
The National Informal STEM Education Network (NISE Network) is pleased to offer 350 free physical Explore Science: Voyage through the Solar System small activity kits to **eligible institutions in the United States**.

This new kit focuses on NASA's ongoing efforts to send future astronauts to the Moon, Mars, and beyond. This physical kit will include all the materials for three hands-on STEM activities designed to complement the NISE Network [Explore Science: Earth & Space toolkits](#) (making this physical kit smaller than past Earth and Space toolkits).

Successful applicants who receive the physical kit will be required to use the activities with local public audience(s) and complete a short online report about this use by November 1, 2023. Please see the requirements section of this overview for further details.

KIT CONTENTS & AUDIENCES

Three hundred and fifty (350) free Explore Science: Voyage through the Solar System 2023 physical kits will be awarded to successful applicants from eligible organizations. Please note:

- Activities are designed for use in children's museums, science centers, science museums, public planetariums and observatories, and NASA visitor centers in the United States.
- Activities are designed for family audiences with a range of experiences appropriate for visitors ages 4 through adult.

The Explore Science: Voyage through the Solar System small activity kit will include:

- professional learning resources
- resources to help prepare for the 2023 and 2024 Solar Eclipses
- three hands-on activities focused on human exploration of the Solar System
- promotional materials about the DIY Sun Science and DIY Solar System apps, which are designed to extend learning at home

In addition to the physical kits, the DIY Sun Science and DIY Solar System apps and digital versions of kit materials will be available for free online to support at-home STEM learning beyond museum walls.

TIMELINE

- **March 2023:** Online application for a free physical kit opens
- **May 15, 2023:** Deadline to submit an application, review of applications begins
- **June 2023:** Notification of award decisions
- **Summer 2023:** Physical kits ship to successful applicants, digital kit available online
- **Fall 2023-Spring 2024:** Awardees use activities with local public audience(s)
- **November 1, 2023:** Required short online report due

ELIGIBILITY

The physical kit activities are designed to complement the NISE Network [Explore Science: Earth & Space toolkits](#).

The physical kit is designed for informal science education, public events, and outreach. To be eligible to receive a physical kit, organizations must be:

- Located in the United States (including US territories)
- Public informal science outreach and education institutions such as:
 - Science museums and science centers
 - Children’s museums
 - Natural history museums
 - Public planetariums and observatories
 - NASA visitor centers
- Priority will be given to institutions that have previously received one or more Explore Science: Earth and Space toolkits from 2017-2020.
 - If you are unsure if your organization has previously received any of the Explore Science: Earth and Space toolkit(s), please see our [list of NISE Network Partners Across the Country](#). This list is alphabetized by State, City, and physical kits received (“kits: Earth & Space” will appear next to any partner who received one or more Earth and Space toolkits).

Please note that K-12 schools, afterschool programs, libraries, parks, and astronomy clubs are **not** eligible to receive physical kits. Consider downloading a digital kit if your organization does not meet eligibility criteria.

DIGITAL KIT

In addition to the physical kits, digital versions of the kit resources will be available online for free download. These materials should be posted to our website by late summer 2023.

To learn more about this project and keep up-to-date with the release of digital resources: <https://www.nisenet.org/voyage-solar-system>

Digital versions of all Explore Science: Earth and Space toolkits are available for free download online: <http://www.nisenet.org/earthspacekit>

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications for the Explore Science: Voyage through the Solar System small activity kit **must be submitted online through Alchemer (SurveyGizmo) by May 15, 2023:**

<https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7156306/Voyage-Application>

Preview the application: Please note that it is NOT possible to save your work in the Alchemer application and applications left idle for too long will go blank when you progress to the next screen. Please plan to complete the online application in one session. You may want to write your responses in a Word doc, save, and then cut and paste that information into this application. You may download the application in PDF and Word document formats here:

<https://www.nisenet.org/voyage-solar-system>

SELECTION PROCESS

A total of 350 copies of the Explore Science: Voyage through the Solar System small activity kits will be awarded through a competitive award process.

The NISE Network project team will review all physical kit applications and make awards only to organizations that meet the eligibility criteria. Successful applications will comply with the project requirements, reach local underserved audiences, and help the project achieve geographic diversity. If multiple applications are received from the same geographic location, applicants may be asked to collaborate and/or share resources.

Priority will be given to NISE Network partners who have previously received one or more Explore Science: Earth and Space toolkits from 2017-2020.

Applicants will be informed of award status in June 2023.

REQUIREMENTS

Organizations receiving the Explore Science: Voyage through the Solar System small activity kit are required to:

- 1. Use the activities with local public audience(s):** Use of the kit activities could take place in different locations and in a variety of formats. This includes but is not limited to:
 - o Public events

- o Programs on a museum floor
- o Summer camps
- o Outreach in the community
- o Afterschool programs

If you need more ideas for how to use your kit activities year-round, check out our calendar of celestial events, STEM educational events, and other annual programming for public audiences: <http://www.nisenet.org/seasons>

We also strongly encourage you to collaborate with local volunteer experts. These individuals are a key ingredient to many successful public engagement efforts. Check out our [Working with STEM Experts: A Guide for Educators in Museums and Other Informal Learning Settings](#) for more on how to find, prepare, and work with STEM experts.

Finally, we also suggest collaborating locally to reach underserved audiences. Please see our [Museum & Community Partnerships: Collaboration Guide and additional resources](#) for tips around collaborating with local community groups, chapters of national youth-serving organizations, and many more possible partnership opportunities.

- 2. Complete a short online report by November 1, 2023:** The NISE Network will provide a template for this brief report, which will mainly ask about:
- o How you have already used the kit activities
 - o How you anticipate using the kit activities in the future
 - o Estimated reach

MORE INFORMATION

For project questions and inquiries, please contact Christina Leavell, NISE Network Community Manager: ChristinaMLeavell@gmail.com

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