Panelists

Sonia Esperança
Program Director, Directorate for Geosciences, Division of Earth Sciences

Jean Feldman
Head, Policy Office; Office of Budget, Finance & Award Management, Division of Institution & Award Support

Jolene Jesse
Program Director, Directorate for Education & Human Resources, Division of Research on Learning in Formal & Informal Settings

Anita La Salle
Program Director, Directorate for Computer & Information Science & Engineering, Division of Computer & Network Systems
Topics Covered

- Find Funding Opportunities
- Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide
- Sections of an NSF Proposal
- Proposal Development Strategies
- Support for Proposal Writing
- RAPID & EAGER Proposals
Other Ways to Find Funding

Use Grants.gov’s search feature
What is the Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide?

The Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide (PAPPG) contains documents relating to NSF’s proposal and award process. It has been designed for use by both our customer community and NSF staff and consists of two parts:
What is the Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide?

Part I is NSF’s proposal preparation and submission guidelines -- the NSF Grant Proposal Guide (GPG) and the NSF Grants.gov Application Guide.
What is the Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide?

Part II is NSF’s award and administration guidelines -- the documents used to guide, manage, and monitor the award and administration of grants and cooperative agreements made by NSF.
Grant Proposal Guide

• Provides guidance for preparation and submission of proposals to NSF
• Describes process – and criteria – by which proposals will be reviewed
• Outlines reasons why a proposal may be returned without review
• Describes process for withdrawals, returns, and declinations
### Types of Funding Opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program Descriptions</strong></td>
<td>Proposals for a <strong>Program Description</strong> must follow the instructions in the GPG.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program Announcements</strong></td>
<td>Proposals for a <strong>Program Announcement</strong> must follow the instructions in the GPG.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program Solicitations</strong></td>
<td>Proposals must follow the instructions in the <strong>Program Solicitation</strong>; the instructions in the GPG apply unless otherwise stated in the solicitation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dear Colleague Letters</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dear Colleague Letters</strong> are notifications of opportunities or special competitions for supplements to existing NSF awards.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What to Look For in a Program Announcement or Solicitation

- Goal of Program
- Eligibility
- Special proposal preparation and/or award requirements
Sample Cover Page of a Solicitation

Program Solicitation Number

NSF Directorates and Offices providing funding for this opportunity

__________
Eligibility information for institutions/PIs submitting proposals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligibility Information:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization Limit:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposals may only be submitted by the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Universities and Colleges (two-year and four-year colleges, including community colleges) accredited to, and having a campus located in the US, acting on behalf of their faculty members. Such organizations also are referred to as academic institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PI Limit:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocations including the B20 and B21: To promote institutional commitments to increase the quality and quantity of underrepresented minorities in STEM disciplines, the Administrative Lead must be a Principal Investigator. A full explanation should be provided for a PI designation variance with this requirement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-principal investigators from partner institutions may be designated, as appropriate, for the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Limit on Number of Proposals per Organization:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliances including B20 and B21: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadening Participation Research in STEM Education: No limit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliances including B20 and B21: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridges to the Doctorate: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadening Participation Research in STEM Education: No limit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Types of Proposal Submissions

No Deadlines – Proposals may be submitted at any time

1. When to Submit Proposals

- Proposals should allow adequate time for evaluation.
- NSF Program Directors consider proposals on a rolling basis.
- Proposals exceeding 12 pages may be reviewed partially.
- Proposals exceeding 50 pages may not be submitted.

2. Review deadlines:

- Target dates: deadlines after which proposals will still be accepted, although they may miss a particular panel or committee meeting.
- Deadline dates: dates after which proposals will not be reviewed by NSF. The deadline date will be waived only in extenuating circumstances. Such a deviation only may be authorized in accordance with NSF Chapter 8.3.
Target Dates –
Talk to the Program Office if you think you might miss the date

1. When to Submit Proposals:

Proposers should allow adequate time for peer review and processing of proposals (see NSF Chapter 6.C.1 for further information). Many NSF programs accept proposals at any time. The following types of due dates are utilized by NSF:

   1. Target dates: dates after which proposals will still be accepted, although they may miss a particular panel or committee meeting.
   2. Deadline dates: dates after which proposals be returned without review by NSF. The deadline date will be waived only in extenuating circumstances. Such a deviation only may be authorized in accordance with NSF Chapter 6.A.
Types of Proposal Submissions

Deadline Dates – Proposals will not be accepted after this date and time (5 pm submitter’s local time)

1. When to Submit Proposals

Proposers should allow adequate time for peer review and processing of proposals (see EPS Chapter 4.1 for further information). Many NSF programs accept proposals at any time, subject to the deadlines for submission of proposals. The following three types of due dates are utilized by NSF:

1. Target dates: dates after which proposals will still be accepted, although they may miss a particular panel or committee meeting.

2. Deadline dates: dates after which proposals be returned without review by NSF. The deadline date will be waived only in extenuating circumstances. Such a deviation only may be authorized in accordance with EPS Chapter 4.1.
Submission Windows – Closing date converts to a deadline date

3. Submission windows: Designated periods of time during which proposals will be accepted for review by NSF. It is NSF's policy that the end date of a submission window converts to, and is subject to, the same policies as a deadline date.
Letters of Intent – Enables better management of reviewers and panelists

1. Letter of Intent

Some NSF program solicitations require or request submission of a Letter of Intent (LOI). The primary purpose of an LOI is to provide a quick notification to the agency of a proposed effort to help NSF program staff to gauge the size and range of the community, enabling easier selection and better management of reviewers and panelists. In addition, the information contained in an LOI is used to help avoid potential conflicts of interest in the review process.

A LOI normally contains the PI(s) and co-PI(s) names, the proposed title, a list of possible participating organizations (if applicable), and a synopsis that describes the work in sufficient detail to permit an appropriate evaluation of its merit with rapid and cost-effective evaluation or used to decide on funding. The requirement to submit an LOI will be identified in the program solicitation, and such letters are submitted electronically via the NSF FastLane System.
Types of Proposal Submissions

Preliminary Proposals – Sometimes required, sometimes optional

2. Preliminary Proposal

Some NSF program solicitations require or request submission of a preliminary proposal in advance of submission of a full proposal. The two main reasons for requiring submission of a preliminary proposal are:

- reduce the proposer’s unnecessary effort in proposal preparation when the chance of success is very small. This is particularly true of exploratory initiatives where the community believes that a major new direction is being identified or competitions that will result in a small number of actual awards and
- increase the overall quality of the full submission.
Proposals Not Accepted

- Proposals that do not contain the following required sections will not be accepted by FastLane
  - Project Summary
  - Project Description
  - References Cited
  - Biographical Sketch(es)
  - Budget
  - Budget Justification
  - Current & Pending Support
  - Facilities, Equipment & Other Resources
  - Data Management Plan
  - Postdoctoral Mentoring Plan (if applicable)

- If submission instructions do not require one of the above sections to be provided, proposers must insert text or upload a document in that section of the proposal that states, "Not Applicable."
Sections of an NSF Proposal

Cover Sheet (Required)
Many of the boxes on the cover sheet are electronically prefilled as part of the FastLane login process.

Example from FastLane
Sections of an NSF Proposal

Project Summary (Required)

Text boxes must contain an Overview and Statements on Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts.

Proposals that do not separately address the Overview and both merit review criteria in text boxes will not be accepted by FastLane.

Project summaries with special characters must be uploaded as a PDF document

Text from the GPG
Sections of an NSF Proposal

Project Description (Required)
Proposers should address what they want to do, why they want to do it, how they plan to do it, how they will know if they succeed, and what benefits could accrue if the project is successful.

A separate section within the narrative must include a discussion of the broader impacts of the proposed activities.

Text from the GPG
Sections of an NSF Proposal

References Cited (Required)
Reference information is required, and proposers must follow accepted scholarly practices in providing citations for source materials.

Text from the GPG
Sections of an NSF Proposal

Biographical Sketches (Required)

Biographical sketches are required for all senior project personnel and must not exceed two pages in length, per individual.

Text from the GPG
Budget (Required)
Each proposal must contain a budget for each year of support requested. The budget justification should be no more than three pages for all years of the project combined.

*Example from FastLane*
Budgetary Guidelines

Information regarding budgetary guidelines can be found in both the GPG and in the Award & Administration Guide (AAG), as well as NSF program solicitations.

**Amounts should be:**
- Realistic and reasonable
- Well-justified and should establish need
- Consistent with program guidelines

**Eligible costs consist of:**
- Personnel
- Equipment
- Travel
- Participant support
- Other direct costs (e.g., subawards, consultant services, computer services, and publications costs)
• Inclusion of voluntary committed cost sharing is prohibited in solicited & unsolicited proposals.
  – To be considered voluntary committed cost sharing, the cost sharing must meet all of the standards of 2 CFR § 215.23, to include identification of cost sharing on the NSF budget.
  – Line M will be “grayed out” in FastLane.

• Organizations may, at their own discretion, continue to contribute any amount of voluntary uncommitted cost sharing to NSF-sponsored projects.
Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources (Required)
This section of the proposal is used to assess the adequacy of the organizational resources available to perform the effort proposed.

Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources

**Instruction:** Upload an aggregated description of the internal and external resources (both physical and personnel) that the organization and its collaborators will provide to the project, should it be funded. Describe only those resources that are directly applicable. The description should be narrative in nature and must not include any unattainable financial information. If there are no Facilities, Equipment, or Other Resources identified, a statement to that effect should be indicated in this section and uploaded into FastLane. See GPG II.C.2.i for more information.

Upload File
Sections of an NSF Proposal

Current & Pending Support (Required)
This section of the proposal calls for information on all current and pending support for ongoing projects and proposals.

*Example from FastLane*
Sections of an NSF Proposal

Special Information and Supplementary Documentation

This segment should alert NSF officials to unusual circumstances that require special handling; more information can be found in the GPG Chapter II.C.2.j.

Text from the GPG

Additional information on sharing some types of costs generally associated with research are contained in NSF awards #0706798 and #0236864.
Special Information and Supplementary Documentation

• Postdoctoral Mentoring Plans

• Data Management Plans

• Letters of Support versus Letters of Commitment
Mentoring for Postdoctoral Researchers

- Proposals that include funding to support postdoctoral researchers must include a description of the mentoring activities that will be provided for such individuals.

- Proposed mentoring activities will be evaluated as part of the merit review process, under NSF’s broader impacts merit review criterion.
Mentoring for Postdoctoral Researchers

- **Mentoring activities may include:**
  - Providing career counseling, training in the preparation of grant proposals, or training in responsible professional practices
  - Developing publications and presentations
  - Offering guidance on techniques to improve teaching and mentoring skills
  - Providing counseling on how to effectively collaborate with researchers from diverse backgrounds and disciplinary areas
Mentoring for Postdoctoral Researchers

- Proposals that identify a postdoc on the budget but do not include a maximum one-page mentoring plan as a supplementary document will be prevented from submission in FastLane.

- For collaborative proposals, the lead organization must submit a mentoring plan for all postdoctoral researchers supported under the entire collaborative project.
Data Management Plan Requirements

- All proposals are required to include, as a supplementary doc, a data management plan of up to two pages.
- Plan should describe how the proposal will conform to NSF policy on dissemination and sharing of research results.
- A valid Data Management Plan may include only the statement that no detailed plan is needed, as long a clear justification is provided.
- Plan will be reviewed as part of the intellectual merit and/or broader impacts of the proposal.
Data Management Plan Requirements

Proposal Development Strategies

Key Questions for Prospective Investigators

• What do you intend to do?
• Why do you want to do it?
• How do you plan to do it?
• How will you know if you succeed?
• What benefits would accrue if the project is successful?

These questions apply both to the technical aspects of the proposal and the way in which the project may make broader contributions.
Proposal Development Strategies for Individual Investigators

- Determine your long-term research and education goals
- Develop your bright idea
  - Survey the literature
  - Contact other investigators currently working on the same subject
  - Prepare a brief concept paper
  - Discuss with your colleagues and mentors
- Read solicitation instructions carefully
Proposal Development Strategies for Individual Investigators

- Prepare to carry out your project
  - Determine available resources
  - Realistically assess your needs
  - Develop preliminary data
  - Present to your colleagues, mentors, and students
- Determine possible funding sources
- Understand the ground rules
Find Support for Proposal Writing

- NSF Publications
  - Program announcements and solicitations
  - Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide
  - Program Web pages
  - Funded project abstracts
  - Reports and special publications

- Targeted workshops
- Program Officers
- Mentors on Campus
- Former panelists
- Sponsored Research Office
- Successful proposals

Finally, serving as a reviewer is helpful as well!
Grants for Rapid Response Research (RAPID)

The RAPID funding mechanism is for projects having a severe urgency with regard to availability of, or access to data, facilities or specialized equipment, including quick-response research on natural or anthropogenic disasters and similar unanticipated events.
RAPID

• Requests may be for up to $200K and for one year of duration.
• The project description is expected to be brief; no more than five pages.
• Only internal merit review is required for RAPID proposals. Under rare circumstances, Program Officers may elect to obtain external reviews. If external merit review is to be used, then the PI will be informed.
EArly-concept Grants for Exploratory Research (EAGER)

- The EAGER funding mechanism may be used to support exploratory work in its early stages on untested, but potentially transformative, research ideas or approaches.

- This work is considered especially "high risk-high payoff" because it involves radically different approaches, applies new expertise, or engages novel disciplinary or interdisciplinary perspectives.
EAGER

- Requests may be for up to $300K and for two years of duration.

- Only internal merit review is required. Under rare circumstances, Program Officers may elect to obtain external reviews. If external merit review is to be used, then the PI will be informed.

- No-cost extensions, and requests for supplemental funding may be requested but are subject to full external merit review.
For More Information

Ask Early, Ask Often!

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