



National Science Foundation  
WHERE DISCOVERIES BEGIN

NSF Grants Conference

# Proposal Preparation

March 11-12, 2013

Hosted by Howard University, Arlington, Virginia





# 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**



# Find Funding Opportunities

The screenshot shows the NSF website's navigation and content. A red circle highlights the 'FUNDING' menu, which includes the following items:

- Search Funding Opportunities
- Browse Opportunities A-Z
- Recent Opportunities
- Due Dates
- Preparing Proposals
- Policies & Procedures
- Merit Review
- Interdisciplinary Research
- Transformative Research
- About Funding

The main navigation bar includes: HOME, FUNDING, AWARDS, DISCOVERIES, NEWS, PUBLICATIONS, STATISTICS, ABOUT NSF, and FASTLANE. A search bar is located in the top right corner.

The main content area features a featured article titled "Understanding Bacterial Crowdsourcing" with a "FULL STORY" button. Below this is a horizontal menu with "Advancing the Sciences", "Funding & Supporting", and "Inspiring & Educating", and a "HIDE" button.

Below the menu are several article teasers:

- VIMS Researchers Unravel Life Cycle of Blue-crab Parasite** (October 4, 2012) - Image of microscopic organisms.
- A Mammal Lung, In 3-D** (October 2, 2012) - Image of a 3D model of a lung.
- Home-based Assessment Tool for Dementia Screening** (October 2, 2012) - Image of two people at a computer.
- URI Scientists: Marine Plants Can Flee to Avoid Predators** (October 1, 2012) - Image of a marine organism.
- White Shark Diets Vary With Age and** (partially visible)
- Disappearing Act** (partially visible)



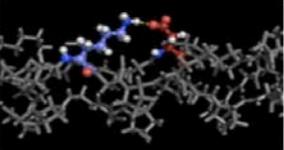
# Find Funding Opportunities



September 27, 2012



**Processes in Earthquake 2012: Sumatra Quake**  
September 26, 2012



**Rice University Lab Encodes Collagen**  
September 25, 2012



**A Clock That Will Last Forever**  
September 24, 2012

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## NSF Funding & Research Community

**SPECIAL NOTICES**

Nominations for the 2013 Alan T. Waterman Award Are Being Accepted Through October 31, 2012

National Science Board Accepting Nominations for 2013 Honorary Awards in Science Leadership and Public Service Through November 1, 2012

NSF Notice of Intent to Revise American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Award General Terms and Conditions to Ensure Project Completion by September 30, 2013

NSF Information Related to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

**EVENT CALENDAR**

<b>09</b> OCT	Center for e-Design IAB Meeting <b>PARTNERSHIP MEETING</b>
<b>10</b>	Advisory Committee for Geosciences

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

**Search Funding Opportunities**

**Search by Program Area**

**VIEW ALL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES** >

Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide

Prepare a Proposal

Upcoming Due Dates

Submit Proposal to FastLane



# NSF News and Information

**NSF** National Science Foundation  
WHERE DISCOVERIES BEGIN

QUICK LINKS

SEARCH

HOME FUNDING AWARDS DISCOVERIES **NEWS** PUBLICATIONS STATISTICS ABOUT NSF FASTLANE

**News**

News Home  
For News Media  
Multimedia Gallery  
Special Reports  
News from the Field  
Research Overviews  
Speeches & Lecture  
NSF Current Newsletter  
NSF-Wide Investments  
News Archive  
Search News

News From the Field  
For the News Media  
Special Reports  
Research Overviews  
NSF-Wide Investments  
Speeches & Lectures  
NSF Current Newsletter  
Multimedia Gallery  
News Archive

News by Research Area

Arctic & Antarctic  
Astronomy & Space  
Biology

**An Advanced Cyberworld for Data Exploration**  
Released October 3, 2012  
News From the Field



# NSF Website Organization

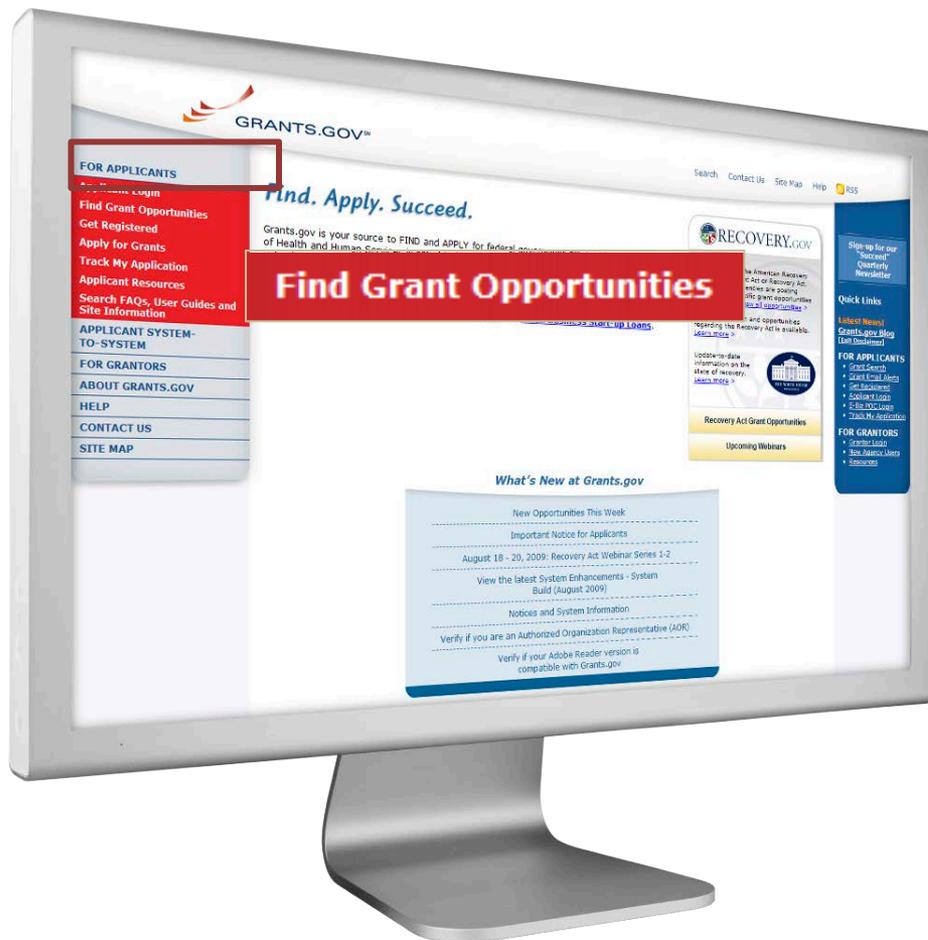
The screenshot shows the NSF website's main navigation and content areas. At the top, there is a blue header with the NSF logo and name, and a 'QUICK LINKS' button. Below the header, the website is organized into several columns and sections:

- Research Areas:** A list of 14 categories including Biological Sciences, Computer & Information Science & Engineering, Cyberinfrastructure, Education and Human Resources, Engineering, Environmental Research & Education, Geosciences, Integrative Activities, International Science & Engineering, Mathematical & Physical Sciences, Polar Programs, and Social, Behavioral & Economic Sciences.
- Funding & Awards:** Divided into 'FUNDING INFO' (Search Funding Opportunities, Browse Funding Opportunities A-Z, Recent Funding Opportunities, How to Prepare a Funding Proposal, Grant Proposal Guide, Submit a Proposal to FastLane) and 'AWARD INFO' (Managing Awards, Award & Administration Guide, Search Awards, Award Statistics (Budget Internet Info System)).
- Contact Us:** A list of 7 links including Staff Directory, Organization List, Visit NSF, Work at NSF, Do Business with NSF, Press, Inspector General Hotline, and How Do I...?. Below this is the physical address: The National Science Foundation, 4201 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, Virginia 22230, USA, along with telephone, fax, and TDD numbers.
- Learning Resources:** A list of 4 items including Film, TV, Exhibits & More!, Slideshows & Photo Galleries, Classroom Resources, and Funding for Research on Learning in Formal & Informal Settings.
- News & Discoveries:** A list of 4 items including Recent News, Recent Discoveries, Multimedia Gallery, and Special Reports.

At the bottom right of the screenshot, there is a photograph of a modern, multi-story building with a glass facade.



# Other Ways to Find Funding

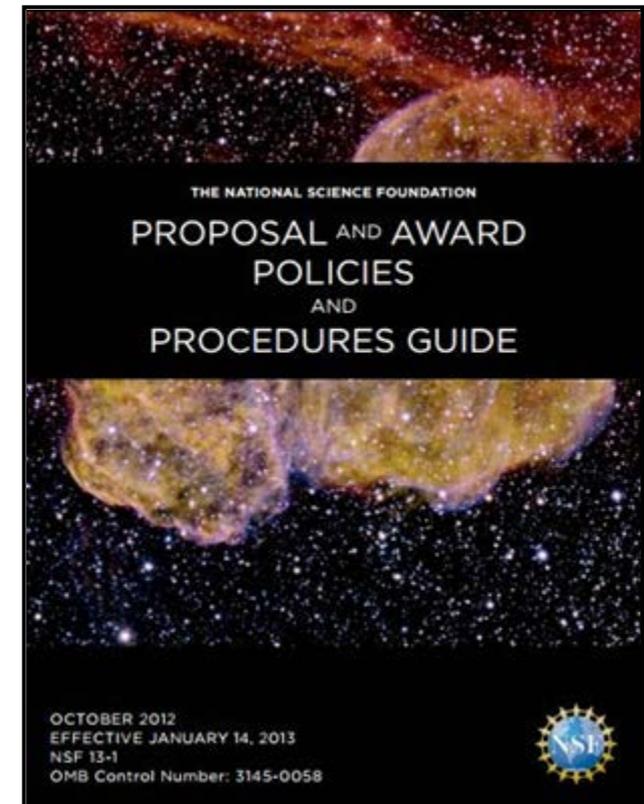


Use Grants.gov's search feature



# What is the Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide?

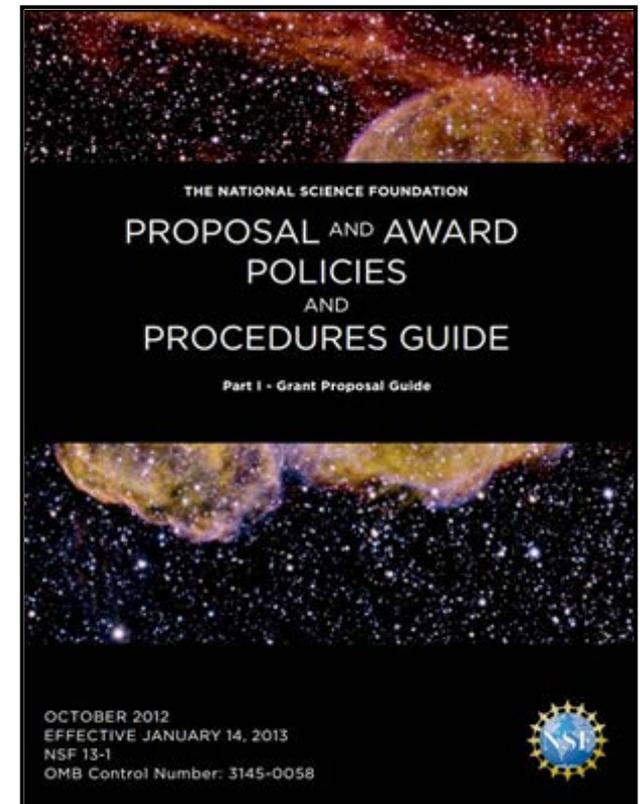
**The Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide (PAPPG) contains documents relating to NSF's proposal and award process. It has been designed for use by both our customer community and NSF staff and consists of two parts:**





# What is the Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide?

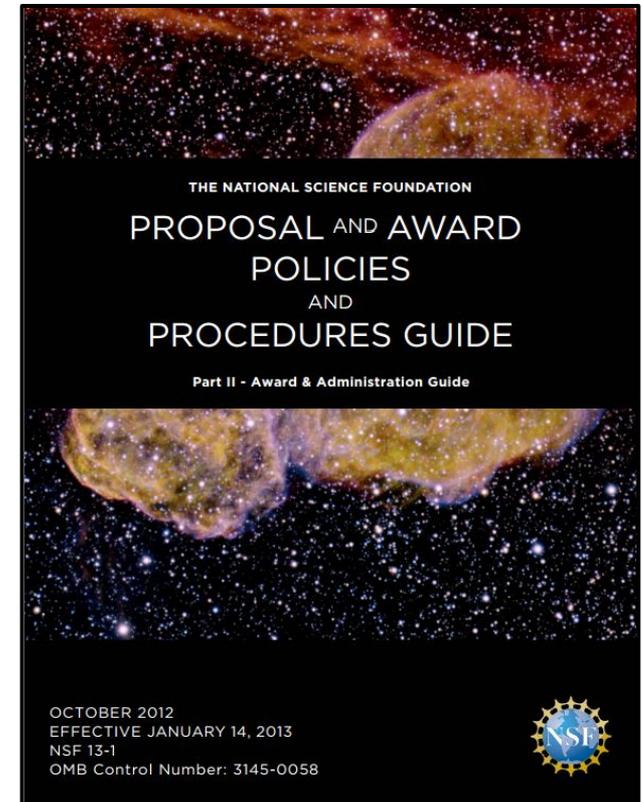
**Part I is NSF's proposal preparation and submission guidelines -- the NSF Grant Proposal Guide (GPG) and the NSF Grants.gov Application Guide.**





# What is the Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide?

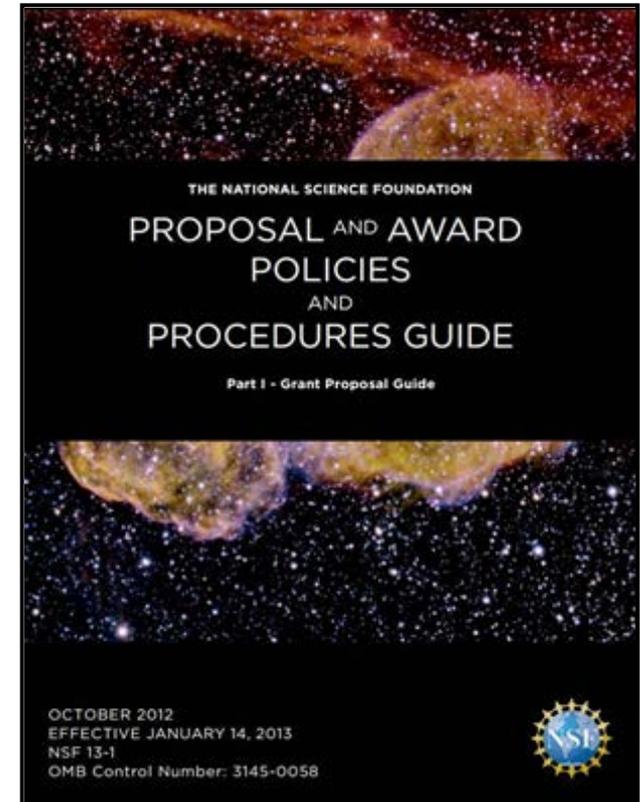
**Part II is NSF's award and administration guidelines -- the documents used to guide, manage, and monitor the award and administration of grants and cooperative agreements made by NSF.**





# 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

## Program Descriptions

Proposals for a **Program Description** must follow the instructions in the GPG.

## Program Announcements

Proposals for a **Program Announcement** must follow the instructions in the GPG.

## Program Solicitations

Proposals must follow the instructions in the **Program Solicitation**; the instructions in the GPG apply unless otherwise stated in the solicitation.

## Dear Colleague Letters

**Dear Colleague Letters** are notifications of opportunities or special competitions for supplements to existing NSF awards.



# 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

**Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation (LSAMP)**

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**PROGRAM SOLICITATION**  
NSF 12-564

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REPLACES DOCUMENT(S):  
NSF 11-543

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 **National Science Foundation**  
Directorate for Education & Human Resources  
Division of Human Resource Development

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**Full Proposal Deadline(s)** (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time):

- August 28, 2012  
Bridge to the Doctorate
- October 05, 2012  
First Friday in October, Annually Thereafter  
Bridge to the Doctorate

**Program  
Solicitation  
Number**

**NSF  
Directorates  
and Offices  
providing  
funding for this  
opportunity**



# Sample Cover Page of a Solicitation

## Award Information

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

**Estimated Number of Awards:** 60

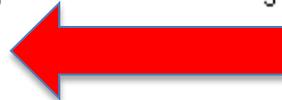


Up to 60 awards will be made across fiscal 2012 and 2013.

In FY 2012, up to 20 Bridge to the Doctorate (BD) grants will be made.

In FY2013, 20 Alliance grants (this includes 5 B2B), up to 15 Bridge to the Doctorate (BD) grants and up to 5 Broadening Participation Research (BPR) in STEM Education grants.

**Anticipated Funding Amount:** \$20,000,000



\$20,000,000 across fiscal years 2012 and 2013; Subject to the availability of funds.

**Number of awards funded by the program per year**

**Funds available to the program per year**



# Sample Cover Page of a Solicitation

## Eligibility Information

### Organization Limit:

Proposals may only be submitted by the following:

- Universities and Colleges - Universities and two- and four-year colleges (including community colleges) accredited in, and having a campus located in the US, acting on behalf of their faculty members. Such organizations also are referred to as academic institutions.

### PI Limit:

**Alliance (including the B2B) and BD:** To promote institutional commitments to increase the quality and quantity of under-represented minorities in STEM disciplines, the President or Provost of the lead institution should serve as the Principal Investigator. A full explanation should be provided for a PI designation in variance with this requirement. Co-principal investigators from partner institutions may be designated, as appropriate, for the project.

**Broadening Participation Research in STEM Education:** Eligible PI/co-PI(s) for proposals applying for educational research or evaluation support should be the individual conducting or responsible for the research or evaluation project. Other potential co-Principal Investigators include collaborators on the research project. At least one of the PI's must have experience in educational research.

### Limit on Number of Proposals per Organization:

**Alliances (including B2B) and BD:** 1

**Broadening Participation Research in STEM Education:** No limit.

### Limit on Number of Proposals per PI:

**Alliances (including B2B):** 1

**Bridge to the Doctorate:** 1

**Broadening Participation Research in STEM Education:** No limit

**Eligibility  
information for  
institutions/PIs  
submitting  
proposals**



# Types of Proposal Submissions

No Deadlines –  
Proposals may be  
submitted at any time



## F. When to Submit Proposals

Proposers should allow adequate time for NSF review and processing of proposals (see [GPG Chapter I.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 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 [GPG Chapter II.A](#).



# Types of Proposal Submissions



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

## F. When to Submit Proposals

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# Types of Proposal Submissions

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



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# Types of Proposal Submissions

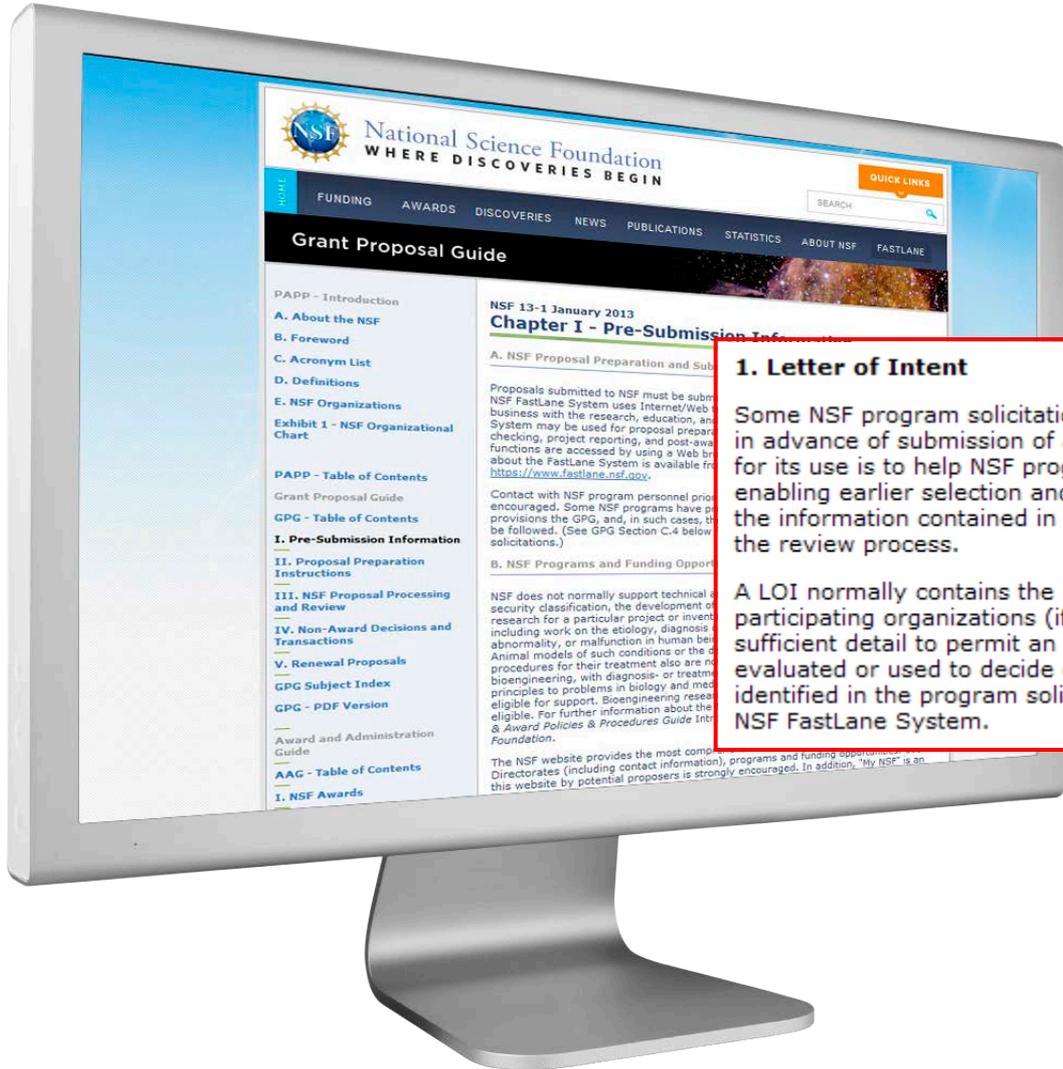


Submission Windows –  
Closing date converts to a  
deadline date

**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.



# Types of Proposal Submissions



**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.



# 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*

COVER SHEET FOR PROPOSAL TO THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION					
PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT/SOLICITATION NO./CLOSING DATE (if not in response to a program announcement/solicitation enter NSF 08-1)					FOR NSF USE ONLY
NSF 98-164					NSF PROPOSAL NUMBER
FOR CONSIDERATION BY NSF ORGANIZATION UNIT(S) (Indicate the most specific unit known, i.e. program, division, etc.)					<b>0840812</b>
CNS - NETWORKING RESEARCH					
DATE RECEIVED	NUMBER OF COPIES	DIVISION ASSIGNED	FUND CODE	DUNS# (Data Universal Numbering System)	FILE LOCATION
08/03/2008	17	05050000 NCR	4097	0748118054568	02/10/2009 10:22am
EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN) OR TAXPAYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (TIN)		SHOW PREVIOUS AWARD NO. IF THIS IS <input type="checkbox"/> A RENEWAL <input type="checkbox"/> AN ACCOMPLISHMENT-BASED RENEWAL		IS THIS PROPOSAL BEING SUBMITTED TO ANOTHER FEDERAL AGENCY? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IF YES, LIST ACRONYM(S)	
NAME OF ORGANIZATION TO WHICH AWARD SHOULD BE MADE			ADDRESS OF AWARDEE ORGANIZATION, INCLUDING 9 DIGIT ZIP CODE		
NSF			Arlington, VA 222302000		
AWARDEE ORGANIZATION CODE (IF KNOWN)			US		
4102852000					
NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION, IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE			ADDRESS OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION, IF DIFFERENT, INCLUDING 9 DIGIT ZIP CODE		
PERFORMING ORGANIZATION CODE (IF KNOWN)					
IS AWARDEE ORGANIZATION (Check All That Apply) <input type="checkbox"/> SMALL BUSINESS <input type="checkbox"/> MINORITY BUSINESS <input type="checkbox"/> IF THIS IS A PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL (See GPG II.C For Definitions) <input type="checkbox"/> FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION <input type="checkbox"/> WOMAN-OWNED BUSINESS THEN CHECK HERE					
TITLE OF PROPOSED PROJECT <b>Neural Network Research</b>					
REQUESTED AMOUNT	PROPOSED DURATION (1-60 MONTHS)	REQUESTED STARTING DATE	SHOW RELATED PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL NO. IF APPLICABLE		
\$ <b>400,000</b>	<b>0</b> months				
CHECK APPROPRIATE BOX(ES) IF THIS PROPOSAL INCLUDES ANY OF THE ITEMS LISTED BELOW					
<input type="checkbox"/> BEGINNING INVESTIGATOR (GPG I.G.2)		<input type="checkbox"/> HUMAN SUBJECTS (GPG II.D.6) Human Subjects Assurance Number _____			
<input type="checkbox"/> DISCLOSURE OF LOBBYING ACTIVITIES (GPG II.C)		Exemption Subsection _____ or IRB App. Date _____			
<input type="checkbox"/> PROPRIETARY & PRIVILEGED INFORMATION (GPG I.D, II.C.1.d)		<input type="checkbox"/> INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES: COUNTRY/COUNTRIES INVOLVED (GPG II.C.2.j)			
<input type="checkbox"/> HISTORIC PLACES (GPG II.C.2.j)					
<input type="checkbox"/> SMALL GRANT FOR EXPLOR. RESEARCH (SGER) (GPG II.D.1)					
<input type="checkbox"/> VERTEBRATE ANIMALS (GPG II.D.5) IACUC App. Date _____		<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH RESOLUTION GRAPHICS/OTHER GRAPHICS WHERE EXACT COLOR REPRESENTATION IS REQUIRED FOR PROPER INTERPRETATION (GPG I.G.1)			
PHS Animal Welfare Assurance Number _____					
PIPD DEPARTMENT <b>Division of Information Systems</b>			PIPD POSTAL ADDRESS <b>4201 Wilson Boulevard</b>		
PIPD FAX NUMBER <b>703-292-3000</b>			Arlington, VA 222301000 United States		
NAMES (TYPED)	High Degree	Yr of Degree	Telephone Number	Electronic Mail Address	
PIPD NAME <b>Terry Demo</b>	<b>PhD</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>703-292-1000</b>	<b>td@nsf.gov</b>	
CO-PI/PI					



# 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**

or projects that are geographically distributed, the proposer should report information for the primary site, as defined by the proposer. For example, proposals for the operations and maintenance of research vessels may list the project/performance site as the vessel's home port.

(h) Other Information

Should any of the following items on the Cover Sheet apply to a proposal, the applicable box(es) must be checked.

- Beginning Investigator (See GPG I.G.2)
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (See GPG II.C.1e)
- Proprietary or Privileged Information (See GPG I.D.3 & II.C.1d)
- Historic Places (See GPG II.C.2)
- Rapid Response Grants (See GPG II.D.1)
- EARly-concept Grants for Exploratory Research (EAGER) (See GPG II.D.2)
- Vertebrate Animals<sup>19</sup> (See GPG II.D.6)
- Human Subjects<sup>20</sup> (See GPG II.D.7)
- International Cooperative Activities Country Name(s) (See GPG II.C.2j)

**b. Project Summary**

Each proposal must contain a summary of the proposed project not more than one page in length. The Project Summary consists of an overview, a statement on the intellectual merit of the proposed activity, and a statement on the broader impacts of the proposed activity.

The overview includes a description of the activity that would result if the proposal were funded and a statement of objectives and methods to be employed. The statement on intellectual merit should describe the potential of the proposed activity to advance knowledge. The statement on broader impacts should describe the potential of the proposed activity to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes. The Project Summary should be written in the third person, informative to other persons working in the same or related fields, and, insofar as possible, understandable to a scientifically or technically literate lay reader. It should not be an abstract of the proposal.

**Proposals that do not contain the Project Summary, including an overview and separate statements on intellectual merit and broader impacts will not be accepted by FastLane or will be returned without review.<sup>21</sup> Additional instructions for preparation of the Project Summary are available in FastLane.**

**c. Table of Contents**

A Table of Contents is automatically generated for the proposal by FastLane. The proposer cannot edit this form.

**d. Project Description (including Results from Prior NSF Support)**

(i) Content

The Project Description should provide a clear statement of the work to be undertaken and must include: objectives for the period of the proposed work and expected significance; relation to longer-term goals of the PI's project; and relation to the present state of knowledge in the field, to work in progress by the PI under other support and to work in progress elsewhere.

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<sup>19</sup> If the proposal includes use of Vertebrate Animals, supplemental information is required. See [GPG Chapter II.D.6](#) for additional information.

<sup>20</sup> If the proposal includes use of Human Subjects, supplemental information is required. See [GPG Chapter II.D.7](#) for additional information.

<sup>21</sup> If a Project Summary contains special characters, it must be uploaded as a Supplementary Document.

Grant Proposal Guide II-8 NSF 13-1



# 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*

The Project Description should outline the general plan of work, including the broad design of activities to be undertaken, and, where appropriate, provide a clear description of experimental methods and procedures. 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. The project activities may be based on previously established and/or innovative methods and approaches, but in either case must be well justified. These issues apply to both the technical aspects of the proposal and the way in which the project may make broader contributions.

The Project Description must contain, as a separate section within the narrative, a discussion of the broader impacts of the proposed activities. Broader impacts may be accomplished through the research itself, through the activities that are directly related to specific research projects, or through activities that are supported by, but are complementary to the project. NSF values the advancement of scientific knowledge and activities that contribute to the achievement of societally relevant outcomes. Such outcomes include, but are not limited to: full participation of women, persons with disabilities, and underrepresented minorities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); improved STEM education and educator development at any level; increased public scientific literacy and public engagement with science and technology; improved well-being of individuals in society; development of a diverse, globally competitive STEM workforce; increased partnerships between academia, industry, and others; improved national security; increased economic competitiveness of the United States; and enhanced infrastructure for research and education.

Plans for data management and sharing of the products of research, including preservation, documentation, and sharing of data, samples, physical collections, curriculum materials and other related research and education products should be described in the Special Information and Supplementary Documentation section of the proposal (see GPG Chapter II.C.2.); for additional instructions for preparation of this section).

(ii) **Page Limitations and Inclusion of Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) within the Project Description**

Brevity will assist reviewers and Foundation staff in dealing effectively with proposals. Therefore, the Project Description (including Results from Prior NSF Support, which is limited to five pages) **may not exceed 15 pages**. Visual materials, including charts, graphs, maps, photographs and other pictorial presentations are included in the 15-page limitation. PIs are cautioned that the Project Description must be self-contained and that URLs that provide information related to the proposal should not be used because 1) the information could circumvent page limitations, 2) the reviewers are under no obligation to view the sites, and 3) the sites could be altered or abolished between the time of submission and the time of review.

Conformance to the 15-page limitation will be strictly enforced and may not be exceeded unless a deviation has been specifically authorized. (GPG Chapter II.A contains information on deviations.)

(iii) **Results from Prior NSF Support**

If any PI or co-PI identified on the project has received NSF funding (including any current funding) in the past five years, information on the award(s) is required, irrespective of whether the support was directly related to the proposal or not. Funding includes not just salary support, but any funding awarded by NSF. Each PI and co-PI who has received *more than one award* (excluding amendments) must report on the award most closely related to the proposal. The following information must be provided:

- (a) the NSF award number, amount and period of support;
- (b) the title of the project;
- (c) a summary of the results of the completed work, including accomplishments, described in two separate sections, related to the Intellectual Merit and Broader Impact activities supported by the award;
- (d) publications resulting from the NSF award;
- (e) evidence of research products and their availability, including, but not limited to: data, publications, samples, physical collections, software, and models, as described in any Data Management Plan; and

Grant Proposal Guide II-9 NSF 13-1



# 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*

(f) If the proposal is for renewed support, a description of the relation of the completed work to the proposed work.

Reviewers will be asked to comment on the quality of the prior work described in this section of the proposal. Please note that the proposal may contain up to five pages to describe the results. Results may be summarized in fewer than five pages, which would give the balance of the 15 pages for the Project Description.

**(iv) Unfunded Collaborations**

Any substantial collaboration with individuals not included in the budget should be described and documented with a letter from each collaborator, which should be provided in the supplementary documentation section of the FastLane Proposal Preparation Module. Collaborative activities that are identified in the budget should follow the instructions in GPG Chapter II.D.4. See also instructions for completion of the Facilities, Equipment or Other Resources section of the proposal (GPG II.C.2.i).

**(v) Group Proposals**

NSF encourages submission of proposals by groups of investigators; often these are submitted to carry out interdisciplinary projects. Unless stipulated in a specific program solicitation, however, such proposals will be subject to the 15-page Project Description limitation established in Section (ii) above. PIs who wish to exceed the established page limitations for the Project Description must request and receive a deviation in advance of proposal submission. (GPG Chapter II.A contains information on deviations.)

**(vi) Proposals for Renewed Support**

A proposal for renewed support may be either a "traditional" proposal in which the proposed work is documented and described as fully as though the proposer were applying for the first time; or, an "Accomplishment-Based Renewal" (ABR) proposal, in which the Project Description is replaced by copies of no more than six reprints of publications resulting from the research supported by NSF during the preceding three to five year period, plus a brief summary of plans for the proposed support period. (See GPG Chapter V for additional information on preparation of Renewal Proposals.)

**e. References Cited**

Reference information is required. Each reference must include the names of all authors (in the same sequence in which they appear in the publication), the article and journal title, book title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication. If the document is available electronically, the website address also should be identified.<sup>22</sup> Proposers must be especially careful to follow accepted scholarly practices in providing citations for source materials relied upon when preparing any section of the proposal. While there is no established page limitation for the references, this section must include bibliographic citations only and must not be used to provide parenthetical information outside of the 15-page Project Description.

**If there are no references cited, a statement to that effect should be included in this section of the proposal and uploaded into FastLane.**

**f. Biographical Sketch(es)**

**(i) Senior Personnel**

A biographical sketch (limited to two pages) is required for each individual identified as senior project personnel. (See GPG Exhibit II-7 for the definitions of Senior Personnel.) The following information must be provided in the order and format specified below.

<sup>22</sup>If the proposer has a website address readily available, that information should be included in the citation, as stated above. It is not NSF's intent, however, to place an undue burden on proposers to search for the URL of every referenced publication. Therefore, inclusion of a website address is optional. A proposal that includes reference citation(s) that do not specify a URL address is not considered to be in violation of NSF proposal preparation guidelines and the proposal will still be reviewed.



# 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*

**Do not submit** personal information such as home address; home telephone, fax, or cell phone numbers; home e-mail address; date of birth; citizenship; drivers' license numbers; marital status; personal hobbies; and the like. Such personal information is irrelevant to the merits of the proposal. If such information is included, NSF will make every effort to prevent unauthorized access to such material, but the Foundation is not responsible or in any way liable for the release of such material. (See also GPG Chapter III.G.)

**(a) Professional Preparation**

A list of the individual's undergraduate and graduate education and postdoctoral training as indicated below:

Undergraduate Institution(s)	Major	Degree & Year
Graduate Institution(s)	Major	Degree & Year
Postdoctoral Institution(s)	Area	Inclusive Dates (years)

**(b) Appointments**

A list, in reverse chronological order, of all the individual's academic/professional appointments beginning with the current appointment.

**(c) Products**

A list of: (i) up to five products most closely related to the proposed project; and (ii) up to five other significant products, whether or not related to the proposed project. Acceptable products must be citable and accessible including but not limited to publications, data sets, software, patents, and copyrights. Unacceptable products are unpublished documents not yet submitted for publication, invited lectures, and additional lists of products. Only the list of 10 will be used in the review of the proposal.

Each product must include full citation information including (where applicable and practicable) names of all authors, date of publication or release, title, title of enclosing work such as journal or book, volume, issue, pages, website and Uniform Resource Locator (URL) or other Persistent Identifier.

**(d) Synergistic Activities**

A list of up to five examples that demonstrate the broader impact of the individual's professional and scholarly activities that focuses on the integration and transfer of knowledge as well as its creation. Examples could include, among others: innovations in teaching and training (e.g., development of curricular materials and pedagogical methods); contributions to the science of learning; development and/or refinement of research tools; computation methodologies, and algorithms for problem-solving; development of databases to support research and education; broadening the participation of groups underrepresented in science, mathematics, engineering and technology; and service to the scientific and engineering community outside of the individual's immediate organization.

**(e) Collaborators & Other Affiliations**

- Collaborators and Co-Editors.** A list of all persons in alphabetical order (including their current organizational affiliations) who are currently, or who have been collaborators or co-authors with the individual on a project, book, article, report, abstract or paper during the 48 months preceding the submission of the proposal. Also include those individuals who are currently or have been co-editors of a journal, compendium, or conference proceedings during the 24 months preceding the submission of the proposal. If there are no collaborators or co-editors to report, this should be so indicated.
- Graduate Advisors and Postdoctoral Sponsors.** A list of the names of the individual's own graduate advisor(s) and principal postdoctoral sponsor(s), and their current organizational affiliations.
- Thesis Advisor and Postgraduate-Scholar Sponsor.** A list of all persons (including their organizational affiliations), with whom the individual has had an association as thesis advisor, or with whom the individual has had an association within the last five years as a postgraduate-scholar sponsor.

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# 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

SUMMARY PROPOSAL BUDGET				YEAR 1		FOR NSF USE ONLY	
ORGANIZATION <b>NSF</b>				PROPOSAL NO.		DURATION (months)	
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR / PROJECT DIRECTOR <b>Terry Demo</b>				AWARD NO.		Proposed	
						Granted	
A. SENIOR PERSONNEL: P/PI/D, Co-PI's, Faculty and Other Senior Associates (List each separately with title, A.7. show number in brackets)				NSF Funded Proposed		Funds Requested by proposer	
				CAL	ACAD	SUMR	Funds granted by NSF (if different)
1. Terry Demo - none				0.00	0.00	0.00	\$ 400,000
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6. ( 0 ) OTHERS (LIST INDIVIDUALLY ON BUDGET JUSTIFICATION PAGE)				0.00	0.00	0.00	0
7. ( 1 ) TOTAL SENIOR PERSONNEL (1 - 6)				0.00	0.00	0.00	400,000
B. OTHER PERSONNEL (SHOW NUMBERS IN BRACKETS)							
1. ( 0 ) POST DOCTORAL SCHOLARS				0.00	0.00	0.00	0
2. ( 0 ) OTHER PROFESSIONALS (TECHNICIAN, PROGRAMMER, ETC.)				0.00	0.00	0.00	0
3. ( 0 ) GRADUATE STUDENTS							0
4. ( 0 ) UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS							0
5. ( 0 ) SECRETARIAL - CLERICAL (IF CHARGED DIRECTLY)							0
6. ( 0 ) OTHER							0
TOTAL SALARIES AND WAGES (A + B)							400,000
C. FRINGE BENEFITS (IF CHARGED AS DIRECT COSTS)							0
TOTAL SALARIES, WAGES AND FRINGE BENEFITS (A + B + C)							400,000
D. EQUIPMENT (LIST ITEM AND DOLLAR AMOUNT FOR EACH ITEM EXCEEDING \$5,000.)							
TOTAL EQUIPMENT							0
E. TRAVEL 1. DOMESTIC (INCL. CANADA, MEXICO AND U.S. POSSESSIONS)							0
2. FOREIGN							0
F. PARTICIPANT SUPPORT COSTS							
1. STIPENDS \$ _____							0
2. TRAVEL _____							0
3. SUBSISTENCE _____							0
4. OTHER _____							0
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS ( 0 ) TOTAL PARTICIPANT COSTS							0
G. OTHER DIRECT COSTS							
1. MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES							0
2. PUBLICATION COSTS/DOCUMENTATION/DISSEMINATION							0
3. CONSULTANT SERVICES							0
4. COMPUTER SERVICES							0
5. SUBAWARDS							0
6. OTHER							0
TOTAL OTHER DIRECT COSTS							0
H. TOTAL DIRECT COSTS (A THROUGH G)							400,000
I. INDIRECT COSTS (F&A)(SPECIFY RATE AND BASE) (Rate: , Base: )							
TOTAL INDIRECT COSTS (F&A)							0
J. TOTAL DIRECT AND INDIRECT COSTS (H + I)							400,000
K. RESIDUAL FUNDS							0
L. AMOUNT OF THIS REQUEST (J) OR (J MINUS K)							\$ 400,000
M. COST SHARING PROPOSED LEVEL \$ _____				0	AGREED LEVEL IF DIFFERENT \$ _____		
PI/PI/D NAME <b>Terry Demo</b>				FOR NSF USE ONLY			
ORG. REP. NAME* <b>Terry Demo</b>				INDIRECT COST RATE VERIFICATION			
				Date Checked	Date Of Rate Sheet	Initials - ORG	

1 \*ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES REQUIRED FOR REVISED BUDGET



# 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.**



# 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.

### Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources

**Instructions:** 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 quantifiable 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*

Current and Pending Support (See GPG Section II.C.2.h for guidance on information to include on this form.)				
<small>The following information should be provided for each investigator and other senior personnel. Failure to provide this information may delay consideration of this proposal.</small>				
Investigator:		<small>Other agencies (including NSF) to which this proposal has been/will be submitted.</small>		
Support: <input type="checkbox"/> Current <input type="checkbox"/> Pending <input type="checkbox"/> Submission Planned in Near Future <input type="checkbox"/> *Transfer of Support				
Project/Proposal Title:				
Source of Support:				
Total Award Amount: \$		Total Award Period Covered:		
Location of Project:				
Person-Months Per Year Committed to the Project.		Cal:	Acad:	Sumr:
Support: <input type="checkbox"/> Current <input type="checkbox"/> Pending <input type="checkbox"/> Submission Planned in Near Future <input type="checkbox"/> *Transfer of Support				
Project/Proposal Title:				
Source of Support:				
Total Award Amount: \$		Total Award Period Covered:		
Location of Project:				
Person-Months Per Year Committed to the Project.		Cal:	Acad:	Sumr:
Support: <input type="checkbox"/> Current <input type="checkbox"/> Pending <input type="checkbox"/> Submission Planned in Near Future <input type="checkbox"/> *Transfer of Support				
Project/Proposal Title:				
Source of Support:				
Total Award Amount: \$		Total Award Period Covered:		
Location of Project:				
Person-Months Per Year Committed to the Project.		Cal:	Acad:	Sumr:
Support: <input type="checkbox"/> Current <input type="checkbox"/> Pending <input type="checkbox"/> Submission Planned in Near Future <input type="checkbox"/> *Transfer of Support				
Project/Proposal Title:				
Source of Support:				
Total Award Amount: \$		Total Award Period Covered:		
Location of Project:				
Person-Months Per Year Committed to the Project.		Cal:	Acad:	Sumr:
Support: <input type="checkbox"/> Current <input type="checkbox"/> Pending <input type="checkbox"/> Submission Planned in Near Future <input type="checkbox"/> *Transfer of Support				
Project/Proposal Title:				
Source of Support:				
Total Award Amount: \$		Total Award Period Covered:		
Location of Project:				
Person-Months Per Year Committed to the Project.		Cal:	Acad:	Sumr:

\*If this project has previously been funded by another agency, please list and furnish information for immediately preceding funding period.

Page G-0 USE ADDITIONAL SHEETS AS NECESSARY



# 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 charging certain types of costs generally associated with meetings and conferences to NSF awards is available in AAG Chapter V.C.5.

### h. Current and Pending Support

This section of the proposal calls for required information on all current and pending support for ongoing projects and proposals, including this project, and any subsequent funding in the case of continuing grants. All current project support from whatever source (e.g., Federal, State, local or foreign government agencies, public or private foundations, industrial or other commercial organizations) must be listed. The proposed project and all other projects or activities requiring a portion of time of the PI and other senior personnel must be included, even if they receive no salary support from the project(s). The total award amount for the entire award period covered (including indirect costs) must be shown as well as the number of person-months per year to be devoted to the project, regardless of source of support. Similar information must be provided for all proposals already submitted or submitted concurrently to other possible sponsors, including NSF. Concurrent submission of a proposal to other organizations will not prejudice its review by NSF. The Biological Sciences Directorate exception to this policy is delineated in GPG Chapter I.G.2.

If the project now being submitted has been funded previously by a source other than NSF, the information requested in the paragraph above must be furnished for the last period of funding.

### i. Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources

This section of the proposal is used to assess the adequacy of the resources available to perform the effort proposed to satisfy both Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts review criteria. Proposers should describe only those resources that are directly applicable. Proposers should include 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. Such information must be provided in this section, in lieu of other parts of the proposal (e.g., budget justification, project description). The description should be narrative in nature and must not include any quantifiable financial information. Reviewers will evaluate the information during the merit review process and the cognizant NSF Program Officer will review it for programmatic and technical sufficiency.

Although these resources are not considered cost sharing as defined in 2 CFR § 215.23 (OMB Circular A-110), the Foundation does expect that the resources identified in the Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources section will be provided, or made available, should the proposal be funded. AAG Chapter II.B.1 specifies procedures for use by the awardee when there are postaward changes to objective, scope or methodology.

If there are no Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources to describe, a statement to that effect should be included in this section of the proposal and uploaded into FastLane.

### j. Special Information and Supplementary Documentation

Except as specified below, special information and supplementary documentation must be included as part of the Project Description (or part of the budget justification), if it is relevant to determining the quality of the proposed work. Information submitted in the following areas is not considered part of the 15-page Project Description limitation. This Special Information and Supplementary Documentation section also is not considered an appendix. Specific guidance on the need for additional documentation may be obtained from the organization's sponsored projects office or in the references cited below.

- **Postdoctoral Researcher Mentoring Plan.** Each proposal<sup>23</sup> that requests funding to support postdoctoral researchers<sup>24</sup> must include, as a supplementary document, a description of the mentoring activities that will be provided for such individuals. If a Postdoctoral Researcher Mentoring Plan is

<sup>23</sup> For purposes of meeting the mentoring requirement, simultaneously submitted collaborative proposals, and, collaborative proposals that include subawards, constitute a single unified project. Therefore, only one mentoring plan may be submitted for the entire project.

<sup>24</sup> In situations where a postdoctoral researcher is listed in Section A of the NSF Budget, and is functioning in a Senior Project personnel capacity (i.e., responsible for the scientific or technical direction of the project), a mentoring plan is not required.



# 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

The screenshot shows the NSF website page for "Dissemination and Sharing of Research Results". The page is titled "NSF Data Management Plan Requirements" and is part of the "Dissemination and Sharing of Research Results" section. The page includes a search bar, a navigation menu, and a sidebar with links to various NSF offices and divisions. The main content area contains the following text:

**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](#).

**NSF Data Management Plan Requirements**

Proposals submitted or due on or after January 18, 2011, must include a supplementary document of no more than two pages labeled "Data Management Plan". This supplementary document should describe how the proposal will conform to NSF policy on the dissemination and sharing of research results. See [Grant Proposal Guide \(GPG\) Chapter II.C.2.i](#) for full policy implementation.

**Requirements by Directorate, Office, Division, Program, or other NSF Unit**

Links to data management requirements and plans relevant to specific Directorates, 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.2.i](#) 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



# 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](https://www.nsf.gov/staff)**

**[nsf.gov/staff/orglist.jsp](https://www.nsf.gov/staff/orglist.jsp)**

**[nsf.gov/about/career\\_opps/rotators/index.jsp](https://www.nsf.gov/about/career_opps/rotators/index.jsp)**