

**Cooperative Institute for Earth System Research and Data Science (CIESRDS)**  
**NA22OAR4320151**

**Administrative Support Plan**

**Lead Institution:**

Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences  
University of Colorado Boulder  
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Boulder, CO 80309

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**Award Period:**

September 1, 2022 - August 31, 2027

## **CIESRDS Award Administrative Support Plan**

The CIESRDS-funded (CIESRDS) workforce is part of the University of Colorado (CU) Boulder's Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Science (CIRES), and as such will benefit from the robust university investment in CIRES and its long history of success. CIRES is viewed as a highly desirable place to work on the university campus, given its high-impact scientific mission and people-first approach. CIRES employs about 830 people, including undergraduate and graduate students. As such, the approximately 415 CIESRDS personnel in the NOAA David Skaggs Research Center will make up about half of the overall CIRES research enterprise, and they will collaborate closely with federal scientists in the NOAA Laboratories and Centers located there.

As CU Boulder and CIRES employees, our CIESRDS workforce will do service, including attending CIRES town halls and other CIRES meetings; serving on CIRES committees; pursuing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) activities; and participating in professional development trainings. This is all part of the expectations that CIRES and CU Boulder has for their employees. Time allotted to these activities are determined with their supervisor and can then occur as part of normal work day.

CIESRDS employees will adhere to all safety requirements as required by the CU Boulder and the terms and conditions of the CIESRDS Cooperative Agreement with NOAA.

## **Administrative Services, Including Fiscal & Human Resource Management**

We will employ a professional administrative staff of sufficient size to support CIESRDS scientists in their various roles and to meet the needs of the cooperative agreement. The administrative staff will include experts in finance, human resources (HR), DEIA, communications, education and outreach (E&O), information technology (IT), facilities, event planning, and general administrative support (Figure 1). The administrative team will continue to ensure all employees—researchers, faculty, administrators, and students—receive the support necessary to fully engage in their work and progress in their careers.

### ***Human Resource Management***

Experienced HR staff will administer all aspects of CIESRDS hiring, employment (including annual performance reviews), training and professional development, payroll, compensation, international employee support, and benefits in support of CIESRDS staff. The current team has an excellent track record of recruiting and retaining exceptional researchers, and contributing to the development of NOAA's federal workforce (e.g., 52 CIRES employees obtained federal positions in NOAA during the last 10 years). HR partners regularly with the CIRES Director of Diversity and Inclusion (DEI), working with the campus Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance to monitor workforce demographics and hiring process metrics, to track trends towards a more diverse workforce.

Our HR experts will onboard all new employees, to introduce them to CIRES and university policies, procedures, benefits, and other relevant details, including expectations of those working in the NOAA laboratories. CIESRDS employees will be hired and supervised by CIRES

employees. Individuals and teams will also benefit from the support of a federal science advisor, who provides input to the day-to-day work of the CIESRDS researchers. Science advisors and other federal employees may provide input to the CI's evaluation performance. This input is limited to an evaluation of a CIESRDS employee's contributions to collaborative projects. CIRES also invites federal partners to provide input to the hiring of CIESRDS employees.

Our HR team will work closely with university HR to offer all CIESRDS employees high-caliber and relevant professional and personal development opportunities, mental health support resources, and employee recognition programs. Regular training opportunities will include topics such as: inclusive hiring and recruiting practices; supervisor expectations; on/off-boarding; and skills development in areas of leadership, project management, communications, and more. HR is committed to ensuring an inclusive approach to its work and related guidance. This includes extending training opportunities to our federal colleagues as well, when appropriate. The cost of professional development training will generally be funded by CIRES HR; the cost of technical training to develop or enhance a necessary skill set for a current position within a NOAA unit will be funded by Task 2 funds.

Other resources and professional development opportunities available to CIESRDS employees will include:

- The CIRES Graduate Association, serving the needs of (and led independently by) graduate students and postdoctoral scholars. We will provide direct support (e.g., IT and grants management) and ongoing training and professional development (e.g., communications, career development, and networking) for these early-career researchers. We will offer, annually, competitive graduate student research assistantships and travel grants.
- The CIRES peer-mentoring program, run by employees, including trainings on active listening, inclusive mentorship, and other topics.
- Continual invitations to CIESRDS HR-, proposal-, and networking-related opportunities from the CU Boulder Research & Innovation Office (RIO), including the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs, and the greater university community, including other institutes and the Office of Government Relations.
- The opportunity to collaborate with the Colorado Postdoctoral Association; Colorado Leveraging Assets for Better Science (CO-LABS), a business-led consortium that promotes, educates about, and connects federally funded research in Colorado; NCAR; UNAVCO; Earth Science Women's Network (ESWN); AGU; American Geosciences Institute (AGI); and others to offer professional development trainings.
- HR Trainings that include supervisor, performance review, and other professional development.
- Field safety and risk management training, including harassment and discrimination.
- Communications and engagement training related to early-career and other scientists' use of social media and engagement with broader audiences (eg, journalists, policymakers)
- Complementary trainings offered by others across campus and the Front Range science ecosystem.
- Professional development and positive support for interns and scholars, including onboarding, weekly support and cohort building, access to affinity groups and resources, and summer workshop training.

- Inclusive mentoring and professional development training for CIESRDS researchers to help them mentor across differences without asking students to assimilate or code-switch.
- Regular communication with students throughout their educational career to help them transition within the suite of intersecting opportunities and help successive cohorts.

As employees embedded in a NOAA facility, CIESRDS employees and their interactions with federal partners will be guided by the following CIRES and University of Colorado Boulder protocols:

- **Work Modality:** Work modalities for CIRES employees are to be determined by the CIRES supervisor with input from CIRES unit and federal science advisor. Fully remote work requests require further approval from CIRES Director and CU Dean of Institutes.
- **Inclement Weather:** CIRES employees will follow inclement weather guidance (closures and delays) issued by the University of Colorado Boulder campus. Currently, the campus policy does not expect CIRES employees to work during official campus delays or closures and they will receive administrative leave. This may also mean that if the NOAA site is closed and CU is open, CIRES employees will be working remotely. CIRES employees who do not have the ability to work remotely when the NOAA site is closed will receive administrative leave in those situations.
- **Holidays and Early Release:** CIRES employees embedded at NOAA will follow the federal holiday schedule. They are also eligible for early releases offered by their respective NOAA unit/lab. In addition, they are eligible for any additional administrative or holiday leave granted by the Governor of Colorado or the Chancellor of the University.
- **Relocation Costs:** CU and CIRES employees are eligible to receive relocation funds when accepting a position with us. Offering relocation is a standard part of a competitive relocation package for new employees. Relocation costs will be charged to Task 2 funds.
- **Personnel Issues between CIRES and Federal Employees:** When issues between CIRES and federal employees arise, CIRES will offer its employees access to all appropriate campus resource groups, including the CU Office of Victim's Assistance, campus Ombudsman, and Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance. In addition, the CIRES Associate Director for Science and the CIRES HR Director will work directly with either: 1) a dedicated NOAA contact person or 2) leadership within the respective NOAA unit/lab in order to directly address and resolve the issue for employees within each organization. *The details of the mechanisms by which personnel issues between federal and CIRES employees are addressed will be developed in the next six months and amended to this document.*

### ***Diversity and Inclusion***

Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) are values that CIRES, CU Boulder and NOAA are working to integrate into everything we do. CIRES has invested in DEI personnel and programming since 2017, in support of NOAA DEI Strategic Goals and also in support of CIESRDS people and programs. Our DEI Program will coordinate with NOAA and with campus partners to develop an inclusive workplace culture, recruit and retain a diverse workforce, and partner with organizations that serve underrepresented and minoritized groups. Our successes and plans are summarized here:

- Administrative actions taken in response to an institutional workplace culture survey resulted in statistically significant improvements to the workplace culture within one year,

such as decreased instances of incivility. CIRES will track workplace culture at regular intervals to assess state-of-the-culture and to plan annual actions in response.

- Our HR team is currently working to identify and rectify any identity-based compensation disparities as part of our response to the Colorado Equal Pay Act, for example through an institute-wide compensation analysis. CIRES will continue to develop fair and competitive salaries for CIESRDS staff that comply with state and federal laws.
- CIRES will systematically scale up inclusive recruiting, search and hiring practices, and assessment of workforce demographics and hiring metrics (in partnership with CU Boulder Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)).
- CIRES will support programs such as the mentoring program (including inclusive mentoring training), a graduate student and postdoc association, a DEI Community of Practice, and will promote inter-Institute affinity groups.
- CIRES will expand upon existing and build new relationships with organizations that support underrepresented and minoritized students and scientists, such as the NOAA CSCs and professional societies that promote DEI in the sciences.
- We will provide professional development and positive support for interns and scholars, including onboarding, weekly support and cohort building, access to affinity groups and resources, and summer workshop training.
- Provide inclusive mentoring and professional development training for CIESRDS mentors to help them mentor across differences without asking students to assimilate or code-switch.
- Maintain regular communication with students throughout their educational career to help them transition within the suite of intersecting opportunities and help successive cohorts.
- Encourage deepening skills of all CIESRDS members and collaborators in JEDI and ensure compliance with all required training, through:
  - Promoting and supporting JEDI professional development. Past examples include facilitated discussion through CU Boulder Coursera Anti-Racism I course, training in difficult conversations, inclusive hiring practices, supervisor training, interpersonal skills, and inclusion for different identity groups;
  - Institute-wide and inter-institute community-of-practice groups and employee resource groups (affinity groups);
  - Recognizing diversity and inclusion contributions in performance assessments;
  - Systematizing and scaling inclusive hiring practices; and
  - Monitoring employee completion of required university DEI training.

### ***Fiscal Management***

Our Finance office provides comprehensive day-to-day management of the institute's sponsored and non-sponsored funding and provides high-quality pre and post-award administration support services. CIRES finance staff will work in partnership with CU Boulder's Office of Contracts and Grants, the Campus Controller's Office, the Research & Innovation Office, Export Control, CU Legal Counsel, and others to ensure CIESRDS' compliance with all applicable federal, state, and funding agency regulations, and university policies, as well as award terms and conditions. Finance staff will monitor all expenditures to ensure they are compliant, reasonable, allowable, and allocable to the project. The Campus Controller's Office generates and submits required periodic financial reports and Finance will monitor this process as well as technical report submissions by PIs. Finance staff will administer award close-out procedures to ensure all university and funding agency requirements are met. Finance staff will work closely with the Campus Controller's Office in all aspects of fiscal management and provide additional support services to PIs, such as tracking known encumbrances and monitoring spending rates using a customized reporting tool developed in-house. CU Boulder has a centralized Project Management Office that provides resources, training, and access to Project Management Professional certification and will assist in meeting funding agency expectations for successful award management. Dedicated staff will assist with university compliance reporting, licenses, and permits for fieldwork, disclosure agreements, and analysis necessary to address export control concerns related to travel, shipping, visitors, and deemed exports. Finance will have dedicated travel liaisons who review and approve all business travel. Staff will regularly attend training to maintain expertise specific to sponsored award administration. We will work closely with our federal colleagues to ensure the award is spent in the way it's intended and is beneficial to the work based on the budget details provided to CIRES. CIRES Finance staff will authorize spending on the CIESRDS award, not our federal partners, as what is allowed on the federal side differs from what the university allows. CIRES will ensure successful, compliant, fiscally responsible management of the NOAA CIESRDS cooperative agreement.

### ***Administrative Support Structure at NOAA Facilities***

Administrative experts will regularly staff four physical offices in NOAA's DSRC to provide administrative support for CIESRDS employees working in the building and ensure robust communication and collaboration between CIESRDS and NOAA. These offices are for:

1. A liaison, who will have extensive knowledge of CIRES and campus people and policies. This person will onboard NOAA-based CIESRDS employees and support day-to-day administrative tasks such as HR and travel support.
2. A rotation of leaders, which may include the Directors of Communications, DEI, Education and Outreach, Finance, HR, and IT and Operations; the CIRES Director; or their designees. These leaders will support CIESRDS employees and coordinate with NOAA colleagues serving in similar roles.
3. A sustained presence of the CIRES Associate Director of Science (ADS) and the CIRES/CIESRDS Administrative and Scientific Manager, who will supervise and/or mentor CIESRDS scientists, who will identify scientific opportunities, and who will engage in regular, ongoing communications with NOAA leadership in Boulder to develop scientific work plans and ensure CIESRDS employees are working collaboratively on projects supported by the agency.
4. A CIRES science communicator, who will produce and support the production of

internal and external communication products about our institutions' scientific discoveries, successes, innovations, and people.

CIRES will also designate a Lead position in each of the NOAA Laboratories or Centers at the DSRC. These Leads will be supervised directly by the CIESRDS Administrative and Scientific Manager and CIRES ADS, be at the top of the supervisory tree in their unit, and will be a primary point of contact between their laboratory or center and CIRES leadership and administration. This will increase communications and collaborations across the organizations.

## Administration Organization Chart

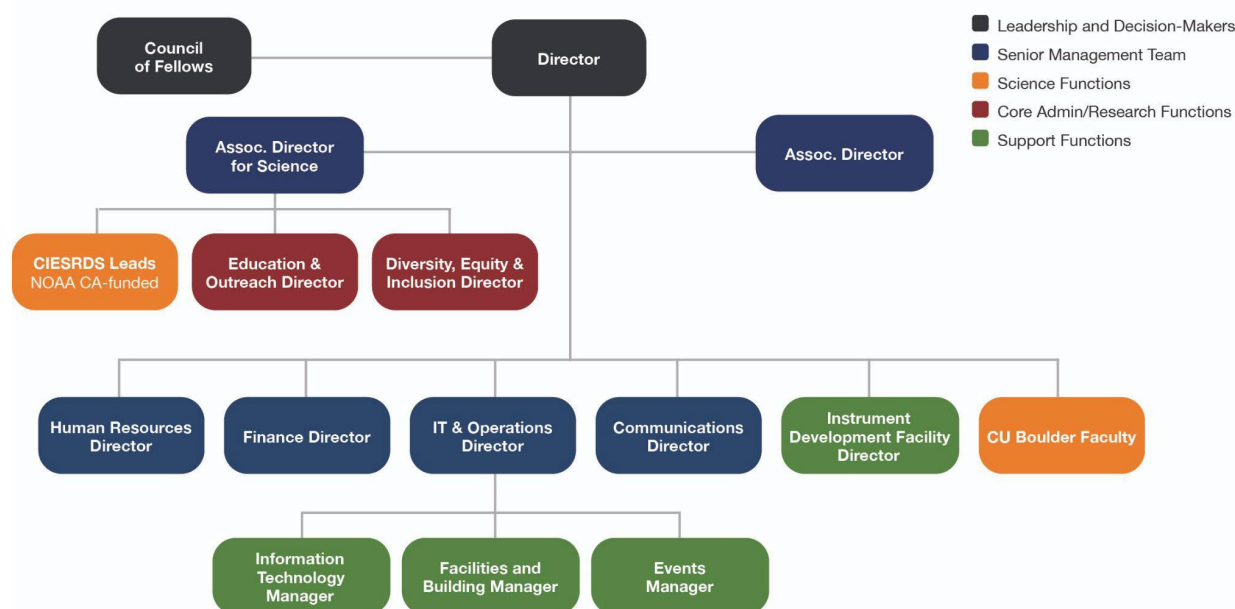


Figure 1: Administration Organizational Chart. This sketch shows the administrative organization of CIRES, with, for example, the Associate Director of Science supervising CIRES/CIESRDS Leads. The CIRES Director also serves as the CIESRDS Director and is ultimately responsible for administering the entire institute.

## Performance Measures

We propose performance evaluation on multiple timescales and levels of organization. CIRES will finalize a set of acceptable performance measures for the CIESRDS Cooperative Agreement, CIESRDS projects, and CIESRDS employees, which will include:

- **Individual** annual performance reviews, in accordance with CIRES and University of Colorado Boulder practices, including assessment of: scientific achievements, publications, software and dataset development, technology transfer, honors and awards, JEDI work, education and outreach service, service to CIRES, and more.
- **Project** performance reports, conducted annually through Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) and NOAA communication required in each group,

including:

- annual review of our work plan with NOAA leadership, and realignment as needed, and
- additional reporting as required by NOAA for specific projects.
- **Institutional** performance reviews:
  - The Boulder campus Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC) reviews all academic units every 7 years. Our next review will be in 2025.
  - NOAA reviews:
    - CIESRDS science and management will be reviewed by NOAA four years into its new cooperative agreement with the agency.
    - NOAA laboratory reviews consistently involve presentations by CIESRDS scientists embedded in those groups.
- **Other metrics** recommended in NOAA's CI21 study, including publications, products transitioned into operations, leveraged funding, number of Ph.D. and Master's degrees awarded, number of employees who attain NOAA employment, media reporting on CIESRDS science, and descriptions of public outreach.

## Operations

### *Accountability and Project Choice*

CIRES, as a unit of the University of Colorado, will be accountable to all its stakeholders, including the university system and campus, sponsoring agencies, its PIs and employees, the international scientific community, and the public at large.

We will ensure our CIESRDS cooperative agreement-funded work aligns with NOAA, CIRES, and CU Boulder strategic objectives and policies. Scientific priorities will be set in collaboration with NOAA partners and aligned through the annual CIESRDS work plan. To ensure accountability to that plan, CIRES will report on CIESRDS work and progress annually to NOAA through an annual report, delivered on deadline and in the format required by the CI handbook or other guidance.

Initially, our scientific and support activities will be divided into the projects associated with our proposed Research Themes. Each project will be developed in collaboration with federal partners and will align with the research themes and goals of CIESRDS, NOAA, and other supporting agencies. CIESRDS scientists will be highly integrated within the NOAA Centers and Labs in Boulder (and beyond), and this collaborative setting enables the identification and development of new projects and research directions. Moreover, CIESRDS scientists will be agile and responsive, so external events requiring rapid response may drive new projects that align with the NOAA mission. Relevant CIESRDS and NOAA scientists and managers will contribute to project definition, scope, goals, and deliverables, ensuring that projects contribute to NOAA goals and objectives and make appropriate use of CIRES expertise and resources. NOAA sponsors will not have supervisory, budgetary or spending authority over CIESRDS personnel or projects, but will have responsibility to coordinate scientific efforts in support of NOAA's objectives.

CIESRDS scientists may also pursue other funding opportunities—when agreed to by NOAA Lab and Center Directors—that are aligned with their NOAA research goals, supplementing



and amplifying the work supported by the cooperative agreement.

CIRES will host retreats, an annual science symposium, and will create other opportunities to bring diverse scientists together to identify new research opportunities and pursue opportunities collaboratively. These gatherings will include researchers from both the campus side as well as NOAA side of CIRES and are meant to inspire innovation and creativity in research. We will support an annual Distinguished Lecture Series, with invitees selected by a committee of Fellows; an Outstanding Performance Awards program run by our members council; and ~5-8 Innovative Research Projects every year, through a competitive process.