NSF Proposal & Award Policy Update

May 2019
Topics

• NSF Budget Update
• Lapse in Appropriations
• PAPPG Significant Changes
• NSF Harassment Term & Condition Implementation
• Changes in Objective or Scope - Reminders
• Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research Reminders
• Proposal Submission in Research.gov
• Account Management Updates
• Update of the NSF Award System
• NSF Outreach
## NSF Budget

### Fiscal Year 2019 Appropriation

- $8,075 billion.
- 4% increase over FY 2018.
- 2.9% increase for Research & Related account.
- 1% increase for Education & Human Resources account.
- 61% increase for Major Equipment & Facilities account.

### Fiscal Year 2020 Request

- $7,066 billion.
- 9% decrease from FY 2019.
- 8% decrease for Research & Related.
- 9% decrease for Education & Human Resources account.
- 7% decrease for Major Equipment & Facilities account.
## NSF Budget by Appropriation ($ in Millions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appropriation</th>
<th>FY 2018 Actual</th>
<th>FY 2019 Enacted</th>
<th>FY 2020 Request</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research &amp; Related Activities</td>
<td>$6,380</td>
<td>$6,520</td>
<td>$5,663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education &amp; Human Resources</td>
<td>$904</td>
<td>$910</td>
<td>$823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Research Equipment &amp; Facilities Construction</td>
<td>$186</td>
<td>$296</td>
<td>$223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency Operations &amp; Award Management</td>
<td>$329</td>
<td>$330</td>
<td>$337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Science Board</td>
<td>$4</td>
<td>$4</td>
<td>$4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Inspector General</td>
<td>$15</td>
<td>$15</td>
<td>$15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total NSF</strong></td>
<td><strong>$7,818</strong></td>
<td><strong>$8,075</strong></td>
<td><strong>$7,066</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Totals may not add due to rounding.*
Lapse in Appropriations

• Proposal Preparation and Submission
• Impact on Deadline Dates
• Proposal Review
• Proposal Processing Time
• Post-Award Administration
PAPPG Implementation

- November 2, 2018 – Released to the community
- February 25, 2019 – (REVISED) PAPPG became effective
PAPPG Significant Changes

• Use of Research.gov for proposal submission: Policy versus on-screen instructions

• Expanded use of Dear Colleague Letters
  - “They also may be used to announce NSF’s interest in receiving proposals in specified topical areas for the following proposal types contained in Chapter II.E: Rapid Response Research (RAPID); Early-concept Grants for Exploratory Research (EAGER); Research Advanced by Interdisciplinary Science and Engineering (RAISE); and Conference.”

• International Branch Campuses of US Institutions of Higher Education and Foreign Organizations
  - If the proposal includes funding to be provided to an international branch campus of a U.S. institution of higher education (including through use of subawards and consultant arrangements), the proposer must explain the benefit(s) to the project of performance at the international branch campus and justify why the project activities cannot be performed at the U.S. campus.
  - If the proposal includes funding to a foreign organization (including through use of subawards and consultant arrangements) the proposer must explain why local support is not feasible and why the foreign organization can carry out the activity more effectively.
PAPPG Significant Changes (Cont’d)

- Proposal font, spacing and margin requirements
- Additional highlighting of NSF’s research misconduct policy
- New language encouraging the training of faculty in the responsible and ethical conduct of research
- Synergistic Activities clarification
  - A list of up to five distinct 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.
- Participant Support enhancements
- RAPID, EAGER and RAISE
PAPPG Significant Changes (Cont’d)

• Resubmission – Policy for programs using “no deadlines” for core programs
• Harassment policy – Implementation of Important Notice 144
• Final Project Report and Project Outcomes Report
• Micropurchase threshold increase to $10K
• Intellectual Property
Sexual Harassment Term and Condition

- New term and condition announced on September 21st
  - Applies to all new awards and funding amendments to existing awards issued on or after October 22, 2018
  - Requires the awardee to notify NSF:
    1. of any findings/determinations regarding the PI/PD or co-PI/co-PD that demonstrate a violation of awardee codes of conduct, policies, regulations or statutes relating to sexual harassment, other forms of harassment, or sexual assault; or
    2. if the awardee places the PI/PD, or co-PI/co-PD on administrative leave or imposes an administrative action relating to a finding or investigation of a violation of awardee policies, codes of conduct, statutes or regulations relating to sexual harassment, other forms of harassment, or sexual assault
Changes to the PAPPG to Address Harassment

- New coverage has been added to the conference proposal section
- Two new notification requirements have been added to the listing of required grantee notifications to NSF in accordance with the new term and condition
- Change in PI coverage now has Changes in PI at the Initiation of the Grantee Organization, and Changes in PI at the Initiation of NSF
- Non-Discrimination Statutes and Regulations coverage has been expanded to include a new paragraph that addresses the “NSF Policy on Sexual and Other Forms of Harassment”, as well as a reference to the new grant condition that implements the harassment policy
Harassment Notification Form

Organizational Notification of Harassment Form

Please use this web form to submit a notification of a PI's or co-PI's placement on administrative leave or a finding of harassment to the National Science Foundation's Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

Only the identification of the PI or co-PI is required. Personally identifiable information regarding any complainants or other individuals involved in the matter must not be included in the notification.

This form also should be used by subrecipients to provide any requisite notifications to NSF.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NSF Award Numbers: *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Principal Investigator (PI/Co-PI) being reported: *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awardee Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awardee Name: *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awardee Address: *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR): *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AOR Title: *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AOR Phone: *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AOR Email: *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DUNS Number: *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Notification: * Please select one of the following.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Finding/Determination that the reported individual has been found to have violated awardee policies or codes of conduct, statutes, regulations or executive orders relating to sexual harassment, other forms of harassment, or sexual assault; or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Placement by the awardee of the reported individual on administrative leave or the imposition of any administrative action on the PI or any co-PI by the awardee relating to any finding/determination or an investigation of an alleged violation of awardee policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanation/Description of Events: *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What Other Steps Have We Taken?

- NSF launched a website [nsf.gov/harassment](https://nsf.gov/harassment) to consolidate policies and procedures, promising practices, and FAQs relating to sexual and other forms of harassment
  - [https://www.nsf.gov/od/odi/docs/Sexual_Harassment_FAQs.pdf](https://www.nsf.gov/od/odi/docs/Sexual_Harassment_FAQs.pdf)
- This is the same website where notifications from the Authorized Organizational Representative are submitted to NSF
- Questions should be directed to the Office of Diversity & Inclusion (ODI) at programcomplaints@nsf.gov
Changes in Objective or Scope

Reminders

• The objectives or scope of a project may not be changed without prior NSF approval.

• NSF does not define what constitutes a change in objectives or scope.

• Requests must be submitted by the AOR via Research.gov

• Prior NSF approval also is required for postaward changes to the Facilities, Equipment & Other Resources section of the approved proposal that constitute changes in objectives or scope.

• Post-award rebudgeting of person months devoted to the project may require NSF prior approval if the change would cause the objectives or scope of the project to change.

See PAPPG, Chapter VII.B.1.a
Research and Ethical Conduct of Research

- NSF expects adherence to high standards of responsible and ethical conduct in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) research and education that NSF supports.

- All allegations of Research Misconduct should be reported promptly to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG).

- NSF awardees are subject to the responsible conduct of research requirement of the America COMPETES Act of 2007 (Public Law 110-69).

- NSF funds research and dissemination of findings on Cultivating Cultures for Ethical Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).
Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research (Cont’d)

• Upon proposal submission, AORs certify that the organization has a plan to provide RCR training to students and postdocs supported by NSF (see PAPPG, Chapters II.C.1.d and IX.B)

• NSF may review the plans upon request

• The Online Ethics Center (www.onlineethics.org) provides RCR resources to assist organizations in developing their training plans

• Each organization determines content, focus, and delivery method for training, tailored to specific needs

• NSF encourages training of faculty in the ethical conduct of research.
Modernizing Proposal Preparation and Submission

**Why?**
- Improve the user experience
- Reduce administrative burden
- Increase efficiencies
- Improve data quality and analytics
- Improve availability of proposal preparation and submission

**How?**
- Collect User Feedback
- Develop Incremental Functionality Incorporating User Feedback
- Release New Incremental Feature or Enhancement
Proposal Submission in Research.gov

Development Timeline to Date

- **April 2018**: Initial Incremental Release
- **September 2018**: Incremental Enhancement
- **February 2019**: Incremental Enhancement
- **Summer 2019**: Incremental Release

Ongoing collection and incorporation of research community feedback

- Green = Feedback from research community
- Purple = Incremental release
- Blue = Incremental enhancement
Proposal Submission in Research.gov

February 2019 Incremental Enhancement

• Capability to delete in-progress proposals, proposal file updates (PFUs), and budget revisions
• Ability for PI to select organization during proposal creation if the PI is affiliated with multiple organizations
• Enhanced error messages for Collaborators and Other Affiliations (COA) uploads

Summer 2019 Incremental Release

• Ability to prepare and submit collaborative proposals from one organization (collaborative proposals with subaward)
• Email notification to SPO/AOR when PI enables proposal access to SPO/AOR
Future Development Activities

- Additional Single Copy Documents
- Separately submitted collaborative proposals from multiple organizations
- Ability to withdraw submitted proposals
- Data pre-population (e.g., Biographical Sketch, Current and Pending Support)
- Additional proposal types (e.g., EAGER, RAPID)
- Additional submission types (e.g., Letters of Intent, ABR, Pre-proposal)
- Unique FastLane modules (e.g., SBIR/STTR, GRFP)
- All proposal documents and forms (e.g., Substitute Negotiator, DUE form)
- Solicitation-specific proposal sections (e.g., BIO classification form)
Proposal Submission in Research.gov

Why Prepare Proposals in Research.gov

• Integrated compliance checks for fonts, margins, and line spacing
• Specific checks on the budget screens and for COA uploads
• Real-time compliance feedback and alerts
• A few seconds to upload documents whereas FastLane can take 30-90 seconds for document upload
• Video job aids and PAPPG guidance are embedded on the various screens in the user interface
• Compared to FastLane, Research.gov is much easier to use and provides the user with less upload time and the ability to quickly create and update documents
Proposal Submission in Research.gov

Getting Help When Preparing Proposals in Research.gov

Project Description Upload Screenshot

Instructions to upload Project Description:
- File cannot exceed 15 pages total, and the Results from Prior NSF Support section must be 5 pages or less. (Please note: Certain solicitations may provide different guidance to follow. In these cases, please follow the solicitation and use [FastLane](https://www.fastlane.com/) to prepare the proposal)
- Maximum file size permitted is 10 MB
- Only 1 document can be uploaded
- Accepted file types include: Adobe PDF
- Your file must include separate section headings for Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts. If applicable, the section heading Results from Prior NSF Support must also be included. To be valid, a heading must be on the same line with another text on that line.
- Guidance should be followed on when to include Results from Prior NSF Support
- Hyperlinks (URLs) must not be used in the Project Description
- Your document should not contain page numbers, as they will be added automatically by the system.

Embedded links on the site to:
- PAPPG
- FAQs
- Instructional videos on relevant screens:
  - Initiating a Proposal
  - How to Manage Personnel & Senior Personnel Documents
  - How to Work on a Proposal Budget
  - How to Upload a Collaborators and Other Affiliations Document
  - How to Submit a Research Proposal in Research.gov

Additional Resources and Information
- [Research.gov About Proposal Preparation and Submission webpage](https://www.nsf.gov/about/proposal/prepprop.jsp) – Includes links to instructional videos and FAQs
- NSF Help Desk: 1-800-673-6188 (7:00 AM - 9:00 PM ET; Monday - Friday except federal holidays) or via email to [rgov@nsf.gov](mailto:rgov@nsf.gov)
- Sign up for Research.gov and FastLane listserv updates. Send a blank email to [system_updates-subscribe-request@listserv.nsf.gov](mailto:system_updates-subscribe-request@listserv.nsf.gov) to be automatically enrolled
Proposal Submission in Research.gov

If I prepare a proposal in Research.gov, will it be available in FastLane and vice versa?
• No, if you prepare a proposal in Research.gov, you will not be able access or edit it in FastLane and vice versa.

Why is there a margin error for the PDF I am uploading? My margins are set to one inch!
• Word processors convert to PDF files differently, and this can affect the margins. Here are some things to do and check:
  ▪ Remove any page numbers
  ▪ Review inserted images or shapes

Why do I receive a font warning upon document upload when the font was set to an acceptable font type and size using “Select All”?
• Much depends on the particular word processor used because of how word processors export files to PDF.

I am getting an error that I do not have a required document section heading (e.g., Broader Impacts) but it is included. What’s causing this error?
• A section heading must be on its own line without any other text in order for the validations to work.

Where are the Academic and Summer months on the Budget?
• Proposers only need to provide the total number of calendar months of support being requested per project year in the Budget section of the proposal.
• Additional information is available on the Research.gov Proposal Preparation Site Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) webpage and on the Electronic Research Administration (ERA) Forum website.
Account Management Modernization

- One-year anniversary of new account management system in Research.gov
- Account management is expanding in Research.gov with additional functionalities moving from FastLane and new functionalities planned for Research.gov in the future

**Development Timeline**

- **March 2018:** Initial Release in Research.gov to Organizational Groups
- **October 2018:** Account Removal Enhancement
- **Summer 2019:** Enhancement Moving Demographic Input to Research.gov
- **Future Account Management Functionalities**

Ongoing Account Management System Incremental Development

- Ongoing duplicate account reconciliations and group email alias account resolutions
- Contact the NSF Help Desk at 1-800-381-1532 or rgov@nsf.gov if you need to have your account fixed or updated
- If you have a pending deadline...CALL and tell us
Account Management FAQs

Why do I continue seeing "Verify Your Information" every time I sign into Research.gov?
• This message indicates that you have multiple accounts and have not contacted the NSF Help Desk to reconcile your accounts.

Why can't I use my alias email as a primary email or work email?
• Alias emails are typically shared by more than one user, and group alias email addresses are no longer supported for NSF accounts because each user must have a unique email address. Your primary email address is used for NSF account notifications, including password resets. It is critical that you have ongoing access to this primary email (e.g., a Gmail address) even if you move to another organization and your work email changes.

How do I manage my primary email address?
• Sign into Research.gov and navigate to My Profile on the top right of the screen. Click on View/Edit profile and select "Edit."

I am not able to add a subawardee organization to the proposal because there is no System for Award Management (SAM) registration. What do I do?
• If the subawardee organization is not registered in SAM, the PI or a representative at the subawardee organization should call the NSF Help Desk for assistance.

Additional information about NSF’s Account Management system, including FAQs and instructional videos, is available on the Research.gov About Account Management webpage.
Update of the NSF Award System

- NSF is modernizing and improving its Awards system used by the Division of Grants & Agreements (DGA) and the Division of Acquisition & Cooperative Support (DACS)
- Moving to a standardized, easy-to-use format for both grants and cooperative agreements
- No changes are needed from awardees: both old and new documents will be in Fastlane as usual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award Notice Types</th>
<th>March 2018</th>
<th>Summer 2018</th>
<th>Fall 2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Cost Extension</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amendments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Non-Funded Amendments</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funded Amendments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Awards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI Transfers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NSF Outreach

- PAPPG Update Webinar
- NSF Grants Conference Video Library
- Proposal & Award Policy Newsletters

https://nsfgrantsconferences.com
For More Information

Ask Early, Ask Often!

policy@nsf.gov