

NASA EPSCoR Caucus Executive Committee Meeting Agenda

Date: **January 13, 2026**

Time: 4:00 p.m. Eastern, 5:00 p.m. Puerto Rico, 3:00 p.m. Central, 2:00 p.m. Mountain, 1:00 p.m. Pacific, 12:00 p.m. Alaska, 11:00 a.m. Hawaii, 7:00 a.m. (+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 updates D. Berger

2/28/2026 Caucus meeting agenda (finalize the agenda) All ExCom

Preliminary discussions related to 2/28 Caucus meeting All Excom

R3 funding mechanism

Next-gen TIMS

NASA EPSCoR Advocacy L. Gilbert, L. Katz

EPSCoR / IDeA Foundation J. Molesworth

2026 Excom meeting schedule All Excom

Does 4:00 p.m. Eastern on 2nd Tuesday of the month still work?

Other business All ExCom

Part 2 Open session (All)—30 minutes

Comments and questions from the floor All

Adjourn

Action Items from January 13th meeting (Colleen's Otter AI):

_ Compile the caucus meeting registration list and provide a headcount and attendee list to EPSCoR IDEA Foundation staff for catering and logistics for the Feb 28 caucus meeting

_ Distribute the approved Feb 28 caucus meeting agenda to caucus members. Chip completed 1/14/26

_ Check with NSSC resource officer and confirm status and timing for issuing annual supplement/award letters and report back to caucus

_ Consult with Grants Manager Sarah McGarvey and clarify NASA research security training requirements, including who (senior personnel, grad students, postdocs, subs) must complete the training, and share guidance with the caucus

_ Investigate and report back on whether NASA will adopt the common biosketch form (or obstacles such as cost), and advocate with grants staff on behalf of EPSCoR

_ Provide written guidance to the caucus about letters of support/commitment for the basic research NOFO (clarifying what letters are acceptable and how NASA will treat them) and distribute that guidance timed with the research focus areas release

_ Reach out to the appropriate contacts to clarify rules and paperwork regarding hiring students from designated countries (designated list checks) and report findings back to caucus

_ Provide guidance for the planned RID augmentation (topics, allowable activities, and how NASA will evaluate proposals) to EPSCoR jurisdictions to support proposal preparation

_ Prepare and make available the FY27 appropriations advocacy packet (forms, talking points, letters) for attendees about a week or two before the Feb 23 annual meeting (EPSCoR/IDeA Foundation)

_ Clip relevant appropriations bill language about NASA funding and protections and send that bill language to Chip for distribution to the caucus. Chip completed 1/13/26

Meeting summary (Otter AI):

The NASA EPSCoR Caucus Excom meeting discussed several key points. The House approved a mini-bus budget including full funding for EPSCoR, Space Grant, and NGS. The basic research NOFO is delayed to April, with a new process targeting late March. The r3 and ISS 20 FY 25 proposals are being reviewed. The hub NOFO for workforce development is expected soon. The meeting also addressed the need for clear guidance on letters of support, emphasizing factual statements of collaboration rather than endorsements. The agenda for the February 28 caucus meeting was finalized, including updates from NASA and EPSCoR advocacy, and discussions on grant mechanisms and next-gen TIMs.

Meeting Notes:

Chip: Welcome everybody. Thank you for joining today. Secretary's report.

Paulo: Are there any corrections or edits to the minutes from Dec. 9 as revised.

Denise moved to approve, Chip seconded. All in favor. None against.

Minutes from Dec 9. approved.

Dave: NASA EPSCoR Updates

Happy new year. Positive news, the House approved a minibus that includes NASA budget, and it includes a 100% healthy OSTEM and NASA EPSCoR. It also includes funding for Next Gen STEM and MUREP. It's already unlocking funds. The Senate has moved to vote on the same bill this week.

Basic research NOFO is scheduled to be released this quarter. CTE and workforce development to accelerate aerospace workforce development continue to be a priority for NASA. More specific to EPSCoR we're continuing the work on the R3s and ISS 2025 selections. The basic research NOFO is in development. There is a new process and over the break an additional item was added, looking now at the end of April for its release. Proposing to specific research areas will be optional for future R3s. Per the GCAM definition, support letters are for identifying collaborators and commitment letters are for commitment of facilities. From the mission directorates, I'm getting the message that they would rather receive your topics rather than frontloading the topics.

Chip: Happy to engage with you offline for further discussion.

Denise: Given the slippage with the NOFO date, are you thinking of going back to the regular schedule? Also, will you have topic areas available by the end of the month?

Dave: I anticipate having topic areas available by the end of the month. As of today, ISS 2025 applications are the last to be reviewed. For 2027 R3s will resume regular cadence.

We plan for a full budget augmentation. RID augmentation, pending funding availability, will get out as soon as possible.

Gerardo: RID follow up question, before we get the augmentation, my anniversary was January 1st, we haven't received it. When can we anticipate the award letter?

Dave: I requested that we use existing funds to release those letters. Let me check with our resource officer and NSSC.

Chip: From Melanie Page, West Virginia, what is the timeline for NASA to implement research security training guidelines for grant proposals and when that it's done so, will it extend to all RID proposals we award?

Dave*: I will talk to Sarah McGarvey [NASA grants manager] and get back.

Toni: At UNH the security trainings are administered through a company that UNH hires. It's an online security course and the certificates are sent to UNH. Still a good question, if it's a min-award, does it still apply?

Dave: I will follow up with this.

Chip: From Melanie any updates on NASA using the common forms for bio sketches.

Dave: Last I heard it was a cost issue.

Chip: It would be good if we could use the common form.

Toni: Just wondering if there will be any changes to the annual report format and letting us know.

Denise: I just submitted mine using last year's template.

Dave: I haven't heard anything. We can talk about it at the directors' mtg. We will definitely be talking this year about NASA's needs and how to better tell your story.

Toni: I'll plan to use the old template.

Chip: Next item is finalizing the Caucus agenda for the our spring meeting. [Chip shares screen and describes breakdown of agenda]

**DRAFT Agenda
NASA EPSCoR Caucus Meeting**

**800 Maine Ave. SW, Washington, DC
Penthouse conference room
February 28, 2026**

8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.	Breakfast
8:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.	Welcome, announcements, and introductions
8:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	Dave Berger, NASA EPSCoR Manager—NASA updates
10:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	Leslee Gilbert, NASA EPSCoR advocacy
10:45 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Break
11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Jessica Molesworth, EPSCoR/IDeA Foundation and Coalition Boards
11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	NASA EPSCoR <u>grant</u> mechanisms (Basic Research, R3, RID, etc.)
12:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.	Break (box lunch available)
12:45 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.	Discussion of next-gen TIMs
1:45 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Wrap-up and summary

What do all think?

Nathan: Depending on what Dave finds out, we may need more time to discuss the security requirements.

Chip: I didn't include any "other business" because I don't want to go over past 2 pm.

Shawna: Just wondering if some of those discussions can be brought into the grant mechanisms topic.

Chip: I do want people to bring topics to the table for a sort of open and organic discussion.

Melanie: I assume that Space Grant will have the same issues as EPSCoR. I'm happy to lead that discussion. Sometimes we processed sub awards to another university but that person is not doing the actual technical work.

Dave: Appreciate the extra 15 minutes on the agenda. Can you include Torry Johnson to the 8:45 to 10 slot?

Chip: Will do.

Paulo: Quick follow up will you're here, Dave. I sent you two emails: One on students' citizenship working on a RID project and the other email was from our pre-award office regarding the NOFO basic research from last year.

Dave: Oh, yes, I will get back to you.

Chip: Approval of February 28th NASA EPSCoR Caucus agenda: Sara moved to approve, Shawna seconded. All in favor. None opposed.

Next agenda item: NASA EPSCoR Advocacy.

Leslee: Some good news. Two things happening at same time: House and Senate FY26 budget should be approved by Thursday. Despite President's budget, House is funding the OSTEM programs. The 10% administrative cap language continues. There is also language by CJS preventing cost-share rate changes; negotiated IDCs from 2024 continue to apply. NASA Jared Isaacman was confirmed before the holidays. The House has a slower approach for the NASA reauthorization in order for him to catch up. I have a question, did NASA say anything about the augmentation; for certain states there were delayed?

Chip: For other folks, this is a Space Grant issue. Some had not been processed. There were eight or ten that had been placed on hold.

James: Question for Leslee, having understood the potential restoration to OSTEM and looking at other mission directorates, Gooddard has changed its basic research agenda to reflect the House recommendations. Do you see a full restoration of basic research agenda?

Leslee: This is an appropriations bill, Congress put guardrails and provisions to prevent large scale movement of funds from one directorate to another. They are doing some of that. They reconfirmed that funding is a typical NASA budget, so each mission directorate is protected. Now, in the the authorization bill I expect to see more discussions on long-term goals. We're clearly gearing up to put FY27 appropriation numbers.

Chip: Jessica foundation update.

Jessica: Board meeting on February 22nd, annual on February 23rd. We will work on the FY27 appropriation package. I will forward that information about a week prior to the meeting. Hotel registration ends January 26th. Please fill out meeting registration by February 9th. I need a head count for your February 28th caucus meeting.

Chip: Thank you for the reminder and thank you for your generosity in hosting us and providing lunch. I will be sending that head count when finalized. Any other business for the ExComm. [none]. Meeting is open to all now.

Eric: The issue about letters of support came from me, we had glowing reviews, but a couple said that it was weird we didn't have any. But the requirement is to acknowledge them only through NSPIRES. Letters of endorsement are not accepted per the GCAM.

Dave: Yes, I hear you. Mission directorates don't want those letters but statements of facts, if that facility or collaborator are essential to the project.

Colleen: Dave, can we get some detailed info on this. We require a letter from NASA that is not related to a collaboration or facility; an email statement suffices. For our seed funding competition, if NASA says a researcher's work is aligned to the work we're doing, we take this as a sign that it is a good area to support. Having detailed guidelines would be very important.

Dave: FY26 Basic research NOFO at the NSPIRES level those letters are not considered.

Colleen: The submission we send to you starts at a state level. A brief memo will be super helpful.

Denise: I like having letters of interest. But for the down select I don't ask them to include them when send them to the national. It's recommended but not a requirement in my solicitation.

Leslie: RID augmentation guidance?

Dave: Definitely, we will have it. We like to share what is important to us. AI, CTE, workforce, but open ended as well.

Chip: Any other questions/comments from the floor? [None]. Thank you all for attending this meeting. We will have another ExComm meeting before our DC meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 5:11pm ET.

***Dave** followed up via email on Wed. Jan. 14 to provide more information:

I am still waiting to hear back regarding state-based subaward competition personnel status. However, I wanted to share this from our Grants Team:

“Yes, we are actually working a policy on this now. It will require all PIs, Co-PIs, and Co-Is on NASA grants/cooperative agreements to take a **one-hr research security training course** and certify that they have taken the course. This is per a CHIPS & Science Act requirement. We developed the policy in collaboration with Dan Evans, SMD, as SMD is now the agency lead for matters related to research security.”

“We are still working on determining if this requirement will flow down to subrecipients. If it do, then PI, Co-PIs, and Co-Is and sub awards would be required to comply.” Both statements from Chris Murguia, Sr. Analyst, Grants Policy and Compliance, Office of Procurement, NASA HQ.

Meeting Outline (Otter AI) but human edited for content and relevancy:

- Bernard Cole welcomes everyone to the Excom meeting for the NASA EPSCoR caucus and confirms the presence of key members like Shawna, Melanie, Paulo, Gerardo, Sara, and Denise.
- Denise confirms a quorum and hands over the meeting to Paulo for the secretary's report.

Secretary's Report and Approval of Minutes

- Paulo Oemig reviews the minutes from the previous meeting, noting a minor revision and the circulation of revised notes.
- Bernard Cole asks for a motion to approve the minutes, which is seconded and approved unanimously.
- Discussion about the availability of an AI note-taker for future meetings.

NASA Updates from Dave Berger

- Dave Berger provides positive news about the House's approval of a mini-bus budget that includes full funding for EPSCoR, Space Grant, and other initiatives.
- He mentions the upcoming release of the NOFO, focusing on combining academia, industry, and NASA to accelerate aerospace workforce development.
- Dave discusses the progress of the R3 and ISS FY25 proposal reviews and selection, and the development of the basic research NOFO, now targeting an April release.
- He emphasizes the importance of letters of commitment and the potential for NASA to review proposals based on alignment and impact rather than pre-review letters.

Discussion on Basic Research NOFO and R3 Proposals

- Denise inquires about the slippage in the release of the basic research NOFO and whether it will become a permanent change.
- Dave explains that the delay is expected to be a one-time adjustment, with the release of research focus areas in late January and the NOFO in April.
- Denise asks about the future of the R3 proposals, and Dave confirms that the plan is to return to the standard schedule and format.
- Dave mentions ongoing efforts to integrate NASA into various programs and opportunities, including flight opportunities, aeronautics, and high-performance computing.

Security Training Requirements and Common Forms for Biosketches

- Gerardo asks about the timeline for receiving award letters for the annual supplement, and Dave promises to check with the resource officer.
- Melanie inquires about the timeline for NASA to implement research security training requirements and whether it will extend to all senior personnel on awards.
- Dave agrees to check with the grants manager about the definition of major personnel and the requirements for research security training.
- Toni mentions that UNH has already started implementing the security training, administered by a company engaged by the institution.

Finalizing the Caucus Meeting Agenda for February 28

- Chip shares the draft agenda for the caucus meeting, including NASA updates, EPSCoR advocacy, and discussions on grant mechanisms and next-gen TIMs.
- The agenda includes a morning break, a box lunch, and a brief afternoon break.
- Discussion about the need for more time to discuss research security training, with the possibility of moving it to the Space Grant meeting.
- The agenda is approved unanimously.

NASA EPSCoR Advocacy Update

- Leslie Gilbert provides an update on the FY 26 appropriation for NASA, noting that the bill funds all programs within the Office of STEM engagement, including EPSCoR, Space Grant, and MUREP.
- She mentions the inclusion of language in the Commerce, Justice, Science bill that prevents NASA from moving forward with indirect cost rate changes.
- Leslie discusses the confirmation of [~~Jericho Eisenman~~] Jared Isaacman as NASA's new administrator and the potential delay in the President's budget request.
- She emphasizes the importance of the upcoming Advocacy Days to support NASA's mission and the need for fiscal year 27 appropriations targets.

EPSCoR Idea Foundation and Coalition Board Updates

- Jessica Molesworth provides an update on the EPSCoR IDeA Foundation and Coalition Board meetings, scheduled for February 22 and 23.
- She mentions the availability of the FY 27 appropriations packet, which will include forms, talking points, and letters.
- Jessica encourages everyone to fill out the registration form for the meeting, due on February 9, to help with planning.
- She requests a head count for the caucus meeting on February 28 to ensure adequate catering.

Discussion on Letters of Support and Research Security Training

- Eric Wilcox clarifies that letters of support as understood via the GCAM.
- Colleen H Fava expresses the need for clear guidance on letters of support, as they are often used to demonstrate alignment and impact at the state level.
- Dave Berger agrees to provide guidance on letters of support and emphasizes the importance of demonstrating alignment and impact in proposals.
- Paulo Oemig and Denise discuss the usefulness of letters of interest at the state level, even if not required for national proposals.

Open Floor for Questions and Comments

- Eric Wilcox reiterates the importance of clear guidance on letters of support to avoid confusion and discouragement among researchers.
- Paulo Oemig asks about the applicability of a memo from [~~Gerard Eichmann~~] Jared Isaacman to non-civil servants, and Dave Berger agrees to check on this.
- Denise supports the need for letters of interest at the state level to understand NASA's current interests.
- The meeting concludes with a reminder that there will be a Excom meeting before the upcoming caucus meeting in DC.