

To: ASP email distribution

From: Earth Science Division, Airborne Science Program Director

Subject: FY27 Airborne Science Flight Program

The Airborne Science Program (ASP), under the Earth Science Division (ESD) of the Science Mission Directorate (SMD) announces the annual call for Fiscal Year 2027 Flight Requests (FRs). This call applies to Earth Science activities anticipated to occur between October 2026 and September 2027 that will utilize [ASP supported aircraft](#), NASA [instruments](#), or any ESD funded airborne activities/missions.

Flight Requests should be submitted as soon as possible to provide advanced notice of the proposed mission and allow sufficient time for scheduling, flight planning, engineering, and integration efforts, or special clearances which are driven by location and total aircraft payload size. At a minimum, Flight Requests for U.S. locations using previously approved flight instrumentation should be submitted at least 3 months before the desired data collection dates, except in cases of rapid response missions to support hazard mapping. Flight Requests for non-U.S locations must be submitted at least 6 months prior to desired data collection dates to enable clearance planning.

Detailed and continually updated aircraft and instrument information can be found on the [Airborne Science Program website](#). This site is a centralized portal for all program components, including the [Science Operations Flight Request System \(SOFRS\)](#), platforms, instrument capabilities, schedules, and points of contact (POCs). For a comprehensive list of ESD program managers, please visit the [Earth Science Division Website](#) or the [Program Officers list](#). In addition, investigators in the pre-proposal planning stage may contact Matt Fladeland at (650) 604-3325 for help with platform selection, engineering questions, or integration concerns.

PLEASE NOTE: All airborne missions utilizing NASA instruments, NASA personnel, NASA aircraft or funded through a NASA contract must be in compliance with the NASA Aircraft Operations Management Manual ([NPR 7900.3D](#)).

ROSES and Multi-Aircraft Missions

ESD-funded investigators with approved or pending proposals from Research Opportunities in Space and Earth Sciences (ROSES) announcements need to submit a Flight Request, as this is the method to acquire a cost estimate for aircraft for inclusion in proposals but is not a substitute for a proposal. If the campaign is planned to take place during multiple fiscal years (FY), a Flight Request needs to be submitted for each FY.

For more information on how to submit a Flight Request, please see [SOFRS: User Guide | NASA Airborne Science Program](#).

User Fees

All airborne assets (aircraft and instruments) are subject to user fees. These fees reflect the usage cost and are assessed by the operating organization. This is true for both NASA and non-NASA assets. See [Appendix A](#) for a list of these assets and a decision tree to determine if a Flight Request is required.

Flight Requests should be associated with a NASA program, grant, proposal, or if funded from a non-NASA source, deemed to be directly related to a NASA area of interest. If no NASA investigation is associated with the request, it will be handled as a Reimbursable Mission. Reimbursable missions are subject to unsubsidized flight hour rates and additional fees, and will require a justification for the use of NASA assets.

Once a Flight Request is approved and scheduled, the user fees must be forwarded to the performing organization(s). User fees must be available to the performing center(s) before mission activities, such as integration, can occur. For SMD funded researchers using NASA assets, the fees will normally be withheld from the investigator's budget by the sponsor and sent directly to the NASA aircraft or instrument organization.

Integration and Mission Peculiar Costs

In addition to user fees, integration costs (aircraft and instrument dependent) and Mission Peculiar Costs (MPCs) may be applied to the FR budget by the aircraft manager. Any costs to the project for science team deployment would be separate. Detailed information on integration costs and MPCs, including those for satellite communication (SATCOM) and the National Suborbital Research Center (NSRC) are located in [Appendix B](#). All relevant aircraft MPCs should be discussed with the aircraft manager.

ASP Supported and Other NASA Aircraft

The Airborne Science Program continues to support an inventory of unique, highly modified "science-ready" platforms. See [Appendix C](#) for the list of current flight hour costs and visit the [ASP platforms page](#) for a detailed list of available aircraft. A remote sensing GV has been added to the core fleet and will be fully modified and ready to support science flights beginning in the Spring of 2027. The B777 modification is nearing completion, and the ASP team is transitioning to support its inaugural mission (NURTURE) in January 2027. The G-IV is currently being modified to support the Next Generation Synthetic Aperture Radar platform and will be ready for science Summer 2027.

Commercial Aviation Services (CAS)

The Airborne Science Program maintains a [list](#) of currently audited and approved Commercial Aviation Services (CAS) vendors. Principal Investigators are requested to specify if continued access to these specific providers is required and to identify any additional commercial vendors necessary for the upcoming fiscal year. Please be advised that, in light of budget limitations, funding for CAS audit inspections is limited and cannot accommodate all requests. Consequently, ASP must prioritize inspections strategically; all requirements should be coordinated with the agency CAS manager, Mike Cropper, to ensure forward-looking mission planning.

Final Words

SOFRS is managed by the Earth Science Project Office (ESPO) at Ames Research Center. If you have any questions regarding SOFRS and/or if you did not receive this message directly and would like to be included in further distributions, please send an email to the [curators](#).

Please submit your completed FY27 Flight Requests as soon in your planning process as possible.

Sincerely,

Derek Rutovic
Director, Airborne Science Program Earth Science Division
Science Mission Directorate