote timely responses to general vendor requests where appropriate, including from new entrants and small businesses
  - Help program and acquisition personnel develop strategies for engaging potential vendors that can provide capabilities necessary to achieve agency missions
  - Review and update, as appropriate, this communication plan to improve interaction throughout the acquisition lifecycle

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**Acquisition Career  
Manager**

- Keep everyone informed of training or related opportunities - Provide COs, Program Officials, CORs, and others with information on training or awareness activities to improve vendor engagement

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**Office of Small  
Business Programs**

- Promote and integrate small businesses into the industrial base of contractors and subcontractors that support
  - Provide assistance to small business concerns and NASA acquisition personnel by sharing educational and training sources
  - Develop and implement appropriate outreach programs that heighten awareness of available contracting opportunities
  - Create an awareness of the benefits of working with small businesses to the NASA acquisition workforce through marketing and training to ensure optimal small business participation in acquisitions
-



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**Procurement Ombudsman**

- Facilitate communications between NASA and interested parties (e.g., offerors, potential offerors, contractors, and industry representatives) in the resolution of matters arising during the pre-award and post-award phases of a procurement
- Receive and disposition recommendations from interested parties on the way NASA can improve its acquisition process

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**Competition Advocate**

- Promote the acquisition of commercial products and services as well as the use of full and open competition

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**Grant Officer**

- Clarification Requests: Requesting additional information or clarification from applicants as needed during the review process
- Award Notification: Communicating the decision regarding grant awards, including details about the amount, terms, and conditions of the grant
- Orientation and Training: Offering orientation or training sessions to familiarize recipients with NASA's reporting systems, financial requirements, and performance expectations
- Regular Updates: Sending regular updates or reminders about key deadlines, reporting requirements, and any changes in policy or procedure that may affect the grant
- Performance Monitoring: Discussing progress reports, addressing any issues related to the project's performance, and providing feedback or recommendations
- Compliance Checks: Ensuring that the recipient is in compliance with federal regulations and NASA policies and addressing any compliance issues that arise
- Problem Resolution: Addressing and resolving any problems or disputes that may arise during the grant period
- Closeout Communication: Guiding the recipient through the closeout process, including final reporting and ensuring all obligations have been met

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**Grant and Cooperative Agreement Technical Officers**

- Program Announcements: Issuing and disseminating program announcements and solicitations for grant applications
- Pre-Award Briefings: Conducting pre-award briefings or informational sessions to provide potential applicants with details about program objectives, application procedures, and evaluation criteria, as applicable
- Application Assistance: Offering guidance to applicants on how to prepare and submit proposals, including clarifications on solicitation requirements, as applicable
- Program Policy Guidance: Providing information on program policies, federal regulations, and agency-specific requirements
- Applicant Queries: Responding to queries from applicants regarding program specifics, funding availability, and other relevant matters
- Technical Evaluation: Conducting a thorough technical evaluation of proposals, assessing their scientific and technical merit
- Recommendation for Awards: Making recommendations for grant awards based on the technical evaluation and alignment with program goals
- Technical Guidance: Offering technical guidance and expertise to recipients throughout the grant period, ensuring that project objectives are met
- Monitoring Progress: Regularly monitoring the technical progress of the grant, ensuring that milestones and deliverables are achieved as per the agreed timeline
- Report Assessment: Reviewing and assessing technical reports submitted by recipients, providing feedback and requesting additional information if needed
- Problem-Solving: Assisting in resolving technical issues or challenges that arise during the project implementation



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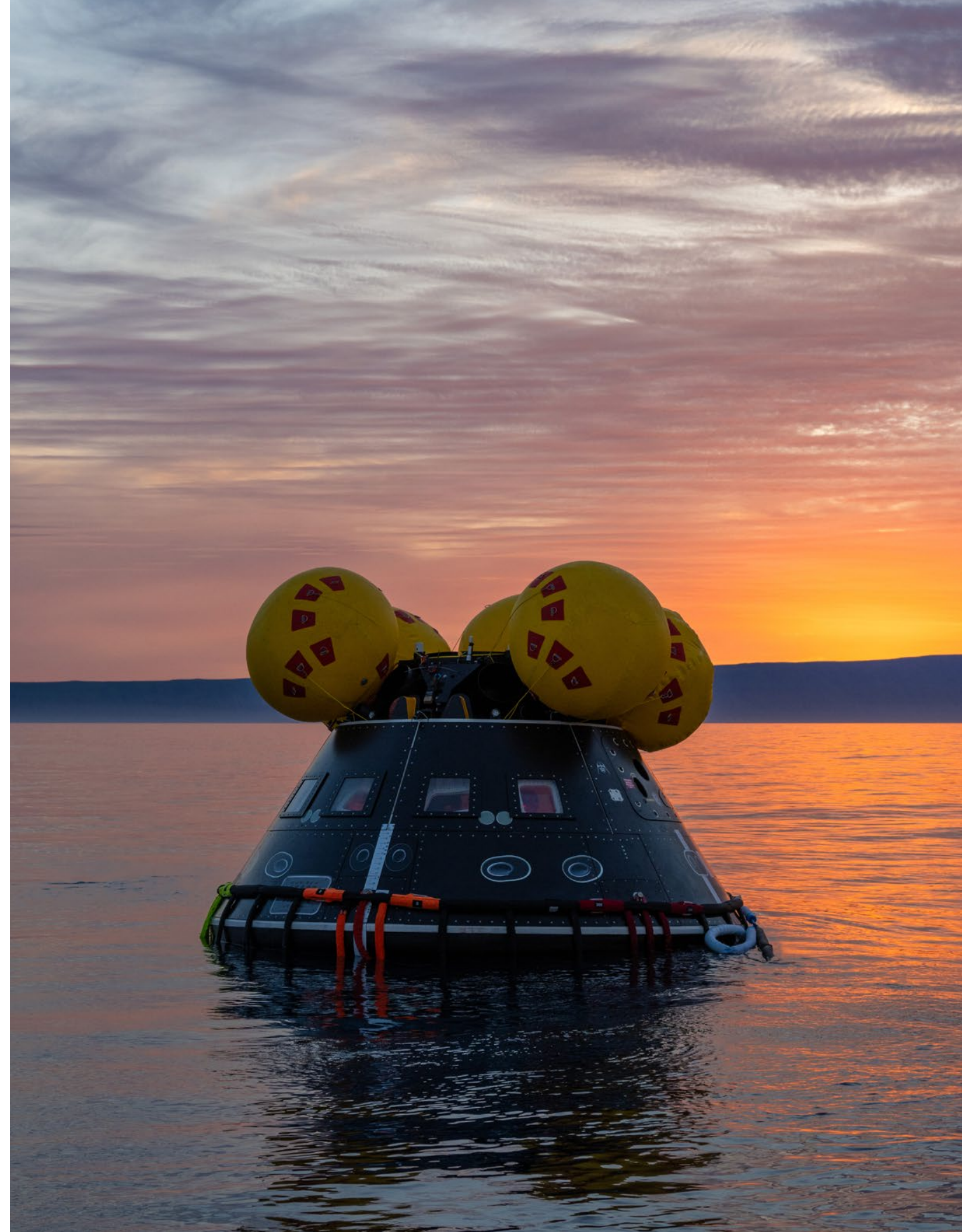
**Office of Procurement,  
Grant Policy and  
Compliance**

- Policy Development and Updates: Developing and updating grant policies and procedures in accordance with federal regulations and NASA's strategic objectives
  - Compliance Oversight: Ensuring that agency grant activities comply with applicable laws, regulations, and policies
  - Training and Workshops: Conducting training sessions and workshops for both NASA staff and grant recipients to ensure understanding and compliance with grant policies and procedures
  - Advisory Role: Providing advice and guidance to NASA staff and grant recipients on policy-related questions and issues
  - Interpretation of Regulations: Offering interpretations of federal regulations and agency policies to grant recipients and NASA staff, ensuring a consistent understanding across all parties
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**Artemis II Orion Underway Recovery Test 11 (URT-11) - Day 3**

During sunrise over the Pacific Ocean, members of NASA's Exploration Ground System's Landing and Recovery team and partners from the Department of Defense aboard the USS San Diego practice recovery procedures using the Crew Module Test Article during Underway Recovery Test 11 (URT-11) off the coast of San Diego on Friday, Feb. 23, 2024.

Photo credit: NASA / Kenny Allen





# APPENDIX C

## KEY RESOURCE LINKS

The OLI-2 (Operational Land Imager-2) on Landsat 9 captured this image of the Snowshoe Lava Field and the surrounding volcanic terrain on October 26, 2023.

Photo credit: Landsat 9 - OLI-2

Listed below are websites available to the Vendor community to learn about engagement events and opportunities to support NASA and other Federal agencies:

- Doing Business with NASA: <https://www.nasa.gov/office/procurement/doingbusiness>
- NASA Annual Procurement Reports: NASA Annual Procurement Reports: <https://www.nasa.gov/procurement-reports-and-guides>
- NASA Acquisition Forecast: [NASA Acquisition Forecast | NASA](#)
- NASA Mission Equity: <https://www.nasa.gov/mission-equity>
- NASA Office of Small Business Programs: <https://www.nasa.gov/osbp>
- NASA SBIR/STTR: <https://sbir.gsfc.nasa.gov>
- NASA Solicitation and Proposal Integrated Review and Evaluation System: <https://nspires.nasaprs.com/external>
- NASA Vendor Database: <https://www.nasa.gov/osbp/nasa-vendor-database>
- NASA OSBP Mobile: <https://www.nasa.gov/osbp/mobile>
- Partnering With NASA: <https://www.nasa.gov/partnerships/how-to-partner/>
- Partnerships Events and Opportunities: <https://www.nasa.gov/partnerships/partnerships-events-and-opportunities/>
- U.S. Small Business Administration: <https://www.sba.gov>
- Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR): <https://www.sbir.gov>
- System for Awards Management: <https://sam.gov/content/home>
- Portal for Federal Grants: <https://www.grants.gov>
- NASA Office of Procurement, Grant Policy and Compliance: <https://www.nasa.gov/general/grants-policy-and-compliance-team/>
- NASA Grant Activities Branch: <https://www.nasa.gov/centers-and-facilities/grants-2/>
- Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR): <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2>
- NASA Grant and Cooperative Agreement Guide: <https://www.nasa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/grant-and-cooperative-agreement-manual-oct.-2022-0.pdf?emrc=89df2b>
- Grant and Cooperative Agreement Proposers Guide: <https://www.nasa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/2023-nasa-proposers-guide-final.pdf?emrc=7b5d89>
- NSIPRES: <https://nspires.nasaprs.com/external/index.do>
- GSA's 8(a) Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) Pool initiative: <https://www.gsa.gov/buy-through-us/purchasing-programs/multiple-award-schedule/help-with-mas-buying/how-to-use-the-new-mas-8a-pool>
- SBA's Dynamic Small Business Search tool: [https://dsbs.sba.gov/search/dsp\\_dsbs.cfm?CFID=32198&CFTOKEN=d855cbabf6b7a69d-8C4607B8-E65B-C9F4-FDAA6A090511B3F0](https://dsbs.sba.gov/search/dsp_dsbs.cfm?CFID=32198&CFTOKEN=d855cbabf6b7a69d-8C4607B8-E65B-C9F4-FDAA6A090511B3F0)
- Government-Wide Procurement Equity Tool: <https://tech.gsa.gov/techtalks/2023-06-22-government-wide-procurement-equity-tool/>
- Supplier Base Dashboard: <https://d2d.gsa.gov/report/supplier-base-dashboard>



The Boeing Starliner spacecraft is lifted at the Vertical Integration Facility at Space Launch Complex-41 at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida.

Photo credit: NASA / Kim Shiflett



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[www.nasa.gov](http://www.nasa.gov)

