

NASA EPSCoR Caucus Executive Committee Meeting Agenda

Date: September 9, 2025

Time: 4:00 PM Eastern, 4:00 PM Puerto Rico, 3:00 PM Central, 2:00 PM Mountain, 1:00 PM Pacific, 12:00 PM Alaska, 10:00 AM Hawaii, 6:00 AM (+1) Guam

Part 1 ExCom business (ExCom and invited participants)—60 minutes

Welcome, roll, agenda	C. Cole
Secretary's report (approval of minutes from last meeting)	P. Oemig
NASA announcements / updates / 3–4-month program forecast	Dave Berger James Harrington Matthew Pearce
Questions/discussion	(ExCom members)
Questions/discussion	(all participants)
NASA EPSCoR Advocacy	L. Gilbert / L. Katz
EPSCoR / IDeA Foundation	J. Molesworth
Other business	All ExCom

Part 2 Open session (All)—30 minutes

Comments and questions from the floor	All
Adjourn	

Action Items:

Dave: Reach out to Sarah McGarvey to discuss F&A costs.

Dave: Reach out to Josh (and Kathy) on possible changes to expected quarterly reporting from jurisdictions.

All: Provide feedback on preference: Augmentation vs. New Basic Research in FY26

James: Work with Dave, Matt and jurisdictions to rebuild the technical monitors' inventory

Meeting Notes:

Chip: Welcome everyone. We have a quorum with four. We can go ahead with the secretary's report.

Paulo: Are there any corrections or edits to the minutes from August 12?

Shawna moved to approved, Chip seconded. All in favor. Minutes from August 12 approved.

Chip: Next agenda item, I'm pleased to welcome Dave Berger and colleagues James Harrington and Mathew Peierce and Joshua Parent. I'll leave it to you to introduce yourselves.

Dave: Thank you, Chip. We also have Josh Parent who has been working with you all for many years. I'm really excited to be in this role. We have a great team and EPSCoR is a great project. We'll start introductions with Josh.

Josh: Good afternoon, everyone. Very happy to get this opportunity to say hello. I had a chance to come over to EPSCoR while Jeppie was still here, so got the benefit of as much knowledge as I could soak up from him and some of his insights on government research programs. Right now, I assist the team with the interpretation analysis of monthly collected award funding. When NASA gets your costing information, we get a status of where you're with your funding and costing. I was also assisting with the program planning and budget execution process. I'm also the liaison with JSC's ISS payload integration team with all of our EPSCoR funded ISS payloads. I keep track of all 28 jurisdictions financial reporting to be sent out quarterly. *And now we've shifted to different reporting schedules.* When proposals work their way through and we start getting awards funded, I assist with putting together the procurement request that are needed to get that funding moving forward. Thank you so much for letting me sit in on your meeting and I appreciate the time and look forward to working with you all in the future.

Dave: I really appreciate Josh tremendously

Thank you, Josh. And I just want to echo Josh has been a rock for us as James, Matt and I come in to form this team. He is a fount of institutional knowledge and has really kept the train running. You probably see him directly, but even if you don't, if you're getting emails from agency, EPSCoR, he's a vital part of our team. Apologies to James, I would just want to pause a minute. I just saw the chat, and I want to yield to Leslie and Chip, if you would like to do a quick pivot due to some time constraints.

Leslee: [Provided updates via the chat – Need to excuse herself earlier for another meeting] I've been putting the updates in the chat. I'm sorry. I've got a meeting with the Senate office. We've been awaiting the house's CJS FY26 appropriations report that came out about 20 minutes ago. And I've put the relevant sections in the chat so you can sort of see the language. I know many of you had questions on the OSTEM office and that is not in the report. I mean, basically it includes EPSCoR under Safety, Security and Mission Services, again, sort of a new place to put EPSCoR, and for those of you are interested, Space Grant as well, but none of the other programs. So Office of STEM Engagement does not get a separate line item in the House bill, the Senate CJS bill does include a line item for the office of STEM engagement, and there's just no other language or clarification there beyond what I put in the in the report. So I didn't want to take too much of your time. That is obviously the most breaking news. I just wanted to make sure you all are aware of that.

Updates in the chat from Leslee: Language just released in House CJS report: Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR).—The recommendation includes \$26,000,000 for EPSCoR. Within the amount provided, the Committee directs NASA to allocate no more than ten percent of EPSCoR funding for administration and other overhead costs. The Committee acknowledges the important role EPSCoR plays in spurring innovation, bolstering research capabilities at institutions that are historically underserved by Federal research and development funding, and strengthening the STEM workforce.

Space Grant Program.—The recommendation includes \$58,000,000 for the Space Grant program and directs NASA to allocate these funds to State

consortia for competitively awarded grants in support of local, regional, and national STEM needs and support all 52 participating jurisdictions at no less than \$860,000 each.

"NASA Headquarters.—The Committee supports initiatives to relocate portions of the footprint of the Federal government outside of the Washington, D.C. region, including through the strategic relocation of work functions, operations, and facilities. The Committee understands that NASA is exploring opportunities to relocate portions of its Headquarters offices outside of the National Capital Region, while maintaining a smaller Headquarters footprint in the National Capital Region. The Committee directs NASA to provide a briefing on the status of these efforts within 180 days of the enactment of this Act."

In the report on F&A related to NASA (and NSF) Facilities and Administrative (F&A) Costs of Research Institutions.—The Committee recognizes the Administration's efforts

across science agencies including the Office of Science and Technology Policy, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and the National Science Foundation (NSF) to identify new mechanisms that reduce administrative burdens, increase transparency, and save taxpayer dollars. The Committee encourages the Administration to work closely with the extramural research community to develop an optimized Facilities and Administrative cost reimbursement solution for all parties that ensures the nation remains a world leader in innovation.

Chip: Thank you, Leslie. Any questions for Leslee?

Colleen: F&A status? I'm getting the feeling that Congress wants federal agencies to come up with their own F&A policies and not having one agreement count for all agencies kind of thing.

Leslee: What's a little bit different in the House language vs the Senate language on this topic of F&A, the Senate actually has a language that basically says the administration shall not change any IDC rates while Congress is deliberating on a new plan that hold harmless provisions, not in the house language, but they do have similar language here. The committee encourages the administration to work closely with these extramural research community to develop an optimized F&A cost reimbursement for all parties... So I think you should read this as the committee is basically saying, we won't want you to work with the JAG (Joint Associations Group) to come up with some sorts of solutions, and then we'll sort of approve it down the road.

Chip: I think we can go back to Dave now.

Dave: I would like to reintroduce James. He is a great new asset and has a new role with our team on EPSCoR. He is the technical officer for many of the awards. He is the technical officer for 14 of the of the jurisdictions.

James: Because so many people do know me I'm going to be brief. I'm at Goddard Space Flight Center. I'm a computer scientist by trade. Many of you know me because I authored the R3s for many years, did some really cool stuff with Chip and Shawna and a few other of the EPSCoR PIs. Those of you who don't know me should be able to see in my bio, worked closely with the northeast region, but I've been reassigned. I'm going to miss many of my colleagues up in Northeast, but I still plan to keep tabs. I talked to Tori, and I still planning to keep tabs and make sure that if there are any needs for the Space Grant states that are not represented in EPSCoR for the Science Mission Directorate support and connections, I'll always be here for you. So it's good to be back Chip. So I'm back now, it's good to see everybody, and I'm happy to be back in EPSCoR, thanks, Dave.

Dave: Biosketches? Maybe I shouldn't use that term, these are not in that format. We do have bios that we will be distributing. We're just doing a brief introduction here. Next is Matt Pierce, who may be new to some folks. I'm really grateful to have Matt as part of our team. He brings a wealth of background in education and science. He is the technical officer for 14 of the jurisdictions.

Matt Pearce – Technical Officer for 14 of the jurisdictions.
Goddard Institute for Space Studies in NYC. I want to learn everything you do with science.

Thank you. Dave. I'm honored to be here today with all of you. It's been on my to do list for a long time to be part of this community. I've been a tremendous fan of the incredible work you do. I'm at the Goddard Institute for Space Studies in New York City, which is currently kind of cross-integrated between multiple institutions around the New York tri state area, including Columbia University, Climate School, and American Museum of Natural History. We have a lot of awesome science collaborators as well, but I've been leading NASA 's Office of STEM engagement at GIS in New York for eleven years, and with NASA for about 20 years. I am so excited to be your student. I want to learn everything about your projects. If you see something cool in science or STEM I'm one of those people who loves that. If you see something cool, you see something fun, you see something innovative, or that you just want to share, please send it along. I really value the opportunity to work with each of you and if I can ever be of an asset, don't hesitate to reach out. And with that, I'll turn it back to you, Dave.

Dave: I know many of you know me and Kathy did a quick introduction at the last meeting, but I'll just share a little bit about myself. I have some pictures to share. I started as a student at NASA about 25 years ago. I started out in the aerodynamics and propulsion branch, recording sonic booms on the Space Shuttle landing and worked in supersonics. I then moved into systems engineering, test integration and flight test. One of my favorite programs was with the Air Force and flew C17 to analyze wingtip vortices and we were able to get around 10% in fuel savings. That was a great program. I spent about 20 years of my career at NASA Armstrong Flight Research Center, and NASA sent me to NASA Johnson to work in systems engineering on the Orion program. For a year, I worked on Exploration Flight Test one, and that was a fun. I did a pivot, I kind of wrote my own story saying it would be a great systems engineering challenge to integrate and work with great folks like you in academia, to collaborate more on research, work with the wonderful, amazing minds, students and professors and together accomplish more. I spent the last 10 years or so approximately in the STEM engagement group. The beauty of being

at Armstrong is I've done a little bit of everything. Worked with Community College robotics challenges. Wrote a K-12 program. I've been the University Affairs Officer. I managed MIRO awards, so I do have some research portfolio experience there. And then worked in Space Grant and lots of other areas. And then about five years ago, I took a one-year detail at HQ in DC, and been there ever since. So I'm truly, truly honored to be the project manager for EPSCoR. I think it's a really, really special program, and I want to be a good steward of the program. So I think we've got a great team here as we kind of reassemble, you know, I don't want to gloss over things. I know things have been very challenging for all of your institutions, and they've been challenging at NASA as well. This is public information, we're down 25% roughly of staff at NASA and in OSTEM, I would put that number closer to 50%. That's not an excuse, but I ask for lenience, a little bit of patience as we come up to speed and look forward to serving the community. I want to thank you for the warm welcome. Please continue to use the agency's EPSCoR inbox, that's really a lifesaver. Josh is a lifesaver as well, in that, you know, we're humans, we have meetings, we take vacations, we have families, and always feel free to write me directly. I'm not trying to exclude that if you've got a personal or sensitive matter, not personal, but sensitive item or something, that's why we've included all of our email addresses, *but for routine business, especially, please use the agency's EPSCoR inbox*, that really helps us in our processing and to be responsive to you. I was thinking about, what are we? Where are our priorities? What are we? What are we doing right now, as you know, I'll have to stop saying at some point that we're a new team. But right now, we are coming up to speed. And we are working on one of our priorities is responsiveness. That you know, you make a request, you're going to hear back from us. Even if we don't have an answer, we're going to acknowledge and track down that answer. And, and we're going to keep the trains running on time, grants management and we want to make sure that we're serving you and your awards. EPSCoR has a wonderful reputation. We want to hold that, keep that reputation. We want to ensure that we're beyond approach, that they're not putting any funding in jeopardy, and we make good use of funds. It's my sincere hope that EPSCoR is fully funded in FY26 in whatever office that may be: OSTEM or a mission support directorate. That's probably a good conversation to have with Elaine and folks. I will say I'm hearing very positive things. And I'm very optimistic about the future of EPSCoR and the future of STEM Engagement at NASA. I know James, Matt and I all brought that up. You know, kind of day one that we don't just want to check the procedural boxes of what it takes to be compliant in grants management, but it's really important to all of us to develop the relationships, the networking, the professional relationships, the community of researchers, and connecting you to NASA. We are here for the research, research contributions and research capacity. I welcome questions, and you'll hear this often from me, even when I'm not new, that I may not have the answer, but I will always be glad to track it down. So as long as we communicate with everyone and make it open to everyone, we are able to share in a way that in other competitive, competitive awards, we can't necessarily share this type of information. But I know there's been some questions. I appreciate your patience as I come up to speed. Kathy has been tremendous. I am so grateful that she is still in the NASA family, that she still picks up the phone when I call, and that we can still use her as a resource. So here's the plan for the next couple of months. I say three months or through the end of the calendar year, *we are going to pick up some additional basic research awards from FY25 NOFO. There were some additional ones that were desirable to be selected, and that is going to be our first additional new award action. We will move to the ISS proposals. We want to honor the hard work put into those proposals. We're going to conduct a standard review and selection.* There has been a lot of staff

turnover, subject matter, expert turnover. *Thank you for your patience as we convene those panels, and then we'll be making those selections.* And I know you have been asking about our R3s. *It is our intent to take the FY25 proposal submissions for the R3s and again, that's going to take even more work.* I'm not putting dates on here. Of course, we're multiple people, but in terms of what I think will come out first, this is kind of an in-order sequence that we'll be working to do the R3 proposals and reviews. Thank you for your patience, as we do kind of an inventory of where we are in terms of what experts are left, who has the bandwidth to work with, with EPSCoR and academic collaborators, we're going to do a refresh on our research focus areas and identify all the technical monitors. That's our intent. To do a call see who is still participating, who is still interested, who is looking to take on new relationships and things like that. I do next slide is about beyond the next three months and FY26. Are there any questions?

Contacts

- Program inbox: agency-epscor@mail.nasa.gov
 - Please copy on all NSSC and other awards management correspondence
 - Please include on anything that is not sensitive
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Three Month Look Ahead Plan

- FY25 NOFO
- Basic Research Award
 - Additional selections
- ISS Proposal Reviews and Selections
- R3 Proposal Reviews and Selections
- NASA Inventory
 - Subject Matter Experts
 - Research Focus Areas
 - Technical Monitors

Cass: Can you confirm, are you taking another look at the research award from 2025 and then go down the list for the 750K?

Dave: Yes. And we will plan for FY26 for a new basic research award to be released.
This is a tentative forecast.

FY26 Forecast

- RID Supplement/Augment Call
- Basic Research Award NOFO
- EPSCoR State Input

This is definitely fluid. So this is definitely not set in stone, but I think Kathy has talked publicly about RID supplement and not just the standard supplement, but an augmentation. I think that is the proper term. So I'm calling that a call right now. The plan would be that would not go through NSPIRES, that we can be a little more lean, a little more efficient on that, that we will require a scope of work. It will require a budget and a budget narrative. If we move forward with this plan, it would be a call, but, and James is very experienced with these as well from the Space Grant side, but we will be working with the lawyers and grant officers. It will not happen in the next 21 days, but we are definitely looking to address and to have a NOFO for basic research

award in FY26. Please provide feedback here, you can email me. You can set up a call, things like that. To do new R3s will be a challenge, lots of experts have left the agency. There is also an ISS manifest backlog. It's not looking likely that an ISS will be released. We will do a Basic Research and RID. We will likely have a continuing resolution. Elaine Ho has gotten approval to continue to operate during the CR with FY25 activities. I expect incremental monthly funding. There is a new EO: Appointee to the agency to approve all NOFO. NASA currently doesn't have that appointed official. New NOFOs cannot be approved. I would like to shoot for Q2 for Basic Research awards, but it's possible that may be pushed farther out; we need that appointed official.

Melanie: How many basic research awards are normally funded?

Dave: I don't know, Josh, if you're still here and have the statistics [not present at the time]. Potentially we could do more since we are not planning on R3 or ISS. Basic Research and RID many ways to slice the funding.

Melanie: My question was based on what Kathy mentioned last time, potentially not running a basic research NOFO, but using that money to all go to an augmentation call. Do you normally fund 10 or 21 states? That would be a different calculus. I also thought hearing you saying that the R3 money will come out of FY26. Did I misunderstand?

Dave: That's true, so that it may not be quite as large.

Melanie: So the only thing we're really saving from is the ISS. Because if we think 10 awards of 750K vs 28 of 450K and states run their own internal competitions. I don't have any preference either way.

Dave: I would appreciate everybody's feedback if you have a preference.

Chip: Thanks, Dave. Questions from the ExComm?

Sara: Let's say every state got 450K, I wonder if it would be better if every state got something giving the current environment we are in.

Chip: Maybe an augmentation will be better. I can spread it around. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. I could see an advantage either way. If this is a way that NASA could give us some funding quicker I would say go that route.

Shawna: My only argument keeping the Basic Research NOFO is that for our early career faculty is a good way for them to get their first grant that they can use toward tenure and promotion, and it's also a great way for them to connect with NASA folks. I can see the benefits in both ways too.

Chip: I see the basic research NOFO as the culmination of smaller awards. Any other ExComm comments?

Paulo: I think Josh mentioned something about quarterly reports and how the timeline has shifted. Can you elaborate on that? Are they going away? [Josh not present at that time]

Colleen: Given additional basic awards out of FY25 vs. Augmentation, I don't think the position was to get rid of the basic research awards altogether, but whether a question if we should have more. The answer will depend on whether or not your jurisdiction won in this competition. Louisiana basic research got selected; so we want RID money, I don't have another proposal in your hands. Regarding the reports Paulo mentioned, those are expenditure reports, NASA EPSCoR internal reports that go to Josh, and then send to all the jurisdictions to see how they match. It can be time consuming. For example, Wyoming and Alaska for example, are small and everyone is in the same system. Louisiana has dozens of institutions and the request has to go through the Louisiana Board of Regents. It would be advantageous to just send those reports when there is a red flag or as a FYI. We brought this up with Kathy and she was going to investigate whether or not these quarterly reports were really necessary or not.

Dave: I know Josh tracks a 25% discrepancy between plan and actuals. Maybe we can adjust. I just need to do a little bit more homework before we address it again.

Chip: Let's open it up to all participants for questions/comments.

Leslie (Guam): Do we want to talk about indirect costs for FY26? Do you anticipate big changes or TBD?

Dave: I would say TBD. We can even bring Sara McGarvey [sp?] to a meeting and we can discuss that.

James: I want to reiterate something that Dave brought up, we had a massive loss of technical monitors and experts. I will work with Matt and Dave to build that up again. And for those of you who have ideas about things that you know are spot on in terms of where we're going with our missions and studies, that you have somebody that can support you as a technical monitor please let me know. We used to have that Stimuli magazine and can't tell you how many people got their hands on that and were really impressed with the descriptions of the research.

Chip: You are all great group and working with you in just the last few weeks has been wonderful. I have no doubt if any want to attract new talent is you. If you need us to do a survey of the caucus, or coordinate a meeting about something that you need guidance from us, that's all the things we can do and help you whatever we can.

Luke asked a question via email: EPSCoR RID, currently 200K/year through 2027; Is the augmentation for next year and if so how much are you considering adding.

Dave: I can't quantify that at this moment. I need to look at it, an option is not doing basic research next year and shifted to RID augmentation. My idea at this early stage would be above the 200K.

Chip: Thanks, Dave. I'll relay that to Luke. Any other questions for Dave and the team.

I think Jessica M. had to leave the call.

She did put something in the chat:

Meeting in October 15-15 in DC: All good topics to discuss at the Coalition/Foundation Board retreat. Dave and team, I will send you the invite to that and follow up. We will have virtual capability. Thanks!

Dave: I've already blocked my calendar off and we'll make it work.

Chip: I think we exhausted our NASA EPSCoR ExComm section.

Any other comments?

Motion to adjourn?

Sara moved to adjourn, Shawna seconded, all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 5:11 pm. ET.