NSF Regional Grants Conference Proposal Preparation

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Panelists

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Topics Covered

• Find Funding Opportunities
• Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide
• Sections of an NSF Proposal
• Proposal Development Strategies
• Budgetary Guidelines
• Support for Proposal Writing
• Grants for Rapid Response (RAPID) & EArly-concept Grants for Exploratory Research (EAGER)
• Conclusion
NSF Home Page

Navigate from NSF’s home page to find funding opportunities.
Sign up for NSF Update
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 & declinations
# Types of Funding Opportunities

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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

ADVANCE: Increasing the Participation and Advancement of Women in Academic Science and Engineering Careers (ADVANCE)

PROGRAM SOLICITATION
NSF 10-593

REPLACES DOCUMENT(S):
NSF 09-504

National Science Foundation

Directorate for Education & Human Resources
Division of Human Resource Development

Directorate for Biological Sciences
Directorate for Computer & Information Science & Engineering
Directorate for Engineering
Directorate for Geosciences
Directorate for Mathematical & Physical Sciences
Directorate for Social, Behavioral & Economic Sciences
Office of Cyberinfrastructure
Office of International Science and Engineering

Program Solicitation Number

NSF Directorates and Offices providing funding for this opportunity
Sample Cover Page of a Solicitation

**Anticipated Type of Award:** Standard Grant or Continuing Grant or Cooperative Agreement

**Estimated Number of Awards:** 23

The total number of awards to be made under this Solicitation is estimated to be 23. NSF expects to make: approximately seven (7) Institutional Transformation five-year awards, at various award sizes, up to seven (7) IT-Catalyst awards with durations of up to two years and total budgets not exceeding a maximum of $200,000 each; and up to nine (9) PAID awards, of various durations, not exceeding a maximum of $750,000 for 5 years.

**Anticipated Funding Amount:** $12,200,000

- Pending availability of funds, NSF anticipates having approximately $12,200,000 available over the two-year fiscal period, FY 2011-FY2012, for support of the ADVANCE portfolio. Approximately $5,600,000 will be available for the FY2011 competition and approximately $6,600,000 will be available for the FY2012 competition.

**Eligibility Information**

- **Organization Limit:** None Specified
- **PI Limit:** None Specified

**Limit on Number of Proposals per Organization:** 1

Proposers may submit only one Institutional Transformation proposal or one IT-Catalyst proposal. There is no limit on the number of PAID proposals that can be submitted.

**Limit on Number of Proposals per PI:** None Specified
Types of Proposal Submissions

No Deadlines – Proposals may be submitted at any time

Proposers should allow adequate time for NSF review and processing of proposals (see GPG 1.1-H for further information). Many NSF programs accept proposals at any time. Other programs, however, establish due dates for submission of proposals. 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 will not be accepted for review by NSF. The deadline date will be waived only in extenuating circumstances. Such a deviation only may be authorized in accordance with GPG Chapter II.A.
Types of Proposal Submissions

Target Dates –
Talk to the Program Office if you think you might miss the date

Proposers should allow adequate time for NSF review and processing of proposals (see GPG 1.1.1 for further information). Many NSF programs accept proposals at any time. Other programs, however, establish due dates for submission of proposals. 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 will not be accepted for review by NSF. The deadline date will be waived only in extenuating circumstances. Such a deviation only may be authorized in accordance with GPG Chapter 11.A.
Types of Proposal Submissions

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

Proposers should allow adequate time for NSF review and processing of proposals (see GPG 1.1 for further information). Many NSF programs accept proposals at any time. Other programs, however, establish due dates for submission of proposals. 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.

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Types of Proposal Submissions

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) in advance of submission of a full proposal. A LOI is not binding. The predominant reason for its use is to help NSF program staff to gauge the size and range of the competition, enabling earlier selection and better management of reviewers and panelists. In addition, the information contained in a 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, a proposed title, a list of possible participating organizations (if applicable), and a synopsis that describes the work in sufficient detail to permit an appropriate selection of reviewers. A LOI is not externally evaluated or used to decide on funding. The requirement to submit a 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 predominant reasons for requiring submission of a preliminary proposal are to:

- reduce the proposers’ unnecessary effort in proposal preparation when the chance of success is very small. This is particularly true of exploratory initiatives where the community senses 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.
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)
The proposal must contain a summary of the proposed activity suitable for publication, not more than one page in length.

Proposals that do not separately address both merit review criteria will be returned without review.

Text from the GPG

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The proposal must contain a summary of the proposed activity suitable for publication, not more than one page in length. It should not be an abstract of the proposal, but rather a self-contained description of the activity that would result if the proposal were funded. The summary should be written in the third person and include a statement of objectives and methods to be employed. It must cleanly address in separate statements (within the one-page summary):

- the intellectual merit of the proposed activity; and
- the broader impacts resulting from the proposed activity.

It should be informative to other persons working in the same or related fields and, as far as possible, understandable to a scientifically or technically literate reader. Proposals that do not separately address both merit review criteria within the one-page Project Summary will be returned without review. To that end, proposers are encouraged to include separate headings within the one-page document for both ‘Intellectual Merit’ and ‘Broader Impacts’. 
Sections of an NSF Proposal

Project Description (Required)
The two merit review criteria should be addressed with the project description, which may not exceed 15 pages.

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
Sections of an NSF Proposal

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
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

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.

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
Proposal Development Strategies

Key Questions for Prospective Investigators

- What do you intend to do?
- Why is the work important?
- What has already been done?
- How are you going to do the work?
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
Proposal Development Strategies: 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.
Proposal Development Strategies: 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
Proposal Development Strategies: 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 2 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.
Dissemination and Sharing of Research Results

NSF Data Sharing Policy

Investigators are expected to share with other researchers, at no more than incremental cost and within a reasonable time, the primary data, samples, physical collections and other supporting materials created or gathered in the course of work under NSF grants. Grantees are expected to encourage and facilitate such sharing. See Award & Administration Guide (AAG) Chapter VI.D.4.

Links to data management requirements and plans relevant to specific Directories, Offices, Divisions, Programs, or other NSF units, are provided below. If guidance specific to the program is not provided, then the requirements established in Grant Proposal Guide, Chapter II.C.5.a apply.

Please note that if a specific program solicitation provides guidance on preparation of data management plans, such guidance must be followed.

* Engineering Directorate (ENG)
  * Directorate-wide Guidance

* Geological Sciences Directorate (GEO)
  * Division of Earth Sciences
  * Integrated Ocean Drilling Program
  * Division of Ocean Sciences

* Mathematical and Physical Sciences Directorate (MPS)
  * Division of Astronomical Sciences
  * Division of Chemistry
  * Division of Materials Research
  * Division of Mathematical Sciences
  * Division of Physics

* Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Directorate (SBE)
  * Directorate-wide Guidance

Data Management & Sharing Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) - updated November 30, 2010

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)
NSF Cost Sharing Policy

• 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.
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.
Grants for Rapid Response Research (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.
EArly-concept Grants for Exploratory Research (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!

http://www.nsf.gov/staff
http://www.nsf.gov/staff/orglist.jsp