

Dear Colleague:

As you may know, the National Science Foundation (NSF) has developed a system called FastLane that utilizes Web technology to receive and to process proposal and award material electronically. Information concerning this system is located on the World Wide Web at <http://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/>. Recently, the Directorate for Mathematical and Physical Sciences (MPS) decided to implement FastLane to the fullest extent possible, starting with a phased-in approach in FY1999, and achieving full implementation in all programs by the end of FY2000.

The workload at NSF has grown dramatically over the past decade, while staffing numbers have remained relatively stable. With the enactment of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), and the emphasis on a more efficient, effective government, agencies are being asked to improve their processes in order to provide higher quality service to their customers. We believe that the use of modern information technology, specifically FastLane, can provide important opportunities for reducing workload and helping NSF respond to these increased demands. Based on experience to date with FastLane, we find electronic submission benefits the MPS staff and the submitters since it ensures that we do not introduce errors as we record the submitted data, and it allows us to access the data more quickly and easily. This has proved to be beneficial to NSF and the submitters by allowing us to respond to your requests in an efficient manner.

In order for MPS to fully utilize FastLane for the entire proposal and award process, each MPS Division has prepared an implementation plan consistent with this goal. A summary of these plans, including the programs, level of participation, and names of divisional FastLane contacts is shown in the matrix below. To facilitate FastLane implementation throughout the Directorate, we have appointed Ms. Florence Rabanal as the MPS FastLane Coordinator. She is interested in hearing your views about these upcoming procedural changes and is available to answer any questions you might have. She can be reached at frabanal@nsf.gov or by phone at 703-306-1998. As always, questions about the content of the proposal or programmatic procedures should be addressed to the relevant Program Director. Information about the MPS Directorate, its staff, programs, and updates to our FastLane implementation plans can be found at <http://www.nsf.gov/mps>.

We look forward to working with you in this important endeavor. We believe that it will enhance the proposal process for everyone.

With best wishes,

Robert A. Eisenstein, Assistant Director
Directorate for Mathematical and Physical
Sciences

MPS FastLane Implementation

The following provides a brief explanation of the major FastLane functions on which we are focusing. Complete instructions for using these functions, as well as all others, are provided on the FastLane Web Page at <http://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/>.

The following two options are currently available for proposal submission via FastLane and are being implemented on a program-by-program basis. Please refer to each division's information in the matrix below to determine which option applies to a particular program. If the program in MPS, which interests you, is not listed below, it DOES NOT mean that FastLane submission is unacceptable. In fact, we strongly encourage you to submit your proposal via FastLane.

1. **Full proposal submission including Project Description.** This is the preferred method and requires proposers to submit using Adobe Acrobat (version 3.01 or greater) or Aladdin GhostScript (version 5.10 or greater). No hard copy of the proposal is required for submission, except for the signed cover sheet. **The signed proposal Cover Sheet (NSF Form 1207) should be submitted within five working days after proposal submission to the following address:**

**National Science Foundation
DIS-FastLane Cover Sheet
4201 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA 22230**

2. **Partial submission involving Cover Sheet and Project Summary only.** Hard copies of the complete proposal are submitted separately.

Use of the following three FastLane functions will be required for all our programs, effective October 1, 1998.

1. **Electronic receipt of both ad-hoc and panel reviews.** Many programs already receive reviews via FastLane. With this notice, we will attempt to substantially increase usage of this function. In FY99, several programs will experiment with transmitting proposals for review via FastLane.
2. **Post-Award Notifications and Requests.** If you have an award at NSF, you and your Sponsored Research Office (SRO) may have already used FastLane to request NSF approval for a no-cost extension, to change the effective date, or to request a change in your grant's objective or scope. These and several other post-award administrative actions are available via this FastLane function.
3. **Progress and Final Project Reports.** A new Project Reporting System has been developed that allows PIs to electronically submit their annual and final project reports. Therefore, the NSF Form 1328, Annual NSF Grant Progress Report, and NSF Form 98A, Final Project Report, have been eliminated. Use of the new report formats is required effective October 1, 1998, and we strongly encourage electronic submission of these reports. For PIs unable to access FastLane, a paper format must be obtained from the NSF Clearinghouse, PO Box 218, Jessup, MD 20794-0218. NSF expects to require use of the electronic reporting system effective October 1, 1999.

The above dates do not apply to proposals sent to the Divisions in response to Foundation-wide solicitations, such as the Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) or Research Experiences for Undergraduates Sites (REU) programs. Those programs have specific target or deadline dates contained in their program announcements.

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