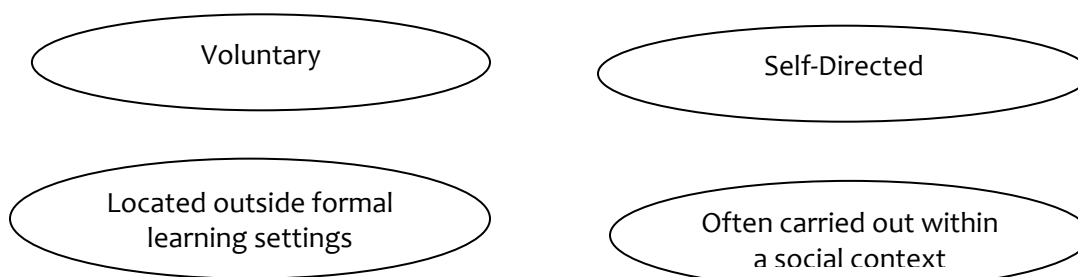


# Informal Science Education (ISE)

## Guiding Principles per the National Science Foundation (NSF)

The NSF efforts in ISE are dedicated to promoting public understanding – and engagement with - STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) in informal learning settings (those outside of the formal education system) to foster a better informed citizenry and inspire young people to consider STEM careers that may help address societal changes.

Learning in ISE is highly personal, based on people’s specific interests and past experiences. Public participation in ISE is:



ISE Projects can:

- Have a powerful impact on the institutions that promote informal learning;
- Fuel partnerships that extend the respective competencies of partners with complementary resources and expertise;
- Use creative new ways of strengthening informal science education;
- Serve the needs and interests of diverse audiences (including those that are typically underrepresented in STEM activities);
- Capture occasions for teaching and learning science in the places and spaces of our lives, through both casual and planned experiences.

Informal learning & exploration is:

- Fun;
- Aimed at using multiple pathways, formats and ways to experience and experiment;
- Respectful of diversity;
- Voluntary, self-directed, hands-on, experiential and open-ended;
- Guided by overall clear goals.

ISE places the content of science hand-in-hand with dynamic processes using tools and technology to engage learners, build skills and knowledge and ensure support for continuing the experience as a lifelong venture. Community institutions have a long history of providing professional development and enrichment experiences for students and the public that is congruent with these ISE principles.

Sources: NSF Division of Elementary, Secondary and Informal Science summary of program requirements; Wahl, Ellen – A discussion paper About Informal Science Education and Inquiry, 2002 and National Science Teachers Association Position Statement on Informal Science Education.

