

Name of Project: Competitive Program For Science Museums and Planetariums
(CP4SMP)
Awarded in Fiscal Year 2009 via NASA Research Announcement (NRA):
NNH08ZNE005N
Resulting Agreements: 13 Grants
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In FY 2008, Congress reallocated the NASA's Office of Education budget and directed it to establish "a competitive program as authorized by section 616 of PL 109-155 for science museums and planetariums to enhance programs related to space exploration, aeronautics, space science, Earth science or microgravity." Congress further directed: *To the extent possible, NASA is urged to use education funds to address the educational needs of women, minorities, and other historically underrepresented groups.* The CP4SMP Project is authorized by PL (Public Law) 109-155 SEC. 616. MUSEUMS: *The Administrator may provide grants to, and enter into cooperative agreements with, museums and planetariums to enable them to enhance programs related to space exploration, aeronautics, space science, earth science, or microgravity.* Congress repeated funding for CP4SMP in the Fiscal Year 2009 budget and a new call for CP4SMP proposals (NNH09ZNE005N) closed on September 10, 2009.

PROJECT GOALS

The basic goal of the CP4SMP project is to establish NASA's flagship investment in Outcome Goal 3: Build strategic partnerships and linkages between STEM formal and informal education providers that promote STEM literacy and awareness of NASA's mission. Specific grant-level objectives include but are not limited to:

- Promote life-long learning in America by students, educators, families, and retirees, using NASA-themed STEM and missions via non-formal and informal education.
- Encourage, inspire and engage large and diverse audiences via NASA's contributions to everyday life within the Congressional defined technical areas.
- Improve understanding of NASA's missions, contributions to STEM disciplines, and STEM careers, including faculty in pre-K-12 and higher education settings.
- Link and engage providers of informal and formal education, including institutions of higher education, particularly HBCUs, Tribal Colleges, and other minority serving

institutions using NASA content through pilot projects that enable educators, parents, retirees, or community leaders to carry the NASA-content back to their households, school, after school groups, summer camps, 4-H communities, etc.

PROJECT BENEFIT TO OUTCOME (1,2, OR 3)

CP4SMP primarily addresses Outcome 3 and supports outcomes 2 and 1 of the NASA education strategic coordination framework. In sum, the three outcomes require the Office of Education to fund activities that 1) establish strategic partnerships, 2) contribute to the development of the STEM workforce, and 3) attract and retain students in STEM disciplines needed to achieve NASA strategic goals.

The CP4SMP funding opportunity supports NASA's education goal to engage educators and students both in and outside the classroom and learners of all ages in science, technology, engineering and mathematics related to NASA missions and careers. The CP4SMP project is uniquely positioned among NASA's competitive grant and cooperative agreement broad agency announcements because it is not specific to just one or a few of NASA missions in exploration, aeronautics, science or space operations. CP4SMP contributes to informal education by making NASA's remarkable resources--facilities, missions, data, images, and employees, including internationally known engineers and scientists-- more broadly known. CP4SMP grants are expected to encourage life-long engagement in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and focus on NASA's contributions to these disciplines.

Informal education is recognized as a successful tool for learners of all ages. The National Academy of Sciences published a National Science Foundation funded study in 2009, *Learning Science in Informal Settings: People, Places, Pursuits* which found evidence that informal education programs involving exhibits, new media and hands-on experiences -- such as public participation in research -- increase interest in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and related careers for both children and adults.

PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The FY 2008 CP4SMP NASA Research Announcement received 70 proposals. NASA selected 13 informal education providers to share \$6.9 million of fiscal year 2008 funds. Participating organizations include museums, planetariums, Challenger Centers, aquariums, and other institutions of informal education. Selected projects partner with NASA's Museum Alliance, a nationwide network of more than 400 science centers, planetariums, museums, aquariums, zoos, observatory visitor centers, NASA visitor centers, nature centers and park visitor centers.

The first cohort of grantees began their work in Fall 2009 in California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Michigan, Montana, New York, North Carolina, Vermont and Washington. The 13 grants have a maximum five-year period of performance and range in value from approximately \$100,000 to \$900,000 each. Selected projects work with the NASA Shared Service Center in Mississippi and other appropriate NASA Field Centers.

PROJECT CONTRIBUTIONS TO PART MEASURES

Created and managed by JPL, the Museum Alliance is a free service provided to educators at over 400 museums, science centers, planetariums and similar institutions of informal education in the United States and beyond. There are Museum Alliance partners in all 50 states, DC, and Guam. Five (5) of the 13 grantees awarded by the CP4SMP project were not previously members of the NASA Museum Alliance. Each time NASA issues a call for CP4SMP proposals, new institutions and individuals learn about and join the Museum Alliance. CP4SMP assisted NASA in attracting new partners to the Museum Alliance.

IMPROVEMENTS (e.g. project management, efficiencies, etc.) MADE IN THE PAST YEAR

Background: The Museum Alliance was established through JPL institutional funding as well as Mars program education and public outreach funding provided through the Science Mission Directorate. The NASA Explorer Institutes competitively selected the Museum Alliance to expand its scope to selected NASA education content in areas beyond JPL-managed missions. Through the Museum Alliance, NASA Education provides interested science centers, museums and planetariums timely access to informal education resources -- NASA images, visualizations, video, and information.

In the Past Year: When Congress reallocated the Explorer Institute funding to establish the CP4SMP project, the Museum Alliance expanded to meet the needs of the direction to enhance programs about NASA including but not limited to aeronautics and human space exploration not previously part of the Museum Alliance offerings. Visitors are using the significantly improved and more accessible Museum Alliance website at: <http://informal.jpl.nasa.gov/museum>.

PROJECT PARTNERS AND ROLE OF PARTNERS IN PROJECT EXECUTION *(THIS IS WHERE FURTHER FOLLOW-UP TO OCCUR FOR COLLECTING 2008 GRANTEE PERFORMANCE SUMMARIES FOR PUBLISHING TO OUR EDUCATION HOME PAGE)*

Because the last CP4SMP grant was made only on August 8, 2009, it is too early to collect or report data about grantee performance. Grantees will report annually as required by NASA grant policies and regulations. A complete list of the FY 2008 Grant Selections including short abstracts can be found at the following URL on the NASA Solicitation and Proposal Integrated Review and Evaluation System (NSPIRES):

<<http://nspires.nasaprs.com/external/viewrepositorydocument/cmdocumentid=192240/Selected%20Proposals%20CP4SMP%202008.pdf>>.