

MREFC account, established in FY 1995, is a separate budget line item that provides an agency-wide mechanism, permitting directorates to undertake large facility projects that exceed 10% of the Directorate's annual budget; or roughly \$70M or greater. Smaller projects continue to be supported from the R&RA Account. Facilities are defined as shared-use infrastructure, instrumentation and equipment that are accessible to a broad community of researchers and/or educators. Facilities may be centralized or may consist of distributed installations. They may incorporate large-scale networking or computational infrastructure, multi-user instruments or networks of such instruments, or other infrastructure, instrumentation and equipment having a major impact on a broad segment of a scientific or engineering discipline. Historically, awards have been made for such diverse projects as accelerators, telescopes, research vessels and aircraft, and geographically distributed but networked sensors and instrumentation.

The growth and diversification of large facility projects require that NSF remain attentive to the ever-changing issues and challenges inherent in their planning, construction, operation, management and oversight. Most importantly, dedicated, competent NSF and awardee staff are needed to manage and oversee these projects; giving the attention and oversight that good practice dictates and that proper accountability to taxpayers and Congress demands. To this end, there is also a need for consistent, documented requirements and procedures to be understood and used by NSF program managers and awardees for all such major projects.

Use of the Information: Facilities are an essential part of the science and engineering enterprise and supporting them is one major responsibility of the National Science Foundation (NSF). NSF makes awards to external entities—primarily universities, consortia of universities or non-profit organizations—to undertake construction, management and operation of facilities. Such awards frequently take the form of cooperative agreements. NSF does not directly construct or operate the facilities it supports. However, NSF retains responsibility for overseeing their development, management and successful performance. Business Systems Reviews (BSR) of the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Major Facilities are designed to provide reasonable assurance that the business systems (people, processes, and technologies) of NSF Recipients are

effective in meeting administrative responsibilities and satisfying Federal regulatory requirements, including those listed in NSF's Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG).

These reviews are not considered audits but are intended to be assistive in nature; aiding the Recipient in following good practices where appropriate and bringing them into compliance, if needed. A team of BSR Participants is assembled to assess the Recipient's policies, procedures, and practices to determine whether, taken collectively, these administrative business systems used in managing the Facility meet NSF award expectations and comply with Federal regulations.

The BSR Guide is designed for use by both our customer community and NSF staff for guidance in leading these reviews. The BSR Guide defines the overall framework and structure and summarizes the details outlined in the internal operating guidelines and procedures used by BSR Participants to execute the review process. Management principles and practices are specified for seven core functional areas (CFA) and are used by BSR Participants in performing these evaluations. Roles and responsibilities of the NSF stakeholders involved in the process are outlined in the BSR Guide as well as the expectations of the Recipient.

This version of the Business Systems Guide aligns with the Uniform Guidance and the *NSF Major Facilities Guide*.

This Guide will be updated periodically to reflect changes in requirements, policies and/or procedures. Award Recipients are expected to monitor and adopt the requirements and best practices included in the Guide.

The submission of Award Recipient and Project administrative business process and procedural documentation used in support of operations of the Major Facilities is part of the collection of information. This information is used to help NSF fulfill this responsibility in supporting merit-based research and education projects in all the scientific and engineering disciplines. The Foundation also has a continuing commitment to provide oversight on facilities design and construction which must be balanced against monitoring its information collection so as to identify and address any excessive review and reporting burdens.

NSF has approximately twenty-four (24) Major Facilities in various stages of design, construction, operations and divestment. The need for a BSR and review scope is based on NSF's internal

annual Major Facility Portfolio Risk Assessment and the assessment of various risks factors.

Burden to the Public: The Foundation estimates that approximately one and half (1.5) Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) are necessary for each major facility project to respond to a BSR requirements on an annual basis; or 2,824 hours per year. With an average of four (4) conducted a year, this equates to roughly 5 FTEs or 11,296 public burden hours annually.

Dated: December 17, 2020.

Suzanne H. Plimpton,
Reports Clearance Officer, National Science Foundation.

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NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Request for Information on Potential Concepts and Approaches for a National Strategic Computing Reserve (NSCR)

AGENCY: Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), Networking and Information Technology Research and Development (NITRD) National Coordination Office (NCO), National Science Foundation.

ACTION: Request for information.

SUMMARY: OSTP and the National Science and Technology Council's (NSTC) Subcommittees on the Future Advanced Computing Ecosystem (FACE) and Networking and Information Technology Research and Development (NITRD) request input from interested parties on the goals, value, and necessary approaches for establishing a National Strategic Computing Reserve (NSCR). The NSCR may be envisioned as a coalition of experts and resource providers that could be mobilized quickly to provide critical computational resources (including compute, software, data, and technical expertise) in times of urgent need. This Request for Information will help inform potential attributes of a NSCR.

DATES: Interested persons are invited to submit comments on or before 11:59 p.m. (ET) on January 16, 2021.

ADDRESSES: Comments submitted in response to this notice may be sent by any of the following methods:

- *Email:* nscr-rfi@nitrd.gov. Email submissions should be machine-readable and not be copy-protected. Submissions should include "RFI Response: National Strategic Computing Reserve" in the subject line of the message.

• *Fax:* (202) 459-9673, Attn: Ji Lee.
 • *Mail:* Attn: Ji Lee, NCO, 2415 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22314, USA.

Instructions: Response to this RFI is voluntary. Each individual or institution is requested to submit only one response. Submissions must not exceed 10 pages in 12 point or larger font, with a page number provided on each page. Responses should include the name of the person(s) or organization(s) filing the comment. Responses to this RFI may be posted online at <http://www.nitrd.gov>. Therefore, no business proprietary information, copyrighted information, or personally identifiable information should be submitted in response to this RFI.

In accordance with FAR 15.202(3), responses to this notice are not offers and cannot be accepted by the Government to form a binding contract. Responders are solely responsible for all expenses associated with responding to this RFI.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ji Lee at nscr-rfi@nitrd.gov, 202-459-9674, or by post mailing to 2415 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22314, USA. Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern time, Monday through Friday.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The prompt, successful, and nimble deployment of computational resources (including expertise) via the COVID-19 High-Performance Computing (HPC) Consortium has demonstrated its essential role in the Nation's response to emergencies. This backdrop has led to the conceptualization of a National Strategic Computing Reserve (NSCR), comprising a coalition of experts and resource providers that could be mobilized quickly to provide critical computational resources (including compute, software, data, and technical expertise) in times of urgent need.

Background Information: The COVID-19 HPC Consortium (<https://covid19-hpc-consortium.org>) was formed in March 2020 and offers an example of how the consortium rapidly delivered scientific insights. The Consortium brought together the Federal Government, industry, and academic leaders to provide access to the world's most powerful computational resources in support of COVID-19 research. Within its first week of existence, the Consortium instantiated an operational framework for providing computational resources for rapid crisis response. The Consortium effectively:

- Worked together across institutional and organizational boundaries within government, industry, and academia to create a common portal to access computational resources and to coalesce ad hoc efforts in smaller "consortia" around the country;

- Ramped up quickly to meet urgent computational resource requirements not easily available through other means; this ramp-up included the development and adaptation of review, matching and on-boarding processes for accessing these resources;

- Set up a communications and user engagement framework for a worldwide community; and

- Accelerated explorations in basic understanding of the SARS-CoV2 virus, its host interactions, strategies to mitigate its spread, and early-stage drug development.

With this RFI, we seek to aggregate the lessons learned from the COVID-19 HPC Consortium with other broader community input towards the potential design of a NSCR effort.

Information Requested: Responders are asked to answer one or more of the following questions in the responses to the RFI:

1. **Deployment Scenarios:** What are envisioned scenarios under which it would be beneficial to make NSCR computational resources available for use? What are relevant characteristics to consider regarding the design of triggers for activating and deactivating the NSCR? What approaches might the NSCR utilize to test readiness for such scenarios? Are there other barriers to activating NSCR that would need to be addressed?

2. **Computational Resources:** By what means will the NSCR computational resources be recruited, vetted, and sustained for use when needed? What are appropriate incentives and mechanisms for compensation? What principles might be employed in assessing the suitability of resources for inclusion in the NSCR? What types of research (e.g., fundamental research, Controlled Unclassified Information research, proprietary research) should the NSCR be provisioned to support?

3. **NSCR Providers:** How should the resource providers' contributions to NSCR be determined? What approaches should guide the selection and allocation of the NSCR computational resources to users, and what roles do resource providers have in determining these approaches? By what means can the NSCR computational resource providers opt in or opt out on computational resource allocations?

4. **NSCR Users:** By what means and with what principles should allocations

for NSCR computational resources be considered? What should constitute eligibility to apply for computational resources? What kind of eligibility restrictions/selection criteria would be appropriate for users and the use cases of applications of NSCR?

5. **Community Formation:** What types of community outreach and communications will help enhance the likelihood of connecting the NSCR computational resources to the relevant computational, scientific, and emergency-response communities? With what organizations and services should the NSCR coordinate to enhance its effectiveness?

6. **Partnership Agreements:** What are key aspects of partnership agreements (e.g., access to results, intellectual property rights) that can help sustain the NSCR over time?

7. **Relationship to Other Strategic Reserves:** Are there other strategic reserves that are relevant to NSCR? How can NSCR connect or interface with those reserves? What lessons can be learned from other strategic reserves that might inform the process of standing up a NSCR?

Submitted by the National Science Foundation in support of the Office of Science and Technology Policy and the Networking and Information Technology Research and Development National Coordination Office on December 16, 2020.

(Authority: 42 U.S.C. 1861.)

Suzanne H. Plimpton,

Reports Clearance Officer, National Science Foundation.

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NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Sunshine Act Meeting

TIME AND DATE: 9:30 a.m., Tuesday, January 12, 2021.

PLACE: Virtual.

STATUS: The one item may be viewed by the public through webcast only.

MATTER TO BE CONSIDERED:

64964—Pipeline Investigation Report—Atmos Energy Corporation Natural Gas-Fueled Explosion, Dallas, Texas, February 23, 2018

CONTACT PERSON FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Candi Bing at (202) 590-8384 or by email at bingc@ntsb.gov.

Media Information Contact: Keith Holloway by email at keith.holloway@ntsb.gov or at (202) 314-6100.

This meeting will take place virtually. The public may view it through a live