Expanding the Network - Program Requirements and Guidelines

The Informal Learning Network of NASA's Universe of Learning is a collaboration of museums and cultural institutions affiliated with the Association of Science and Technology Centers (ASTC) and the Smithsonian who are learning together to create and imagine learning resources and experiences for diverse learning audiences. NASA's Universe of Learning is seeking to enhance and broaden the Informal Learning Network portfolio of astrophysics learning assets through co-creation, and the inclusion of broader perspectives to reduce barriers of participation. By expanding the network it is our hope that together we will achieve impactful astrophysics programming that is innovative, inclusive, accessible, and relevant to broader audiences.

To achieve this goal, we are offering a new round of competitive funding to informal learning institutions. This funding will support expanding opportunities to communities traditionally underserved in STEM and STEAM programming. Funding tiers are described below. All ASTC member organizations and Smithsonian Affiliates are eligible to apply for Tier 1 funding. Only existing members of the community (those that have previously received NASA's Universe of Learning funding) are eligible to apply to funding tiers 2 and 3, which enable Informal Learning Network members to take a more direct leadership role within the network and to maximize the impact of the network's prior work.

Available Funding Tiers:

Tier 1: Focused astrophysics program partnership between informal learning organization and community partner

Funding Level: $2,500-$5,000

Eligibility: All ASTC member organizations and Smithsonian Affiliates

The Informal Learning network has developed <u>over 40 astronomy program models</u> over the past several years. These range from family astronomy events to summer camps and afterschool experiences. This funding opportunity is to support organizations in adopting, adapting, and refocusing one of these program models to better address the interests of a specific underserved community. Program implementations can be similar to past Informal Learning Network program models, but should be more deeply intentional in design for and with a particular community. Focus should be primarily on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA).

EXAMPLE: Partner with a local refugee community center. Work with the center to determine the needs and interests of their community. Then tailor an existing program model and implement it to meet the needs of their audience. Make sure this program model can be adaptable and address any new needs as they arise throughout the length of the program.

Tier 2: Expanding the Network–Growing community partnerships

Funding Level: $5,000-$10,000 (Over 1 or 2 years)

Eligibility: Existing members of the Informal Learning Network (those who have previously received funding from NASA's Universe of Learning)

Build capacity in your communities by leveraging the expertise at your organization. Establish a mini network of organizations in your community working to introduce NASA's Universe of Learning content to a broader community. This mini-network should build on your existing knowledge of Informal Learning Network program models and content areas, and support others in your community in engaging with astrophysics content.

EXAMPLE: Invite all art museums in the city for a two-day workshop. Teach astronomy content, and highlight two STEAM program models developed years 1-5, learn how to connect with host museums and NASA's Universe of Learning subject matter experts. Following the workshop, the art museums are encouraged to put the workshop into practice - with support from workshop host and NASA's Universe of Learning. Art museums that choose to run a program receive supplies from the host museum.

EXAMPLE: Develop a program series with a local community program like Boys and Girls Club that involves multiple visits, or professional development for facilitators with Boys and Girls Club that culminates in a program that involves the museum.

Tier 3: Expanding the Network at larger scale–Maximizing our impact

Funding Level: $10,000-$20,000 over two years

Eligibility: Existing members of the Informal Learning Network (those who have previously received funding from NASA's Universe of Learning)

Broaden the community of organizations participating in the NASA's Universe of Learning Informal Learning Network. Establish a community or regional network that works together to reduce barriers to NASA's Universe of Learning content and resources. This network should include broad perspectives in its efforts to expand pathways to engage with astrophysics content, and more broadly STEM fields. This network should collaborate and co-create with its community over time.

EXAMPLE: Convene a regional network of planetaria over the course of 2 years. Work to increase inclusivity in planetaria shows. Could bring planetaria and communi

Please answer the questions in the following application to propose your NASA's Universe of Learning content or regional Hub. Be sure to highlight the following elements:

Required elements of successful proposals:

- Described projects use NASA's Universe of Learning Resources
- Proposed activities broaden the diversity of organizations using NASA's Universe of Learning resources
- Leaders will work with the NASA's Universe of Learning team to reduce audience barriers to NASA astrophysics
- Project broadens participation/ reaches communities underserved by STEM opportunities such as girls, underrepresented minorities, people with disabilities, rural audiences, etc.
- Organizations proposing to tiers 2 & 3 funding must have staff that have participated in NASA's Universe of Learning webinars/Community of Practice or contributed to past NASA's Universe of Learning Program Model development

Preferred characteristics:

- Proposals are specific in describing how they will be increasing DEIA (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility) efforts in their programs and how they will be working with their local organizations that have expertise in engaging these underserved communities
- Describes the contributions or assets brought to the project by the home institution (e.g., local partnerships, particular educational or multidisciplinary expertise, in-house resources, experience working with underserved communities)
- Proposals articulate a commitment to and strategy for sustainability beyond the period of NASA's Universe of Learning funding including potential in-kind contributions

In addition to the above elements, proposals will be selected based on the following criteria.

- Evidence of intentionality of DEIA focus
- Quality of incorporation of NASA's Universe of Learning astrophysics resources
- Likelihood for having a positive community impact
- Realistic budgeting
- Balance between depth of impact (long engagement) vs. breadth of impact (size of audience)
- Other selection factors will include: geographic distribution; institutional diversity; programmatic variety

*The NASA's Universe of Learning program reserves the right to make partial selections based on budgetary and other considerations. The number of awards will be subject to the number of proposal submissions and availability of funds.

Click the 'Next' button below to begin the application.

* 1. Address

Name

Institution

Address

Address 2

City/Town

State/Province

ZIP/Postal Code

Email Address

Phone Number

* 2. To receive funds your organization must be an active member of either Smithsonian Affiliations or the Association of Science and Technology Centers. Please indicate to which organization(s) your institution belongs.

☐ Smithsonian Affiliations

☐ Association of Science and Technology Centers

* 3. Proposal Title

* 4. Briefly summarize your program idea, this is an abstract. You will have more opportunities to define below. [100 words or fewer]

* 5. What community will you be engaging? [50 words]

[By community we mean those who share a common sense of belonging or shared identity. In a community, people are contributing, not just listening. We can think about community in terms of geography, identity, affinity or other group that shares a common interest.]

* 6. What are your program goals? These include audience outcomes and/or intended community impacts. [3-5 bullets]

* 7. Which level of funding would you like to be considered for?

○ Tier 1: Focused astrophysics program partnership between informal learning organization and community partner

○ Tier 2: Expanding the Network–Growing community partnerships

○ Tier 3: Expanding the Network at larger scale–Maximizing our impact

Tier 1: Focused astrophysics program partnership between informal learning org and community partner

8. Which NASA's Universe of Learning Informal Learning Network program model(s) will you be referencing for your plans?

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9. What is your timeline? List below highlighting major deadlines, events, and tasks.

Example timeline
Spring:

- Establish/strengthen partnership
- Determine needs/interests of the community
- Plan program based on community input

Summer:

- Establish timeline and market event
- Create activities and guides
- Assess program needs

Fall:

- Implement the program
- Offer resources for further engagement
- Continue to facilitate this partnership
- Write report

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10. Briefly describe how you plan to implement your program (150 words MAX).

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11. Would you like program assistance from a subject matter expert? [The NASA's Universe of Learning team will help you identify relevant subject matter experts for your program model.]

Subject matter experts can be available for support such as: collaboration, virtual Q&As with staff or public audiences, review of materials etc.

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Maybe

If yes or maybe, how do you envision using a subject matter expert?

12. Will you recruit participants through expanding an existing partnership or building a new partnership?

☐ Established

☐ New

13. Please tell us about the partnership, e.g. school, community group, program partners, etc.

14. What is the anticipated number of program participants/attendees?

15. In what way will your program help NASA's Universe of Learning achieve its goal of reaching populations traditionally underrepresented in or underserved by science learning opportunities?

16. Are there any other details about your program that you would like reviewers to know?

* 17. What is your total budget request? Tier 1 funding max is $5,000. Please round to the nearest $100.

18. Briefly list your budget breakdown for this award of up to $5000, e.g. staff time - $700; materials and supplies - $1500; marketing/design - $300. Certain equipment/capital expense may be allowable if it is specifically dedicated to maintaining NASA's Universe of Learning content resources for your audience. If selected, you may be asked to submit a more detailed budget.

19. How do you anticipate documenting your program model? Program documentation must be in a format that can be shared with other organizations. Check all that apply, and add more ideas as needed. To view previous program model documentation please see NASA's Universe of Learning Informal Learning Network.

☐ Activity guide/lesson plans   ☐ Demonstration guide/script

☐ Activity and program list   ☐ Planetarium show guide/script

☐ Exhibition planning guide   ☐ Event guide

☐ Other (please specify)

Final Questions

* 44. Do you agree to provide photo documentation of your program model?

◯ Yes

◯ No

* 45. If you are selected to receive the award, you will be expected to:

- Have an authorized representative at your organization sign a contractual agreement.
- Provide detailed documentation that would help other institutions to run a similar program.
- Provide photo documentation and photo release forms of your program model (a release form will be provided by NASA's Universe of Learning).
- Submit a final online report on your program to NASA's Universe of Learning.
- Check-in with a program officer.

The NASA's Universe of Learning team will provide the template for final reports. If you fail to complete these requirements, you will be asked to return the funds.

Do you agree to these terms?

◯ Yes, I agree to these terms.

◯ No, I don't agree to these terms.