

# NASA HISTORY: NEWS & NOTES

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## HQ HISTORY DIVISION LAUNCHES ARCHIVE PROJECT FOR DOCUMENTS COLLECTION

The onset of winter in the History Division at NASA headquarters has been much lightened by the arrival in September of Sarah Turner and Jill Anderson, whose principal task for the next three years will be to develop a finding aid for our historical documents collection. Their work has begun with making an inventory of what is in fact tucked away in the many nooks, crannies, and file drawers of our suite in the Reporters' Building at NASA headquarters. As they continue, they are tailoring a computerized information retrieval system for us so that some day (!) you and others will be able to "scan" our collection to learn if we have materials that may help you in your work.

Sarah has a B.A. in History from the University of South Carolina and has worked as an archivist for the Maryland Hall of Records. She spent a year at Georgetown University designing a database for the Woodstock Seminary papers for the Jesuit History Project. Jill earned her B.A. in History from Carleton College and, before coming to NASA, worked with the Woodrow Wilson Birthplace collection in Staunton, VA.

Our archive project is designed to enable our visitors to make a preliminary search of our resources for research in NASA related aerospace history. Sarah and Jill have been working closely with Lee Saegesser, who remains the indispensable guide to the substantive content and research potential of our collection.

## NASA HISTORY ELIGIBLE FOR NEW AWARD CATEGORY

We will dispense with further reports of our activities (and yours), not because we haven't been busy, but because we have recently obtained approval to make awards for historical research and writing under the NASA Research Announcement (NRA) program for solicited research proposals. The remainder of this Newsletter will be devoted to the NRA as it applies to NASA history.

Former, present, and prospective NASA history contractors, most of whom are associated with colleges and universities, should welcome the NRA as a way of competing for support. The NRA, unlike the forms of solicitation we have used in the past, is designed for proposals from research scholars offering original ideas, interpretations, or research methods. Those of you familiar with programs for historical research support administered by the National Science Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities will recognize the philosophical kinship between NSF and NEH program announcements and the NASA Research Announcement.

### Opportunities for NASA Sponsored Historical Research

[N.B. This announcement supersedes Chapter 2 and Chapter 5 of History at NASA NASA HHR-50 (1986), pp. 2-3 and pp. 8-9]

First established in 1959, NASA's history program is one of more than thirty "public" history programs in the federal government. Its threefold mission is to assure that the documentary foundation of the agency's history is captured and preserved for current and future generations, to stimulate historical research in areas of inquiry that may broaden our understanding of the modern age of aerospace research and development, and to disseminate the results of NASA's historical documentation and research activities.

NASA supports historical research and writing in NASA-related history by both academically affiliated and independent scholars. Support may be in the form of (1) sponsorship for a specific research, writing and/or documentation effort on a subject of particular interest to the agency at a given time, or (2) a competitive fellowship, awarded annually by the American Historical Association.

Periodically the NASA History Division invites scholars to submit proposals for research, writing, and/or documentation projects on subjects of current interest to the agency. These solicitations are publicized in the Commerce Business Daily ("CBD"), and in the newsletters of the Society for the History of Technology, the History of Science Society, and the American Historical Association. The individual solicitation documents, called "NASA Research Announcements,"<sup>1</sup> contain full details on the nature of the research and writing desired, NASA's interest in relating the effort to the academic environment, and the specifics of proposal preparation and submission.

In cooperation with the Society for the History of Technology, the History of Science Society, and the Economic History Association, the American Historical Association administers annually, on behalf of NASA, a fellowship competition for pre-doctoral or post-doctoral research in any area of NASA-related aerospace history. The fellowship program is publicized regularly in the newsletters of the cooperating societies and of the American Historical Association. For further information, contact the American Historical Association 400 A Street, SE, Washington, DC 20003.

### Background

NASA's agencywide history program is directed from the History Division at NASA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. The division maintains a historical reference collection at NASA headquarters and encourages the development of similar collections at NASA installations or "centers." It fosters historical research through an annual research fellowship competition conducted by the American Historical Association, as well as through a program of research and writing conducted by NASA-sponsored professional historians. This research normally results in published historical volumes, journal articles, and reference works.

The visitors' log at the NASA Headquarters History Division is evidence of the hundreds of persons inside and outside the agency who visit the office to make use of the NASA history program's considerable documentary resources. As numerous authors have graciously acknowledged, NASA's history program has provided the indispensable starting point for research in the history of federally sponsored aerospace research and development. From school youngsters preparing a class report to busy NASA managers, from Congressional staffers and foreign journalists to dissertation writers, all kinds of researchers have come to rely on NASA's agencywide history program for help in their work.

### Independent Inquiry and NASA History

The strength and reach of NASA's history program is attributable to the established institutional commitments and practices of the larger organization it serves. Paramount among these is that NASA is primarily a research community; thus

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<sup>1</sup> See attached "Instructions for Responding to NASA Research Announcements for Solicited Research Proposals," August 1988 (Appendix I to 18-70.203 of the NASA Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement.)

it appreciates the importance to any understanding of human events of independent inquiry and a continuing dialogue among many researchers. NASA does not intend the publications in its professionally recognized History Series to be "definitive" accounts; nor has their original designation as "official" histories ever implied bureaucratic censorship or constraint of their authors. NASA history publications occasionally stimulate controversy both inside and outside the agency; this is as it should be, and testifies to the freedom given NASA-sponsored historians to interpret historical evidence in the light of their own best professional judgment.

Thus, scholars doing historical research for NASA are assured full academic freedom of research and expression and are expected to observe the highest professional standards in achieving historical accuracy in the representation of facts and events. Interpretations shall be based on evidence, and speculations noted as such. NASA assures historians working under agency sponsorship access to all relevant documents and data within proprietary and national security constraints.

History at NASA: Program Goals

During 1985 the NASA History Advisory Committee assisted the agency in developing a Five-Year Plan to shape history program activities for the remainder of the 1980s. This plan affirmed the preeminence of documentation as a goal of NASA's history program, and the importance of narrative histories and reference works as a foundation for innovative research in aerospace history. In addition, the Five-Year Plan envisions the following goals: the introduction of a New Series of NASA historical publications to place NASA's programs in the larger context of the modern history of science, technology, and research and development management and policy; the publication of the New Series by a distinguished university press; and increased opportunities for scholars to enter the field of aerospace history through a program of fellowships.

NASA's History Advisory Committee has contributed substantially to the quality of NASA's history program. Composed of distinguished scholars from outside the agency, the committee provides impartial guidance on policy and program issues. As one of several standing subcommittees of the NASA Advisory Council, the History Advisory Committee reports directly to the Council and the NASA Administrator. The chairman of the History Advisory Committee, as a member of the Council, also brings to the Council's deliberations the knowledge and insights of a professional historian. Appointment to NASA's History Advisory Committee is a mark of distinction, made partly in recognition of an individual's accomplishments in historical scholarship. Committee (and Council) members serve without compensation to assure that their advice will be unaffected by any conflict of interest.

**[Please continue to the next seven pages for "Instructions for Responding to NASA Research Announcements for Solicited Research Proposals," Appendix I to 18-70.203 of the NASA Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement.]**

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Happy New Year from all of us in the History Division at NASA Headquarters, Washington, D.C.!

Sylvia Fries  
Lee Saegesser  
Sarah Turner

Rebecca Miller  
Patricia Shephard  
Jill Anderson

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESPONDING TO  
NASA RESEARCH ANNOUNCEMENTS  
FOR SOLICITED RESEARCH PROPOSALS**

**(AUGUST 1988)**

**FOREWORD**

NASA depends upon industry, educational institutions and other nonprofit organizations for most of its research efforts. While a number of mechanisms have been developed over the years to inform the research community of those areas in which NASA has special research interests, these instructions apply only to "NASA Research Announcements," a form of "broad agency announcement" described in 6.102(d)(2) and 35.016 of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR). The "NASA Research Announcement (NRA)" permits competitive selection of research projects in accordance with statute while at the same time preserving the traditional concepts and understandings associated with NASA sponsorship of research.

These instructions are Appendix I to 18-70.203 of the NASA Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement.

**POLICY**

NASA fosters and encourages the submission of research proposals relevant to agency mission requirements by solicitations, "NASA Research Announcements," which describe research areas of interest to NASA. Proposals received in response to an NRA will be used only for evaluation purposes.

NASA does not allow a proposal, the contents of which are not available without restriction from another source, or any unique ideas submitted in response to an NRA to be used as the basis of a solicitation or in negotiation with other organizations, nor is a pre-award synopsis published for individual proposals.

A solicited proposal that results in a NASA award becomes part of the record of that transaction and may be available to the public on specific request; however, information or material that NASA and the awardee mutually agree to be of a privileged nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law, including the Freedom of Information Act.

**PURPOSE**

These instructions are intended to supplement documents identified as "NASA Research Announcements." The NRAs contain programmatic information and certain "NRA-specific" requirements which apply only to proposals prepared in response to that particular announcement. These instructions contain the general proposal preparation information which applies to responses to all NRAs.

**RELATIONSHIP TO AWARD**

A contract, grant, cooperative agreement, or other agreement may be used to accomplish an effort funded on the basis of a proposal submitted in response to an NRA. NASA does not have separate "grant proposal" and "contract proposal" categories, so all proposals may be prepared in a similar fashion. NASA will determine the appropriate instrument.

Grants are generally used to fund basic research in educational and nonprofit institutions, while research in other private sector organizations is accomplished under contract. Additional information peculiar to the contractual process (certifications, cost and pricing data, facilities information, etc.) will be requested, as necessary, as the

procurement progresses. Contracts resulting from NRAs are subject to the Federal Acquisition Regulation and the NASA FAR Supplement (NHB 5100.4). Any resultant grants or cooperative agreements will be awarded and administered in accordance with the NASA Grant and Cooperative Agreement Handbook (NHB 5800.1).

### CONFORMANCE TO GUIDANCE

NASA does not have any mandatory forms or formats for preparation of responses to NRAs; however, it is requested that proposals conform to the procedural and submission guidelines covered in these instructions. In particular, NASA may accept proposals without discussion; hence, proposals should initially be as complete as possible and be submitted on the proposers' most favorable terms.

In order to be considered responsive to the solicitation, a submission must, at a minimum, present a specific project within the areas delineated by the NRA; contain sufficient technical and cost information to permit a meaningful evaluation; be signed by an official authorized to legally bind the submitting organization; not merely offer to perform standard services or to just provide computer facilities or services; and not significantly duplicate a more specific current or pending NASA solicitation. NASA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received in response to an NRA when such action is considered in the best interest of the Government.

### NRA-SPECIFIC ITEMS

Several proposal submission items will appear in the NRA itself. These include: the unique NRA identifier; when to submit proposals; where to send proposals; number of copies required; and sources for more information.

Items included in these instructions may be supplemented by the NRA, as circumstances warrant. Examples are: technical points for special emphasis; additional evaluation factors; and proposal length.

### PROPOSAL CONTENTS

The following general information is needed in all proposals in order to permit consideration in an objective manner. NRAs will generally specify topics for which additional information or greater detail is desirable. Each proposal copy shall contain all submitted material, including a copy of the transmittal letter if it contains substantive information.

#### Transmittal Letter or Prefatory Material

(1) The legal name and address of the organization and specific division or campus identification if part of a larger organization;

(2) A brief, scientifically valid project title intelligible to a scientifically literate reader and suitable for use in the public press;

(3) Type of organization: e.g., profit, nonprofit, educational, small business, minority, women-owned, etc.;

(4) Name and telephone number of the principal investigator and business personnel who may be contacted during evaluation or negotiation;

(5) Identification of any other organizations that are currently evaluating a proposal for the same efforts;

(6) Identification of the specific NRA, by number and title, to which the proposal is responding;

(7) Dollar amount requested of NASA, desired starting date, and duration of project;

(8) Date of submission; and

(9) Signature of a responsible official or authorized representative of the organization, or any other person authorized to legally bind the organization (unless the signature appears on the proposal itself).

#### Restriction on Use and Disclosure of Proposal Information

It is NASA policy to use information contained in proposals for evaluation purposes only. While this policy does not require that the proposal bear a restrictive notice, offerors or quoters should, in order to maximize protection of trade secrets or other information that is commercial or financial and confidential or privileged, place the following notice on the title page of the proposal and specify the information subject to the notice by inserting appropriate identification, such as page numbers, in the notice. In any event, information (data) contained in proposals will be protected to the extent permitted by law, but NASA assumes no liability for use and disclosure of information not made subject to the notice.

#### NOTICE

##### Restriction on Use and Disclosure of Proposal Information

The information (data) contained in [insert page numbers or other identification] of this proposal

constitutes a trade secret and/or information that is commercial or financial and confidential or privileged. It is furnished to the Government in confidence with the understanding that it will not, without permission of the offeror, be used or disclosed other than for evaluation purposes; provided, however, that in the event a contract (or other agreement) is awarded on the basis of this proposal the Government shall have the right to use and disclose this information (data) to the extent provided in the contract (or other agreement). This restriction does not limit the Government's right to use or disclose this information (data) if obtained from another source without restriction.

#### Abstract

Include a concise (200-300 word if not otherwise specified in the NRA) abstract describing the objective of the proposed effort and the method of approach.

#### Project Description

(1) The main body of the proposal shall be a detailed statement of the work to be undertaken and should include objectives and expected significance; relation to the present state of knowledge in the field; and relation to previous work done on the project and to related work in progress elsewhere. The statement should outline the general plan of work, including the broad design of experiments to be undertaken and an adequate description of experimental methods and procedures. The project description should be prepared in a manner that addresses the evaluation factors in these instructions and any additional specific factors in the NRA. Any substantial collaboration with individuals not referred to in the budget or use of consultants should be described. Note, however, that

subcontracting significant portions of a research project is discouraged.

(2) When it is expected that the effort will require more than one year for completion, the proposal should cover the complete project to the extent that it can be reasonably anticipated. Principal emphasis should, of course, be on the first year of work, and the description should distinguish clearly between the first year's work and work planned for subsequent years.

#### Management Approach

For large or complex efforts involving interactions among numerous individuals or other organizations, plans for distribution of responsibilities and any necessary arrangements for ensuring a coordinated effort should be described. Aspects of any required intensive working relations with NASA field centers that are not logical inclusions elsewhere in the proposal should be described in this section.

#### Personnel

The principal investigator is responsible for direct supervision of the work and participates in the conduct of the research regardless of whether or not compensation is received under the award. A short biographical sketch of the principal investigator, a list of principal publications and any exceptional qualifications should be included. Omit social security number and other personal items which do not merit consideration in evaluation of the proposal. Give similar biographical information on other senior professional personnel who will be directly associated with the project. Give the names and titles of any other scientists and technical personnel associated substantially with the project in an

advisory capacity. Universities should list the approximate number of students or other assistants, together with information as to their level of academic attainment. Any special industry-university cooperative arrangements should be described.

#### Facilities and Equipment

(1) Describe available facilities and major items of equipment especially adapted or suited to the proposed project, and any additional major equipment that will be required. Identify any Government-owned facilities, industrial plant equipment, or special tooling that are proposed for use on the project.

(2) Before requesting a major item of capital equipment, the proposer should determine if sharing or loan of equipment already within the organization is a feasible alternative to purchase. Where such arrangements cannot be made, the proposal should so state. The need for items that typically can be used for both research and non-research purposes should be explained.

#### Proposed Costs

(1) Proposals should contain cost and technical parts in one volume: do not use separate "confidential" salary pages. As applicable, include separate cost estimates for salaries and wages; fringe benefits; equipment; expendable materials and supplies; services; domestic and foreign travel; ADP expenses; publication or page charges; consultants; subcontracts; other miscellaneous identifiable direct costs; and indirect costs. List salaries and wages in appropriate organizational categories (e.g., principal investigator, other scientific and engineering professionals, graduate students, research assistants, and technicians and other non-professional personnel).

Estimate all manpower data in terms of man-months or fractions of full-time.

(2) Explanatory notes should accompany the cost proposal to provide identification and estimated cost of major capital equipment items to be acquired; purpose and estimated number and lengths of trips planned; basis for indirect cost computation (including date of most recent negotiation and cognizant agency); and clarification of other items in the cost proposal that are not self-evident. List estimated expenses as yearly requirements by major work phases. (Standard Form 1411 may be used).

(3) Allowable costs are governed by FAR Part 31 and the NASA FAR Supplement Part 18-31 (and OMB Circulars A-21 for educational institutions and A-122 for nonprofit organizations).

**Security**

Proposals should not contain security classified material. However, if the proposed research requires access to or may generate security classified information, the submitter will be required to comply with applicable Government security regulations.

**Current Support**

For other current projects being conducted by the principal investigator, provide title of project, sponsoring agency, and ending date.

**Special Matters**

(1) Include any required statements of environmental impact of the research, human subject or animal care provisions, conflict of interest, or on such other topics as may be required by the nature of the effort and current statutes, executive orders, or other current Government-wide guidelines.

(2) Proposers should include a brief description of the organization, its facilities, and previous work experience in the field of the proposal. Identify the cognizant Government audit agency, inspection agency, and administrative contracting officer, when applicable.

**RENEWAL PROPOSALS**

a. Renewal proposals for existing awards will be considered in the same manner as proposals for new endeavors. It is not necessary that a renewal proposal repeat all of the information that was in the original proposal upon which the current support was based. The renewal proposal should refer to its predecessor, update the parts that are no longer current, and indicate what elements of the research are expected to be covered during the period for which extended support is desired. A description of any significant findings since the most recent progress report should be included. The renewal proposal should treat, in reasonable detail, the plans for the next period, contain a cost estimate, and otherwise adhere to these instructions.

NASA reserves the right to renew an effort either through amendment of an existing contract or by a new award.

**LENGTH**

Unless otherwise specified in the NRA, every effort should be made to keep proposals as brief as possible, concentrating on substantive material essential for a complete understanding of the project. Experience shows that few proposals need exceed 15-20 pages. Any necessary detailed information, such as reprints, should be included as attachments rather than in the main body of the proposal. A complete set of attachments is necessary for each copy of the proposal. As proposals are not



returned, avoid use of "one-of-a-kind" attachments: their availability may be mentioned in the proposal.

### JOINT PROPOSALS

Some projects involve joint efforts among individuals in different organizations or mutual efforts of more than one organization. Where multiple organizations are involved, the proposal may be submitted by only one of them. In this event, it should clearly describe the role to be played by the other organizations and indicate the legal and managerial arrangements contemplated. In other instances, simultaneous submission of related proposals from each organization might be appropriate, in which case parallel awards would be made.

Where a project of a cooperative nature with NASA is contemplated, the proposal should describe the contributions expected from any participating NASA investigator and agency facilities or equipment which may be required. However, the proposal must be confined only to that which the proposing organization can commit itself. "Joint" proposals which purport to specify the internal arrangements NASA will actually make are not acceptable as a means of establishing an agency commitment.

### LATE PROPOSALS

A proposal or modification thereto received after the date or dates specified in an NRA may still be considered if the selecting official deems it to offer NASA a significant technical advantage or cost reduction.

### WITHDRAWAL

Proposals may be withdrawn by the proposer at any time. Offerors are requested

to notify NASA if the proposal is funded by another organization or of other changed circumstances which dictate termination of evaluation.

### EVALUATION FACTORS

Unless otherwise specified in the NRA, the principal elements (of approximately equal weight) considered in evaluating a proposal are its relevance to NASA's objectives, intrinsic merit, and cost.

Evaluation of a proposal's relevance to NASA's objectives includes the consideration of the potential contribution of the effort to NASA's mission.

Evaluation of its intrinsic merit includes the consideration of the following factors, none of which is more important than any other:

(1) Overall scientific or technical merit of the proposal or unique and innovative methods, approaches, or concepts demonstrated by the proposal.

(2) The offeror's capabilities, related experience, facilities, techniques, or unique combinations of these which are integral factors for achieving the proposal objectives.

(3) The qualifications, capabilities, and experience of the proposed principal investigator, team leader, or key personnel who are critical in achieving the proposal objectives.

(4) Overall standing among similar proposals available for evaluation and/or evaluation against the known state-of-the-art.

Evaluation of the cost of a proposed effort includes the consideration of the realism and reasonableness of the proposed cost and the relationship of the proposed cost to available funds.

### EVALUATION TECHNIQUES

Selection decisions will be made following peer and/or scientific review of the proposals. Several evaluation techniques are regularly used within NASA. In all cases, however, proposals are subject to scientific review by discipline specialists in the area of the proposal. Some proposals are reviewed entirely in-house where NASA has particular competence; others are evaluated by a combination of in-house people and selected external reviewers, while yet others are subject to the full external peer review technique (with due regard for conflict-of-interest and protection of proposal information), such as by mail or through assembled panels. Regardless of the technique, the final decisions are always made by a designated NASA selecting official. A proposal which is scientifically and programmatically meritorious, but which is not selected for award during its initial review under the NRA may be included in subsequent reviews unless the proposer requests otherwise.

### SELECTION FOR AWARD

When a proposal is not selected for award, and the proposer has indicated that the proposal is not to be held over for subsequent reviews, the proposer will be notified that the proposal was not

selected for award. NASA will notify the proposer and explain generally why the proposal was not selected. Proposers desiring additional information may contact the selecting official who will arrange a debriefing.

When a proposal is selected for award, negotiation and award will be handled by the procurement office in the funding installation. The proposal is used as the basis for negotiation with the submitter. Formal RFPs are not used to obtain additional information on a proposal selected under the NRA process. However, the contracting officer may request certain business data and may forward a model contract and other information which will be of use during the contract negotiation.

### CANCELLATION OF NRA

NASA reserves the right to make no awards under this NRA and, in the absence of program funding or for any other reason, to cancel this NRA by having a notice published in the Commerce Business Daily. NASA assumes no liability for cancelling the NRA or for anyone's failure to receive actual notice of cancellation. Cancellation may be followed by issuance and synopsis of a revised NRA, since amendment of an NRA is normally not permitted.