

# CIRES Visiting Fellows Program (VFP)

## Informational Session

**Christine Wiedinmyer**, CIRES Associate Director for Science  
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**Emily Hinga**, CIRES HR Lead for VFP



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# What is CIRES?

CIRES is the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences at the University of Colorado Boulder

- 900+ researchers, students, administrators
- Partnership with NOAA
  - 400+ CIRES Associates work embedded at 7 NOAA Labs and Centers
- 20+ Faculty across many departments (Geology, Geography, Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences, Environmental Studies, Engineering, Economics, Ecology and Biology)
- Many different embedded Centers and Programs across CU Boulder (NC CASC, WWA, Earth Lab, CEEE, ESOC, .... )

[cires.colorado.edu](https://cires.colorado.edu)



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# CIRES Research Areas

- Atmospheric Sciences (Climate and Weather)
- Biology and Ecosystems
- Chemistry (Atmospheric Chemistry)
- Cryosphere and Polar Science
- Solid Earth
- Space Weather
- Water Resources
- Data Science
- Remote Sensing
- Social Science



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# What is the VFP Program?

## Post-Doctoral Fellowship

- 2 years
- Fully Funded (Salary)
- Research Budget
- Relocation stipend

## Sabbatical visitor opportunity

- 3 -12 months
- Housing Allowance
- Research budget



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# Post-Doctoral Fellowship Eligibility

- The applicant should be no more than 4 years out from completion of PhD at the time of application.  
*(exceptions may be made for time off due to caretaking responsibilities).*

## **PhD must be achieved by the start of Fellowship**

- Priority will be given to candidates affiliated with institutions outside the greater Boulder scientific community.
- Past or current CU Boulder graduate students and postdocs are not eligible.
- Current or former CIRES Visiting Fellows are not eligible.



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# Timeline

- Applications open October 21, 2024
  - <https://insidecires.colorado.edu/visitingfellow/>
- Applications due 11:59pm MT January 2, 2025
- Reference Letters in support of applications due January 8, 2025
- Applications reviewed by internal committee January- February 2025
  - Committee recommendations must be approved by the CIRES Fellows
- Applicants notified Spring 2025
- Awardees must start before February 2026



# Application

- **CV** (2-page, template provided)
- **Transcripts** (may be unofficial)
- **Sponsor**

Identification of at least 1 (and up to 3) CIRES Fellow/ Senior Research Scientist Sponsor

<https://cires.colorado.edu/institutional-programs/visiting-fellows-program/sponsors>



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# Application

- **Cover letter** (max 2 pages, 12 pt font)
  - Expected start date, the name(s) of the sponsoring CIRES Fellow(s) and other CIRES, NOAA, and University of Colorado researchers with whom you intend to work, and a description of the nature of the collaboration with each scientist.
  - Justification of how you would be a strong addition to the CIRES scientific community. Be sure to align your answers to the [CIRES Strategic Plan](#).
  - Short description of an experience or event that was pivotal in your growth as a researcher, in terms of what was learned and how it informs your approach to your research. Higher priority will be given to those who can clearly explain how this position will forward their growth as a researcher, both in terms of methodology and skillset.



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# Application

- **Research proposal**

(3 pages max including figures, 12-point font. Figure captions can be 10-point font. References not included in 3-page limit.)

- Proposals should outline your motivation for the work, its novelty and potential contribution to the field, the research question, the methods to be pursued, and the expected outcomes. Higher priority will be given to those who indicate an appropriate timeline for achieving these outcomes.
- Proposals should also include the scientific rationale for doing the work in CIRES, such as linkages with the research of the CIRES Fellow/Senior Research Scientist supporting your proposal.
- **Please remember that the proposals will be reviewed by an interdisciplinary scientific team** and should therefore be written for a broad scientific audience. Feel free to contact [Christine.Wiedinmyer@colorado.edu](mailto:Christine.Wiedinmyer@colorado.edu) if you would like clarification on this request.



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# Application

- **Letters of recommendation (3)**
  - Letters of recommendation should include specific examples to illustrate the candidate's ability to complete tasks on a reasonable timeline, independent thinking skills, creative problem-solving skills, passion for the field of study, examples of perseverance when met with a challenge and the ability to work collaboratively on a team.
  - Be sure to contact your letter writers in advance! Give them plenty of time to write you a strong letter. Feel free to share examples with them that illustrate the qualities outlined above.
  - CIRES sponsors cannot write recommendation letters.
  - Applicants are responsible for following up with their recommendation letter writers to ensure that they get their letters submitted by the deadline.



# Qualities of a strong application

- Cover letter and letters of recommendation follow application guidelines.
- Novelty of research being proposed.
- Clear benefit of research to CIRES
  - Significance and relevance of the proposed research to the mission of the Visiting Fellowship program, CIRES, and NOAA.
- Potential for the development of novel partnerships across CIRES and/or NOAA that could benefit scientific understanding.
- Meeting the imperatives of the CIRES Strategic Plan.
- Support of CIRES Fellow/Senior Research Scientist sponsor(s).



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# Insights and Suggestions

- Follow the directions and make the deadlines!
- Timing
  - START Early
  - Reach out to a sponsor early
    - Contact sponsor through email as soon as possible
    - Sponsor page, pubs list, info interview if desired
- Proposal - What makes a good proposal?
  - Write to a general scientific audience
    - Avoid jargon and acronyms
    - Have someone read it and give you feedback!
  - Be specific about what problem you plan to address
  - Motivate the work: Why is this work important, interesting, needed?
  - Realistic outcomes - is it achievable?
  - **Research fits within CIRES**



# Reach out to us with any questions!

- Christine Wiedinmyer [Christine.Wiedinmyer@colorado.edu](mailto:Christine.Wiedinmyer@colorado.edu)
- Becca Edwards [Becca.Edwards@Colorado.EDU](mailto:Becca.Edwards@Colorado.EDU)



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# Our panelists



Dr. Graham Feingold  
NOAA Research Scientist  
for Chemical Sciences  
Laboratory



Dr. Anne Gold  
Director Center for Education,  
Engagement, and Evaluation

# Thank you!

[FAQ link](#)

[Recording from 2023](#)



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