



AMERICAN ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

National Science Foundation



Julena Steinheider Duncombe Mini-Grants Program: Call for Proposals — Engaging the Public with the Solar Eclipse

The American Astronomical Society (AAS) Solar Eclipse Task Force is pleased to announce a call for proposals for small grants to fund programs and activities aimed at engaging the public with the solar eclipse that will cross the continental US from coast to coast on August 21, 2017.

<https://eclipse.aas.org>

We anticipate funding 20 to 50 grants in the range \$1,000 to \$5,000. Support for these mini-grants is provided by the US National Science Foundation (NSF). Accordingly, grants may go only to organizations within the United States.

Highest priority will be given to programs specifically designed to engage meaningfully in eclipse outreach activities with under-represented groups (URGs; including women/girls, ethnic minorities, and people with physical and/or mental disabilities) who often do not imagine themselves in science careers or who believe that science is “not for them.”

Building on existing partnerships within the target communities is especially encouraged. We expect most proposals will be aimed at engaging the public in the proposers’ local communities via education/outreach programs held in venues such as science museums, planetariums, libraries, afterschool programs, schools, colleges, etc. No grants will be given for activities limited to students in one school; all activities should engage families and the public as well. Proposals spearheaded by consortia of science educators and organizations reaching underserved populations are encouraged.

Emphasis should be placed on connecting the eclipse to underlying principles of physics and astronomy, the physics of the Sun, and Earth & space science.

Examples of activities that may be included in proposals:

1. Large-scale public education events, such as library programs or community events to prepare the public for the total or partial eclipse (particularly those that repeat, have an ongoing component for involvement, or involve something more than just one public lecture).
2. Professional development for STEM educators or community leaders serving underserved communities in preparation for the eclipse.
3. Development of eclipse resources and materials, including bilingual materials, designed to make the eclipse experience meaningful for all communities, e.g., women/girls, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, and/or non-native English speakers. However, proposers are encouraged to become familiar with what already exists in terms of eclipse education materials, so they don’t engage in needless duplication. See, e.g., <http://www.astrosociety.org/eclipse>.

This mini-grants program is named for Julena Steinheider Duncombe (1911–2003), an outstanding astronomer and educator who started the US’s first school-lunch program for underprivileged children. For many years she published eclipse predictions for the US Naval Observatory. Several towns in Nebraska where she taught school will be in the path of the Moon’s shadow on August 21, 2017.

Eligibility

Proposals must come from nonprofit organizations (e.g., primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, public libraries, community groups that have nonprofit status), not from individuals or for-profit corporations. Proposing organizations must be based in the US. Lead proposers (principal investigators, or PIs) need not be US citizens as long as they work at US institutions.

All projects must engage directly with the public in some way. Proposals to fund programs or activities for individuals or exclusively for members of the proposing organization(s) will not be considered.

Expenses for people to travel to the path of totality or to regions with better viewing conditions are excluded.

Expenses for telescopes, solar filters, and other eclipse-related equipment (but not computers, printers, and other office equipment) are excluded *except* in cases where the proposal describes a plan to ensure the equipment's continued public and educational use in the community beyond the date of the eclipse.

When possible, we expect proposal collaborations to include both scientific/educational organizations and URG community leaders, or to demonstrate verifiable plans to meaningfully engage URGs. Letters of commitment from partner organizations are required.

Guidance on Appropriate Topics

Proposals may include, for example, a series of outreach events at a public library, community center, or evening family program; work with local media in getting eclipse information, science, and safe-viewing instructions out to a larger community; or professional development for science-education or community-outreach specialists. We will look particularly favorably on those programs that can provide role models to and/or employ URG persons in a "train-the-trainer" program to spread a passion for science throughout their community.

Without limiting the creativity of potential proposals, we imagine that each award is likely to target a specific demographic, e.g., historically black colleges/universities (HBCU), or a community center aimed at rural or urban low-income communities, or a facility for people with physical disabilities, or a Native American reservation.

Proposers who are not already engaged with URGs are strongly encouraged to build partnerships with local or national organizations that serve URGs in order to succeed in reaching and meaningfully engaging their audience.

Examples of the types of projects and activities we would like to fund:

- Building Sun-Moon-Earth models to explain the geometry of the eclipse at a Boys & Girls Club or similar afterschool program.
- Constructing pinhole projectors or other safe observing devices at a community center or similar venue.
- Forging a partnership between a community center and an amateur-astronomy group to purchase solar telescopes and/or filters and build a sustained program beyond the 2017 eclipse. Similar partnerships could be established between, e.g., planetariums and local Native American community organizers, or college professors and local African-American community leaders.

Format

Proposals will be limited to two pages of descriptive text and a third page with an itemized budget and detailed budget justification.

The two-page description should include the proposers' contact info (with clear indication of which of the participating groups is/are nonprofit), an explanation of the proposed activities and whom they will reach, and an assessment component that will capture the number of people reached as well as their demographic breakdown (age, gender, ethnicity) and determine what was successful (or not). Letters of commitment from partner organizations do not count in the two-page limit.

Budgets *cannot* include salaries/wages or overhead, only direct costs. Every item listed in the budget should be accompanied by a clear justification of both the amount and the rationale for its inclusion.

Proposals should be submitted as a PDF or Word document attached to our online application form (<https://eclipse.aas.org/grants-program/application>).

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on these criteria:

- (a) Project goals are clearly articulated and align with mini-grant program goals.
- (b) Project design is clearly described and connects to the project goals.
- (c) Project uses exemplary practices, especially with respect to engaging URGs.
- (d) Proposal includes a definition of success and a means to evaluate success.
- (e) Collaborations are relevant and linked to project goals; letters of commitment are required from partner organizations.
- (f) Budget is complete, cost-effective, and relevant to the goals, activities, and outcomes.

Reporting

The AAS will provide a webform designed to collect a qualitative report and quantitative assessment data for all successful proposals. Reports from all successful grants will be due within 30 days of the eclipse (i.e., by 20 September 2017).

Deadline

Proposals must be submitted via the webform at <https://eclipse.aas.org/grants-program/application> by 5:00 pm Eastern time on Friday, January 13, 2017. Proposers will be notified of a decision by Friday, February 17, and funds will be dispersed by the end of February.

Questions about organizations eligible to submit, or whether projects meet the guidelines set out here, should be directed to eclipse2017@aaas.org.