**Discover Exoplanets Application FAQ**

*Eligibility*

Q: How do I know if my library is eligible to apply?

A: All public and tribal libraries in the United States, territories and protectorates are eligible to apply. School and university libraries in the US that host free programs for the general public are also eligible to apply.

Q: I work at a military library, are we eligible?

A: Some military libraries may be eligible to apply, please contact your on-base chain of command to determine eligibility.

Q: The application mentions that reaching “underserved and underrepresented” audiences is a major goal of the program. How do you define this term?

A: Underserved and underrepresented refers to folks who have been excluded from STEM and science fields and careers, from participating fully in society, or benefiting from public services. Living and working in a community populated by these groups is not sufficient to apply to this grant. Please ensure your proposal narrative describes how you will *explicitly* target the groups you hope to serve. Think about the groups in your community who have historically been excluded. While this could certainly be women/girls, or rural populations writ large, think about how indigenous, black, immigrant, neurodiverse and other audiences have been excluded in your own venue, and ways to invite them in. Again, your work should target a *new audience* within your library system, or *increase participation* by an underserved/underrepresented group.

Q: The application also mentions community organizations that do not necessarily focus on STEAM. Are we allowed to partner with schools?

A: Absolutely! The intent of community partners is to reach deeper into the community to target underserved populations, increase reach, and identify populations not currently benefiting from library services. Schools, churches, recreation centers and places in the community where people gather are fantastic partners to increase reach. Also consider culturally-focused groups, if that’s appropriate to your target audience.

Q: The application mentions 3 outreach pieces. What does this mean? Are we to install 3 of the computerized pieces at another venue? If so, what is our responsibility regarding these components and what is theirs?

A: We have 3 duplicate pieces (that already appear in the library piece, two computer interactives and one panel) that can be shared with other community venues to “advertise” the exhibition at the library. This venue could also be another library in your system, a recreation or community center, or a community partner. The expectation is that all pieces would be delivered to the library and the library would coordinate with the secondary venue to arrange pickup/delivery (the kiosk will fit in the back of a standard SUV).

Q: Do we only report on working with our partners during the time we’re hosting the exhibition, or should we report other opportunities?

A: You will receive a kit that stays with your institution towards the beginning of the project, you can work with partners to facilitate programs using kit materials. If these programs happen soon before or after your exhibit period, they can count towards the 10 required programs.

*Programming Requirements*

Q: The application says we must complete a total of 10 programs. What if we do more? How do we know if a specific type of program “counts”?

A: The 10-program requirement is based on realistic work performed in past library exhibit programs. We provide the breakdown (one opening event, three public programs for adults, three public programs for families, and three programs for out of school K-12 children) as a flexible template for your programs. Your library knows best what types of programs can fulfil these requirements. For example, you may choose to do a story-time program to satisfy the family programs, or to do an outdoors rocket experiment. What is most important to the project team is that a variety of audiences are impacted by programming. If you do more than 10 programs, we’d appreciate it if you report on each one, so we can keep track of audience engagement across the larger program.

Q: When must the 10 programs occur?

A: Due to the limited exhibit time at your institution, some of your 10 programs (utilizing kit materials) may occur before or after your exhibit hosting period.

*Exhibit Requirements*

Q: The application states that the exhibit will take up approximately 700 square feet. Does that all have to be in one part of the library?

A: The 700 square foot measurement assumes all the items placed together with appropriate ADA distance between pieces. You are more than welcome (and even encouraged!) to break the exhibit up in your library. Some pieces will be better suited for children’s, some for teens, etc. Mix it up!

Q: Can I split exhibit components between library branches?

Splitting components between branches is allowed, but you will need to make sure you have your own transportation to move items between venues, and that all items are back at the main host site by the outbound shipping date. Splitting strategies can be discussed with the project team upon award.

Q: I work at our Central Library and wish to apply on behalf of one of our smaller libraries. Is this okay?

A: Do not apply to host the exhibition if you plan on having another branch host. The host venue must submit the application and be on board with the project.

Q: We don’t have a loading dock, does this mean we can’t host the exhibit?

A: You can absolutely still host the exhibit! We need to know this information for our shipper to make plans, but it does not impact your ability to host. You will need to make sure that whatever entrance you do plan on using has semi-trailer access, and won’t be blocking any fire lanes.

Q: We’re in an older Carnegie building with original architecture, will the exhibit fit into our building?

A: It might be tight! Generally speaking, all exhibit components will fit through a normal width door, but we prefer double doors so things don’t get banged up. At the very least, a single door entrance, or an oddly shaped entrance that has library security features needs to have those items removed prior to moving the exhibit in or out. The exhibit may also have crates that will not fit inside an older Carnegie building doorway. It is appropriate to unpack those crates outside the building, and store the crates at an offsite location, but the library will be responsible for moving those items.

Q: What if something in the exhibit breaks?

A: Each library is required to have coverage on their insurance for the exhibition. Most libraries already have this coverage, and just need to provide us proof that the exhibit will be insured. Rarely, a separate rider for the full replacement cost of the exhibit will need to be purchased. Typically, these insurance policies have a $500 deductible. If the damage is over that deductible, the library will be expected (through their insurance) to finance replacing/repairing the broken piece. If it is under that limit, the project will absorb the cost.

Q: Does the exhibit require an internet connection?

A: It’s possible that a kiosk in the exhibit will require a persistent internet connection, or that we will ask you to connect a kiosk to the internet for support purposes, so you should be prepared to support that. Wifi is preferred, as long as the kiosk only needs to be signed in once (in other words, it can’t be required to agree to usage terms each time it reconnects).

*Required Training and Travel*

Q: Is travel to the in-person workshop required? What if there is a COVID surge?

A: Assuming “back to normal” operations, workshop attendance will be required. If folks need accommodation due to medical issues, we will be able to stream the workshop for those individuals, but many of the “hands-on” pieces of the workshop (such as practicing assembling the exhibit) will be missed. If there is a COVID surge we will follow CDC recommendations for gatherings, and will move to virtual with extra training videos/live support if necessary.

*Evaluation and Reporting Requirements*

Q: What reporting requirements do we have?

A: A final report will be required within 60 days of the exhibit leaving your site. This report will ask you to describe programs hosted, provide pictures (with photo releases), and provide any numerical or demographic information available about program and exhibition attendance. A draft of the final report will be available prior to the tour start.

Q: Will we be interacting with the project evaluators?

A: Yes! You will be asked to complete surveys about your experiences in the project; you may also be asked to participate in an interview about your experiences. The project evaluators will be visiting a limited number of sites to observe patron interactions, and will ask your help in administering a very brief survey to patrons who attend project-related programming. The project team/evaluators may also ask you to take pictures of interactive exhibit components (for example a dot-voting activity, or mural) to capture patron interactions.

*COVID-19 Impacts on libraries*

Q: If the pandemic shuts our library down during our exhibit window, will we have another opportunity to host it?

A: Unfortunately, this depends on how long such a shutdown lasts. We do have some flexibility at the end of our NASA grant term to accommodate 1 or 2 libraries who may have missed out, but we may not be able to accommodate everyone who may be impacted by a future surge.

Q: We were shut down for much of 2020 due to COVID and are just now opening. Are there specific procedures or extra tasks you recommend to keep our community safe?

A: Before traveling a different exhibition, the Space Science Institute talked to our local health department to determine how we could help minimize risks to patrons. They recommend each participating library contact their own health department for location specific guidelines. In addition, we recommend frequent cleaning with disinfectant wipes, outdoor programs when feasible, and live-streaming in-person programs to provide multiple means of engagement for patrons who may not be able to interact in crowds yet.

Q: Our budget has been impacted by COVID-19, do both the Project Director and Project Coordinator need to be library staff, or can one be a library volunteer?

A: As long as a volunteer can meet the requirements to host the exhibition (such as participating in the in-person workshop, facilitating programs, gathering data for the evaluation, etc.) it is absolutely acceptable for the Project Coordinator to be a volunteer, though we do need the Project Director to be a paid staff member.