Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
On Collaborators and Other Affiliations (COA) Information Template

January 29, 2018

The National Science Foundation (NSF) requires that Collaborators and Other Affiliations information must be separately provided for each individual identified as senior project personnel. (See NSF *Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide* (PAPPG), Chapter II.C.1.e.) The COA information must be provided through use of the COA template. The template has been developed to be fillable, however, the content and format requirements must not be altered by the user. This template must be saved in .xlsx format and directly uploaded into FastLane as a Collaborators and Other Affiliations Single Copy Document.

The following are frequently asked questions that may be useful in preparation of the COA template.

General

Must the information requested for each section be in alphabetical order?

The information provided in the tables is not required to be sorted, alphabetically or otherwise.

In previous versions of the COA, instructions required that each PI, co-PI, and senior personnel provide a list of their postdoctoral scholar sponsor(s) and the postgraduate-scholar(s) they sponsored. Does this information need to be included in the current COA?

Submission of information on an individual's own postdoctoral scholar sponsor(s) and/or advisees is no longer required.

Why does information on postdoctoral sponsor(s) and scholar(s) advised no longer need to be included on the COA template?

Submission of information on an individual's postdoctoral sponsor(s) and the postdoctoral scholar(s) the individual has advised is no longer required. THIS IS PURPOSEFUL AND WE NO LONGER REQUIRE THIS INFORMATION TO BE REPORTED. These persons may be listed in Table 4 of the COA template if they were/are co-authors or collaborators of the individual submitting the template. Where appropriate, the persons also may be included in Table 2 in situations where a personal, family or business relationship would otherwise preclude their service as a reviewer.

Would a "foreign" senior key person need to complete the COA template?

Regardless of whether an individual is located outside the US, all individuals identified as senior project personnel need to complete the template.

If there is someone that belongs in more than one category (e.g., PhD advisee and co-author), should that person be listed in both categories?

If someone belongs in more than one category, list their name in all eligible categories.

In situations where an individual is a sponsoring committee member for a conference, are conference attendees considered collaborators if the individual has directly interacted with them?

Attendees at a conference are not considered to be collaborators.

What does the "Last Active" column mean?

The "last active" column refers to when the individual last interacted with the person in the capacity to which the table is referring. You may leave this column blank for interactions that are ongoing.

For the "Last Active" fields, can this be an estimated date?

If exact dates are not available, estimated dates may be entered in the "Last Active" fields. "Last active" dates are optional, but this will help NSF staff easily determine which information remains relevant for reviewer selection.

In Tables 2 through 5, if a person has moved to another organization, which affiliation should be listed – their current affiliation or the organization which they were at when the interaction took place?

The person's current organizational affiliation should be listed.

When preparing a separately submitted collaborative proposal, should all of the COA templates be uploaded to the lead organization's proposal?

In accordance with PAPPG Chapter II.D.3, COA information must be prepared for each individual identified as senior project personnel, and must be uploaded as a single copy document in the proposal submission from their organization.

Do I need to list all editors that I interacted with as either author or reviewer?

No, do not list editors or reviewers you have interacted with because of a paper submission.

How do I add blank rows in order to provide additional entries on the tables?

As noted on the COA template, to insert n blank rows, select n row numbers to move down, right click, and choose Insert from the menu. If you need further assistance, contact the NSF IT Help Desk at (800) 673-6188.

Notice of changes to the order of the tables and table identifier.

- Table A = Table 1
- Table B = Table 3
- Table C = Table 4
- Table D = Table 5
- Table E = Table 2

Table 1

What does "considered affiliation" mean in Table 1? Does it apply to any organization to which an application for employment was submitted?

"Considered affiliation" means an entity to which an employment application has been submitted or an interview is scheduled, or has taken place. If there was no response, however, from the application or interview and 60 days have expired, then that information does not need to be included on the COA template.

Table 3

Table 3 of the COA template only asks for G: The individual's Ph.D. advisors and T: All of the individual's Ph.D. thesis advisees. Where do I list graduate advisors?

The COA template does not ask for graduate advisors to be reported. This is purposeful as NSF no longer requires that this information be reported. If the individual meets the definition of another category, report them under that Table.

For Table 3, should the designation "G: The individual's Ph.D. advisors" be used for postdoctoral students that the individual has advised in his or her lab?

No, ""G" should be used to designate the PhD advisor(s) of the individual.

Table 4

Can supervised master's students be listed in Table 4? If so, which code should be used to designate master's students?

Proposers should use the generic "C" for collaborators on Table 4. However, supervised master's students should only be listed if they actually collaborated on research.

For co-authors in the last 48 months, does NSF want just senior investigators or all co-authors?

Regardless of position and/or title, all co-authors in the last 48 months should be listed.

If a person has co-authored publications or collaborated with a substantial number of colleagues in the past four years, do all the colleagues need to be listed? Is there an acceptable "filter" that can be used, such that only the closest or top collaborators are listed?

In such situations, individuals should follow the instructions in the solicitation to which they are submitting or check with a cognizant NSF Program Officer.

Table 5

I understand that co-editors should be named; however, what about a faculty member who is a Chief Editor for a journal? Would all Associate/Assistant Editors of the journal be considered his or her co-editors?

Yes, Chief Editors should list all the Associate/Assistant Editors. The Associate/Assistant Editors, in turn, would always list their Chief Editor.

When a PI is an associate editor, does the PI need to list just the editor-in-chief? Must the other associate editors or the editorial advisory board also be listed?

When completing Table 5, individuals should list the specific editor-in-chief. If they interact with other associate editors, then those associate editors also should be listed. Editors with whom the PI, co-PI or senior personnel have not communicated need not be listed. Table 5 does not include "Editorial Advisory Boards", "International Advisory Boards", "Scientific Editors", or any other subcategory of editorial boards.

If a PI is a member of an editorial team for a journal, are all other members of the team considered collaborators if group e-mails have been exchanged among them all?

If the interaction was limited to group e-mail exchanges, editorial team members need not be listed.