



National Aeronautics and
Space Administration
Washington, DC 20546

Grant Information Circular (GIC)

GIC 26-03
02/25/2026

GUIDANCE ON NASA COMMUNITY PROJECT FUNDING/CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED SPENDING (EARMARKS¹) AWARDED AS GRANTS FOR FY 2026

PURPOSE: To provide guidance on NASA Community Project Funding/Congressionally Directed Spending projects (earmarks) included in the Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the FY 2026 consolidated Commerce, Justice, Science; Energy and Water Development; and Interior Appropriations Act ([P.L. 119-74](#)) (the Act).

BACKGROUND:

The Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the Act identifies 39 NASA “Community Project Funding/Congressionally Directed Spending” projects (earmarks), funded at a total of \$58.417M within the Safety, Security, and Mission Services (SSMS) appropriations account.

The Act specifies: “*Provided further*, That of the amounts appropriated under this heading, \$58,417,135 shall be made available for the SSMS projects, and in the amounts, specified in the table titled ‘Community Project Funding/Congressionally Directed Spending’ included for this division in the explanatory statement described in section 4 (in the matter preceding division A of this consolidated Act): *Provided further*, That the amounts made available for the projects referenced in the preceding proviso may not be transferred for any other purpose.”

The NASA Office of the General Counsel (OGC) has determined that this incorporation of earmarks, by reference, satisfies the requirements of [E.O. 13457](#), and the FY 2026 earmarks are statutory, to the extent that they are specified in the Joint Explanatory Statement.

Thus, where an intended recipient of an earmark is designated in the Joint Explanatory Statement, an award may be made to the intended recipient, in the amount and for the purpose specified in the Joint Explanatory Statement, pursuant to P.L. 119-74.

¹ The terms “earmark” and NASA “Community Project Funding/Congressionally Directed Spending” projects (earmarks) are used interchangeably to refer to 39 projects listed in the Explanatory Statement accompanying the FY 2026 Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 119-74) and incorporated by reference into the Act. These 39 projects are not “earmarks” for the purposes of the Statement of Federal Financial Accounting Standards 27: Identifying and Reporting Funds from Dedicated Collections.

GUIDANCE:

Guidance issued by the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations regarding FY 2026 “Community Project Funding” and “Congressionally Directed Spending” projects (earmarks) stated that no earmarks may be designated for a for-profit entity. As such, all FY 2026 earmark awards are expected to be issued to non-profit organizations.

All earmark proposals will be awarded as grants and not cooperative agreements, so they must not include NASA “substantial involvement.” Substantial involvement includes a high degree of cooperation between NASA and a cooperative agreement recipient; it may consist of collaboration, participation, or intervention in the activity being performed under the award. Substantial involvement does not include award administration, monitoring, or oversight activities.

NASA will not permit the use of earmark funds for construction. Construction is the process of erection or modification of real property. Construction includes one or more systems (e.g., structure, roof, exterior, interior, finishes, heating ventilation and air conditioning, electrical, plumbing, conveyance, construction-related program support equipment, etc.) and involves the related skilled trades (e.g., carpenters, painters, steel erectors, brick masons, plumbers, electricians, concrete workers, telecommunication workers, etc.) to perform the work. However, proposals may include earmark funds for non-collateral equipping, outfitting, or wiring.

For all earmarks, a representative from the NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC) will request the proposal from the intended recipient; provide preliminary guidance to the intended recipient; review the proposal for completeness; and coordinate evaluation of the proposal. The following elements or factors, each approximately equal in weight, must be considered in evaluating any proposal for the non-discretionary award of a grant:

- (1) The proposal's relevance to NASA's mission;
- (2) The intrinsic scientific, engineering, or educational merit of the proposed effort;
- (3) Cost allowability, allocability, and reasonability.

Examples of criteria that may be considered in evaluating the scientific, engineering, or educational merit of the proposed effort include: (a) the existence of unique or innovative methods or the quality of the approaches or concepts demonstrated by the proposal; (b) the qualifications, capabilities, and experience of the key personnel critical in achieving the proposed objectives; (c) the proposer's facilities, techniques, and past experience and performance relevant to the proposed objectives; and (d) for proposed research, advancement of the state-of-the-art.

In evaluating cost allowability, allocability, and reasonability, the cost principles in [2 CFR 200](#), Subpart E, will be utilized. During award processing, NASA will also confirm that the intended award recipient is a nonprofit organization by checking their “profit status” in the [System for Award Management \(SAM.gov\)](#).

NASA evaluators may find that proposals for some earmarks are not directly relevant to NASA's missions or may question the intrinsic scientific, engineering, or educational merit of the proposed effort. In such cases, NASA will work with prospective recipients to align their proposals as closely as possible with NASA's missions.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This GIC is effective as dated and shall remain in effect until canceled or superseded.

CANCELLATION: GIC 24-02, FY 2024 Earmark Guidance, dated April 4, 2024, is hereby canceled.

HEADQUARTERS CONTACT: Office of Procurement, Procurement and Grants Policy Division, Grants Policy and Compliance, e-mail: hq-dl-grants-policy-compliance@mail.nasa.gov.