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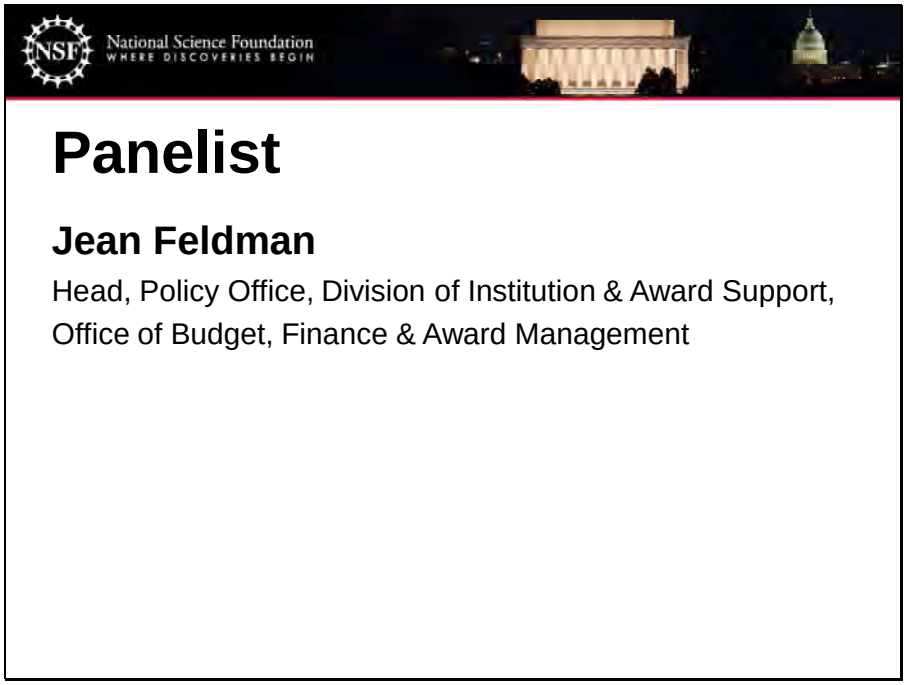
WHERE DISCOVERIES BEGIN
NSF Grants Conference
NSF Policies and Procedures Update
March 11-12, 2013
Hosted by Howard University, Arlington, Virginia

Slide 2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WHERE DISCOVERIES BEGIN
Panelist
Jean Feldman
Head, Policy Office, Division of Institution & Award Support,
Office of Budget, Finance & Award Management

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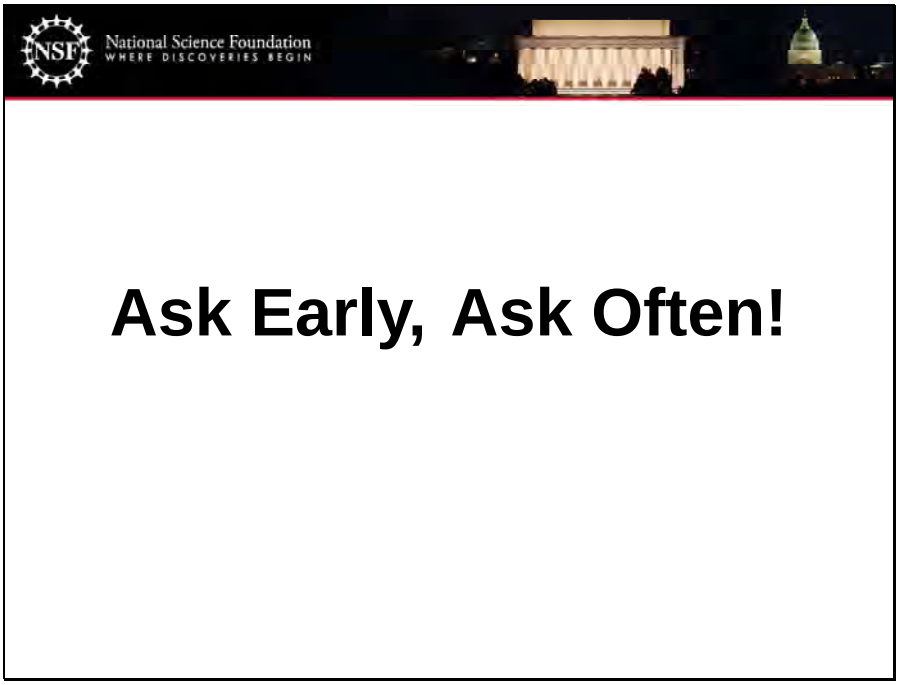
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WHERE DISCOVERIES BEGIN
Ask Early, Ask Often!

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Coverage

- Revisions to the *Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG)*
- Automated Compliance for Required Proposal Sections
- *NSF Grants.gov Application Guide* updates
- Cost Sharing Update
- Implementation of the Research Performance Progress Report in Research.gov
- Implementation of the Award Cash Management Service in Research.gov
- National Science Board Task Force on Administrative Burdens

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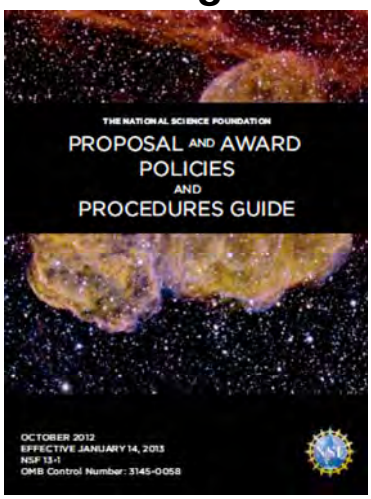
Highlights of Significant Changes

- October, 4 2012 Release
- January 14, 2013 Implementation



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PAPPG Revision Process

- Federal Register Notices issued in January 2011 and May 2012 to alert the public to NSF's intent to revise PAPPG
- Disseminated draft document with changes highlighted to research community
- Comments submitted to OMB/NSF (were due July 12th)
- Updated PAPPG released October 4, 2012; effective for proposals submitted or due on or after January 14, 2013

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Merit Review Criteria – For Proposers

- Project Summary requires text boxes in FastLane not to exceed 4,600 characters and will include
  - Overview
  - Statement on Intellectual Merit
  - Statement on Broader Impacts
- Proposals with special characters may upload Project Summary as a PDF document
- Text boxes must be filled out or a project summary must be uploaded or FastLane will **not** accept the proposal.

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Merit Review Criteria – For Proposers

- Project Description
  - Must contain a separate section with a discussion of the broader impacts of the proposed activities
  - Results from Prior Support (if any) must address intellectual merit and broader impacts
- New certification regarding Organizational Support
  - Requires AOR certification that organizational support will be made available as described in the proposal to address the broader impacts and intellectual merit activities to be undertaken
- Annual and Final Project Reports
  - Must address activities intended to address the Broader Impacts criterion that are not intrinsic to the research
- FastLane help updated for proposers

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Merit Review Criteria – For Reviewers

- Guiding Principles, Revised Review Criteria, and five review elements incorporated into GPG Chapter III
- Reviewer and Panelist Letters
  - Give due diligence to the three Merit Review Principles
  - Evaluate against the two Merit Review Criteria
  - Consider the five review elements in the review of both criteria
- Panel and Proposal Review Form in FastLane
  - Updated to incorporate consideration of review elements in addressing the two criteria
  - Text box added for reviewers to address solicitation-specific criteria

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Merit Review Criteria – Resources

- NSF Merit Review Website
  - www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/merit_review/
- Resources for the Proposer Community
  - www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/merit_review/resources.jsp
    - Fact Sheets
    - Webcast
    - Presentations
    - FAQs

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Biographical Sketch(es)

- The “Publications” section to of the Biosketch has been renamed “Products”.
  - This change makes clear that products may include, but are not limited to, publications, data sets, software, patents, and copyrights.
  - If only publications are identified, the heading “publications” may be used in this section of the biosketch.

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Proposals Not Accepted

- Formally recognizes a new category of non-award decisions and transactions: Proposal Not Accepted
- Is defined as “FastLane will not permit submission of the proposal”
- This new category currently applies to:
  - Data Management Plans
  - Postdoctoral Mentoring Plans
  - Project Summaries

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GPG-Required Sections of the Proposal

- Project Summary *
- Project Description
- References Cited
- Biographical Sketch(es)
- Budget
- Budget Justification
- Current and Pending Support
- Facilities, Equipment & Other Resources
- Supplementary Documentation
  - Data Management Plan *
  - Postdoctoral Mentoring Plan (where applicable) *

* **These proposal sections are already being auto-compliance checked.**

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What FastLane Will / Will Not Check

- FastLane will check for the presence of GPG required sections of the proposal
- If a section is not included, FastLane will not permit submission of the proposal
- FastLane will not check:
  - Formatting
  - Page Length (except for Project Summary)
  - Content

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WHERE DISCOVERIES BEGIN

Auto-Compliance Checking

- Biographical Sketches & Current and Pending Support
  - FastLane permits the biosketch and current and pending support sections to be uploaded as a single PDF for the PI, co-PI and senior project personnel.
  - For FastLane to accept the proposal, proposers must insert text or upload a document that states, “Not Applicable” for any co-PI or senior person.

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Auto-Compliance Checking

- Proposal submission instructions that deviate from the GPG will require special attention:
  - Conferences, symposia or workshops
  - International travel grants
  - Program solicitations, where applicable
- If solicitation submission instructions do not require one of the sections, proposers will need to insert text or upload a document in that section of the proposal that states, “Not Applicable”
  - This will enable FastLane to accept the proposal.

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Separately Submitted Collaborative Proposals

Lead Organization: Required Sections

- Project Summary
- Project Description
- References Cited
- Biographical Sketch(es)
- Budget
- Budget Justification
- Current and Pending Support
- Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources
- Supplementary Documentation
  - Data Management Plan
  - Postdoctoral Mentoring Plan (if applicable)

Non-Lead Organization: Required Sections

- Biographical Sketch(es)
- Budget
- Budget Justification
- Current and Pending Support
- Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources

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Auto-Compliance Checking

- Principal Investigators (PI)
  - Will receive warning messages if any of the GPG required sections are missing
  - Will be able to forward proposal to their institution's SPO
- Sponsored Projects Office (SPO)
  - FastLane will prevent submission from the SPO if any of the GPG-required sections is missing

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Auto-Compliance Checking

- Automated compliance checking will not be applied to:
  - Preliminary Proposals
  - Supplemental Funding Requests

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What is the impact on Grants.gov proposals?

- The *NSF Grants.gov Application Guide* specifies the same general content requirements for proposal submission.
- Grants.gov may allow a proposal to be submitted even if one of the required sections is missing.
- If a section is missing, a proposal may be returned without review.

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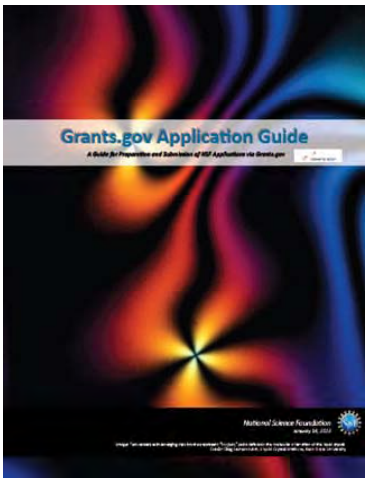
Grants.gov Application Guide - Revisions

- Revisions made for consistency with those released in the PAPPG
- For applications submitted or due on or after January 14, 2013



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Grants.gov Application Guide - Revisions

- Project Summary/Abstract contents must include three separate statements covering (1) Overview; (2) Intellectual Merit; (3) Broader Impacts
- Revised instructions for attachments
  - Facilities & Other Resources
  - Equipment Documentation
  - Other Attachments – Data Management Plan
  - Biographical Sketch
  - Current & Pending Support
- Budget – Total Direct Costs modified per PAPPG changes
- Other Information – High Resolution Graphics

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Cost Sharing Update

- As recommended by the National Science Board and implemented by NSF, inclusion of voluntary committed cost sharing is prohibited in solicited & unsolicited proposals, unless approved in accordance with agency policy.
- Only 7 programs have been approved to require cost sharing:
  - Major Research Instrumentation Program (MRI);
  - Robert Noyce Scholarship Program;
  - Engineering Research Centers (ERC);
  - Industry/University Cooperative Research Centers (I/UCRC);
  - Experimental Programs to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR);
  - Innovation Corps (I-Corps); and
  - Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) NEW

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Cost Sharing Update

- Removal of PI from Budget
  - If no person months are requested for senior personnel, they should be removed from the budget.
  - Their names will remain on the coversheet
  - Role should be described in the Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources section of the proposal.

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Cost Sharing Update

- Facilities, Equipment & Other Resources
  - New format will assist proposers in complying with NSF cost sharing policy and is a required component of the proposal.
  - Provides an aggregated description of the internal and external resources (both physical and personnel) that the organization and its collaborators will provide to the project.
  - No reference to cost, date of acquisition, and whether the resources are currently available or would be provided upon receipt of award.
  - If there are no resources to describe, a statement to that effect should be included in this section of the proposal and uploaded into FastLane.

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NSF Implementation of the Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR)

- Compliant with new RPPR format and data dictionary
- New service in Research.gov for PIs, co-PIs, SPOs
- Replaces annual, interim, and final project reports in FastLane
- Structured data collection
- Minimal changes for NSF staff

New Service in Research.gov

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NSF Report Components

- Accomplishments: What was done? What was learned?
- Products: What has the project produced?
- Participants & Other Collaborating Organizations: Who has been involved?
- Impact: What is the impact of the project? How has it contributed?
- Changes/Problems
- Special Reporting Requirements (where applicable)
- Appendix 1: Demographic Information for Significant Contributors

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Key Differences of the New Project Report System

- Project reporting dashboard
- Pre-populated report sections
- Structured collection of data
- PDF upload to support images, charts, and other complex graphics
- Improved citation search through Thomson Web of Science

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Key Differences of the New Project Report System

- Special reporting requirements are controlled by solicitation
- PI no longer provides demographic information on significant participants
  - Pilot: 53% of participants are entering demographic information compared to 43% in FastLane (for calendar year 2012).

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Key Implementation Dates

- Project Report Pilot currently underway with 19 research organizations submitting project reports on Research.gov
- Final Target Launch Date: March 18, 2013
  - All NSF awards and institutions
  - NSF awardees were asked to stop submitting project reports in FastLane starting on February 1, 2013
  - Program Officers must approve all FastLane-submitted reports by March 15, 5 PM EST

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More Information and Help

- Research.gov Webinar Series
  - For directions, email webinars@research.gov
- Research.gov Website: Project Report Info Page (for PIs and SPOs)
- Research.gov Help Desk
  - Rgov@nsf.gov or 1-800-381-1532

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Award Cash Management Service (ACM$)

- The Award Cash Management $ervice (ACM$) is a new approach to award payments and post-award financial processes
  - ACM$ will transition financial processing of award payments from the current “pooling” method and transition to submission of award level payments
  - This will require the submission of award level payment amounts each time funds are requested
  - End of the current “pooling” method and transition to submission of award level payment amounts each time funds are requested
  - Eliminates quarterly Federal Financial Reports (FFR)

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Key Implementation Dates

- ACM$ was released on January 4th to pilot organizations, a group comprised of 38 research organizations including small and large organizations and "large facility" organizations.
  - These 38 research organizations represent 20% of the total award base for NSF
  - ACM$ will be released to all NSF awardees April 2013 on Research.gov

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National Science Board (NSB)
Task Force on Administrative Burdens

- Charged to examine administrative burden imposed on federally supported researchers and identify opportunities to reduce burden.
- Request for Information will ask for feedback covering:
  - Sources of administrative work and recommendations for reductions;
  - IRB and IACUC processes;
  - Proposal preparation;
  - Agency specific requirements;
  - Reform efforts currently proposed by OMB
- Breakout session immediately following led by Dr. Alan Leshner, Member of the NSB and Chief Executive Officer, AAAS and Executive Publisher, Journal of Science.

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For More Information

Ask Early, Ask Often!

nsf.gov/staff

nsf.gov/staff/orglist.jsp

nsf.gov/about/career_opps/rotators/index.jsp