

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) for National Science Foundation (NSF) Proposers and Awardees

May 19, 2020

The following addresses questions associated with the NSF proposal and award process that may arise in relation to COVID-19. A separate set of [FAQs for REU Sites](#) also has been developed. Given that COVID-19 and the associated impacts continue to evolve, proposers and awardees are strongly encouraged to monitor [NSF's COVID-19 website](#) for updates.

Unless announced on [NSF's website](#), proposal deadlines, target dates, and submission windows remain unchanged. NSF will continue to review proposals using *ad hoc* reviews and virtual panels, enabling the agency to maintain a high-quality and timely merit review process.

1. I have a question related to COVID-19's potential impact on my research project, project-related travel, or field work. Where are some of the places I can find helpful information?

Your employing organization is an ideal starting point. In many cases, organizations have created websites that provide information.

Beyond that, we encourage you to consult the following resources:

- COVID-19 in general: see the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) and [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) websites, and also refer to your state or local health department;
- Travel to/from and quarantine in foreign countries: see the [State Department Travel Advisories website](#); and
- [NSF Guidance for Major Facilities and Contracts Regarding COVID-19.](#)

2. Will NSF provide for an extension to my award if the planned activities are disrupted by the COVID-19 public health threat?

Recipients must follow the standard policies and procedures specified in the *NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide* (PAPPG) [Chapter VI.D.3](#), and applicable award conditions regarding submission of grantee and NSF-approved no-cost extensions.

3. I am a PI on an NSF-funded Conference or Travel award, but the meeting has been canceled. Who do I contact regarding the impact to the NSF award?

You should contact the cognizant NSF program officer about this situation. In light of the public health threat, you may wish to consider alternate plans, such as providing or using options for virtual participation. In addition, NSF program officers will be open to

rescheduling the conference or using the funds for a future meeting that is consistent with the original scope and objectives of the award.

4. A conference has been canceled, but I have nonrefundable travel and/or hotel costs. Can these be charged to an NSF Conference or Travel grant?

Recipients who incur costs related to the cancellation of events, travel, or other activities necessary and reasonable for the performance of the award, or the pausing and restarting of grant funded activities due to the public health emergency, are authorized to charge these costs to their award without regard to 2 CFR § 200.403, *Factors affecting allowability of costs*, 2 CFR § 200.404, *Reasonable costs*, and 2 CFR § 200.405, *Allocable costs*. Recipients may charge the full cost to the award when the event, travel, or other activities is conducted under the auspices of the grant. Recipients must not assume that supplemental funding will be available should the charging of cancellation or other fees result in a shortage of funds to eventually carry out the event or travel. If a shortfall is anticipated, recipients must contact the cognizant NSF Program Officer to discuss the situation. Recipients are required to maintain appropriate records and cost documentation as required by 2 CFR § 200.302 – *Financial management* and 2 CFR § 200.333 - *Retention requirement of records*, to substantiate the charging of any cancellation or other fees related to interruption of operations or services.

Recipients are reminded of the requirement to maintain supporting documentation in the event that a review is performed in the future.

5. I am involved with a Conference or Travel award for a meeting that is taking place in the coming weeks. Should I continue with plans for the meeting?

NSF recommends first reaching out to the conference organizer or host. They are best equipped to understand the guidance at the location of the event. They may recommend having contingency plans if the event is ultimately cancelled or re-located, or might be planning to provide options for virtual participation. If you are the organizer, you may wish to consider developing contingency plans. We also suggest checking the [State Department Travel Advisories website](#) if the conference involves foreign travel.

6. I am considering submitting a Conference or Travel proposal to NSF for a future meeting. The site of the meeting has not yet been selected; should I take into account COVID-19 in conference planning and site selection?

Travel logistics, accessibility, and health and safety considerations of the participants should always be a foremost consideration in any Conference proposal. Since the COVID-19 threat is still evolving, it is important to consider flexibility and alternative plans in a proposal to support travel or a conference. For foreign travel, you should consult the [State Department Travel Advisories website](#).

7. I am scheduled to attend an NSF-funded meeting. What do I do?

Meetings funded via NSF grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts that are scheduled to take place at NSF headquarters through September 30, 2020, will be converted to virtual meetings or rescheduled for later dates.

Meetings funded via NSF grants or cooperative agreements scheduled to take place elsewhere through September 30, 2020, will be reassessed for sufficiency in consultation with the receiving organizations for their organizational policies and practices. Organizers should consider moving to all-virtual participation or rescheduling the meetings for later dates.

Meetings funded via NSF contracts scheduled to take place elsewhere through September 30, 2020, will be converted to virtual meetings or rescheduled for later dates, unless there is an exceptional circumstance. NSF staff will determine if exceptional circumstances necessitate a different approach.

NSF will provide updated guidance on NSF-sponsored meetings scheduled to take place on or after October 1, 2020, no later than June 30, 2020.

8. My NSF grant involves an exchange of researchers (including students) and/or other foreign travel. Should I continue with plans?

Travel logistics, accessibility, and health and safety considerations of the participants in an active research project should always be a foremost consideration. NSF recommends consulting with your organization about its policies and procedures. You may consider approaching the planned researcher exchanges and/or other foreign travel with flexibility, and/or devising alternate plans including virtual participation as appropriate. As noted above, NSF understands that plans for active research projects may be disrupted, to the point of needing extensions on the original award durations. For foreign travel, you should consult the [State Department Travel Advisories website](#).

9. I am quarantined for a period of time. There is an NSF proposal deadline during my quarantine period and some essential materials I need are in my office. Can I receive an extension to the deadline?

NSF has extended the deadline dates for specific funding opportunities. A [listing](#) of these extensions is available on the Foundation's [COVID-19 webpage](#). Deadline dates for funding opportunities that do not appear on the list remain unchanged. Recipients who are unable to meet stated deadlines should contact the cognizant NSF Program Officer to discuss the issue. NSF will consider extensions on a case by case basis.

10. My university has asked staff to stay home for an undetermined period of time. How would I petition for an extension of a proposal deadline?

NSF has extended the deadline dates for specific funding opportunities. A [listing](#) of these extensions is available on the Foundation's [COVID-19 webpage](#). Deadline dates for funding opportunities that do not appear on the list remain unchanged. Recipients who are unable to meet stated deadlines should contact the cognizant NSF Program Officer to discuss the issue. NSF will consider extensions on a case by case basis.

11. Which prior approvals are still *required* to be submitted to NSF during the time period for which the administrative relief flexibilities referenced in [NSF's implementation of OMB Memorandum M-20-17](#) apply?

Recipients are required to obtain NSF prior approval for the following program or budget-related reasons specified in 2 CFR § 200.308 (c):

- Change in the scope or the objectives of the project;
- Change in a Principal Investigator (PI) or co-PI specified in an NSF award;
- The transfer of funds budgeted for participant support costs to other categories of expense;
- Unless described in the proposal and funded in the approved NSF award, the subawarding or transferring out of any work under an NSF award; and
- The need arises for additional NSF funding to complete the project.

12. Which prior approvals are *waived* by NSF during the time period for which the administrative relief flexibilities apply?

Recipients are required to obtain the prior approvals specified in #10 above which must be submitted via Research.gov. All other prior approvals specified in the [Research Terms and Conditions Appendix A Prior Approval Matrix](#) (applicable to institutions of higher education and non-profit organizations) and the [NSF Prior Approval Matrix for State and Local Governments and For-Profit Organizations](#) are waived. For example, incurring project costs more than 90 calendar days pre-award is listed in the matrices as required for NSF. During the administrative relief flexibilities time period, however, this prior approval and all others listed in the matrices are waived for NSF grants, except for those specified in #10 above.

- 13. Is the August 15, 2020 Annual Inventory Report submission requirement per the CA-FATC, Article 6. Equipment, and the Annual Inventory Report for Federally-owned Property and article 62. NSF Owned Equipment and Real Property for Major Facilities still due?**

Due to COVID-19 impacts on Recipients performing a physical inventory of property and equipment, NSF has waived the Annual Inventory Report requirements on Federally-owned Property based on [NSF Implementation of OMB Memorandum M-20-17](#).

- 14. Will NSF recipients be able to draw grants funds without delay?**

NSF will continue to process daily grant payments to recipients through ACM\$ without interruption during the COVID-19 epidemic.

- 15. How will COVID-19 impact previously scheduled site visits?**

For any previously scheduled site visits, NSF staff will contact the awardee to make alternative arrangements, such as videoconferencing, to meet with the project team and review documentation. In cases where the presence of NSF staff on site is essential, NSF staff may make an in-person visit at a later date.