

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for Human and Social Dynamics (HSD) (NSF 05-520)

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Question: What type(s) of inter-institutional collaborations is NSF encouraging?

Answer: The HSD Program expects that proposers will put together the best team possible to carry out the project. Simultaneously, HSD encourages research-intensive and extensive universities to partner with other types of colleges and universities, especially ones serving underrepresented minority populations. Large research universities have an opportunity to expand and enrich research and education in Human and Social Dynamics beyond their institutions.

Question: If multiple institutions are cooperating in the proposed project, what are the mechanisms for submitting a proposal?

Answer: NSF has two mechanisms for submission of proposals from multiple institutions: as a single proposal, in which a single award is being requested (with subawards administered by the lead organization); or by simultaneous submission of proposals from different organizations, with each organization requesting a separate award. In either case, the lead organization's proposal must contain all of the requisite sections as a single package to be provided to reviewers (that will happen automatically when procedures below are followed.) All collaborative proposals must clearly describe the roles to be played by the other organizations, specify the managerial arrangements, and explain the advantages of the multi-organizational effort within the project description.

These collaborative proposals are described more fully in the Grant Proposal Guide (GPG) <http://www.nsf.gov/pubsys/ods/getpub.cfm?gpg>. The GPG also

includes instructions for submission of these types of proposals.

Question: One of the institutions involved in our project is in an EPSCoR state. How do we get EPSCoR certification?

Answer: In order to get an EPSCoR certification for a university or college located in an EPSCoR state, that institution must submit a proposal to NSF. Proposers in institutions in EPSCoR states, who are involved in a collaborative project, may want to submit a collaborative proposal from multiple organizations so that certification can be obtained. For more information on EPSCoR go to <http://www.ehr.nsf.gov/epscor>

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Question: How many proposals can an investigator submit this year to the HSD solicitation (NSF 05-520)?

Answer: No person may be a PI, Co-PI, or senior personnel on more than one proposal submitted to this solicitation (NSF-05-520). (NSF defines senior personnel as the principal and co-principal investigators responsible for the scientific or technical direction of the project and other faculty members involved in the project.) This restriction applies to all individuals on subawards who fall into the category of senior personnel.

Question: In submitting to HSD, does the university department of the PI matter?

Answer: No. The department within a university or non-profit research organization does not matter. The subject of the research does matter; the HSD competition stresses multidisciplinary so HSD proposals from many different university or organizational departments are anticipated.

Question: Can international institutions apply to HSD?

Answer: The HSD Program encourages international collaborations. HSD

understands that topics of interest will cross national boundaries and that U.S. investigators will and already do communicate and collaborate with colleagues throughout the world to accomplish their research and educational goals. The typical expectation is that all investigators on a project team will receive funding from their own countries' funding agencies, especially if the international collaboration is with researchers in developed countries (e.g., Europe, Britain, Japan) that have substantial resources of their own. However, the eligibility rules for submission to HSD do allow for international institutions to apply indirectly to the HSD Program — either as consultants on a lead proposal or as subawards. In both cases, justification is required of the unique capabilities offered or the specific research needs that will be accomplished. No indirect costs by international institutions are allowed. In addition, it is expected that the international budget will be small, relative to the overall size of the project budget.

Question: Are government labs or for-profit organizations allowed to submit HSD proposals?

Answer: Only US universities and colleges, and nonprofit organizations in the US, may submit proposals to this competition.

Question: Are graduate students or unaffiliated researchers eligible to apply to HSD?

Answer: Graduate students and unaffiliated researchers may be included on HSD proposals. Graduate students should not be included as PI, Co-PI, or senior personnel. Unaffiliated researchers need to go through an eligible institution to be involved in this HSD competition. (See the answer to the previous question.)

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Question: How will the HSD funds be divided across the NSF directorates and different subject areas of the solicitation?

Answer: We do not make a priori funding decisions across the areas even though each Directorate knows (once we get our budget from Congress) how much it is likely to spend on new HSD awards this year. HSD is an interdisciplinary, Foundation-wide activity and many awards receive funds from several Directorates. Decisions about funding are made after the proposals are reviewed, and after all Directorates have a chance to determine which proposals are the most interesting and promising to them. If the proposals in some particular area are of unusually high quality, that area may attract more money than expected in advance.

Question: May faculty request academic year salary in addition to or instead of summer salary?

Answer: NSF typically allows summer salary on its grants. (As stated in the Grant Proposal Guide, summer salary for faculty members on academic-year appointments is limited to no more than two-ninths of their regular academic-year salary.) However, in some cases academic year salary is allowed, either in addition to or instead of summer salary. Requests for academic year salary need to be justified in the proposal.

Question: What kinds of administrative costs may be included in the budget?

Answer: Many universities and colleges consider certain kinds of administrative costs, such as lab space and secretary salary, to be included in the indirect cost portion of the budget. Thus, they typically cannot be included as direct costs. If you have a question about what is allowable at your university or college, please check with your Sponsored Research Office. It is best situated to answer this question.

Question: May HSD proposal budgets include equipment?

Answer: Yes. Equipment that is necessary to carry out the proposed project may be requested and should be justified in the budget justification.

Question: How might the requested budget affect chances of success? Are there budgets that would be inappropriate because they are too large or too small?

Answer: HSD is an interdisciplinary, Foundation-wide activity. A high-quality, innovative proposal that addresses the substance of the HSD solicitation and has high societal value or impact has the best chance of being funded. Proposers should request the funding amounts necessary to carry out the work. Since there are maximum award amounts, investigators should take care to construct a project that is feasible within those budgetary limits. Please refer to “Section IV. Award Information” of the solicitation NSF 05-520, which provides information about maximum total awards based on type of project activity. **NOTE: Proposals that exceed the maximum for their type will be returned without review.**

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Question: What needs to be included in the Project Summary?

Answer: The latest Grant Proposal Guide (GPG) (available at <http://www.nsf.gov/pubsys/ods/getpub.cfm?nsf042>) specifies that the Project Summary must clearly address, in separate statements within the one-page limit, both the broader impacts and the intellectual merit. Proposals that do not address both merit review criteria in separate statements in the project summary will be returned without review. The GPG also states that the broader impacts must be addressed in the Project Description and described as an integral part of the narrative.

Question: Will you enforce the page limits on proposals?

Answer: Yes. See the HSD solicitation (NSF 05-520) section V.A "Full Proposal Instructions."

Question: Do citations and references count against the project description page limit?

Answer: No. They should be included in the References Cited section of the proposal.

Question: May I submit the same proposal to HSD and to another NSF program?

Answer: No. A unique proposal can be submitted only once to NSF. If the proposal is a duplicate of or substantially similar to a proposal already under consideration by NSF, it will be returned without review.

Question: Can I request an extension of time to submit a proposal?

Answer: No.

Question: What if my university computer is unavailable on a submission deadline?

Answer: Please avoid this problem by submitting early. If you choose not to submit until the last minute, it is at your own risk.

Question: What if there is an earthquake, fire or other disaster?

Answer: Please contact us at hsd@nsf.gov immediately. We will make determinations on a case-by-case basis.

Question: Should proposals from non-profit research organizations address the broader impacts criterion and the integration of research and education along with the intellectual merit?

Answer: Yes. Every proposal regardless of submitting institution will be evaluated on both NSF merit review criteria - the intellectual merit and the broader impacts of the proposed effort. Integrating research and education should be addressed as well. Non-profit research organizations should take special care to explain how their proposals will provide these benefits.

Question: What if listing my five most recent relevant papers would take more than two pages because these papers have several hundred authors each?

Answer: The two-page limit dominates over the need to include the entire list of authors for your relevant publications. If your publications include large numbers of co-authors and you choose to list all of the co-authors, you likely will be able to list only a few papers. Instead, you may want to list only the first few authors and add text reference to additional authors, such as "Jane Doe, Soo Kim, and 26 other authors, including <Your Name>."

Question: How do we submit supplementary documents?

Answer: Supplementary documents that are in accordance with the solicitation should be scanned into the Special Information and Supplementary Documentation section of the FastLane proposal.

Question: Can I be a reviewer for HSD this year?

Answer: The HSD competition is split into two parts this year. The Exploratory Research proposals and the HSD Research Community Development proposals form one part. The Full Research proposals form the second part. If you are on an HSD proposal submitted this year then you cannot be a reviewer for that part of the competition, but you can volunteer to be a reviewer for the other part. If you did not submit an HSD proposal this year in response to NSF 05-520, then you can volunteer to be a reviewer for either part. If you want to volunteer, notify the Program Officer in the list of contacts who is closest to your field of research. Include a URL for your biosketch and a brief description of your research expertise in your email. The program officer will contact you if your area of

expertise is relevant and we need reviewers in that area. If you don't see anyone in the list of contacts who you feel is appropriate, send the information to hsd@nsf.gov.

Question: Why is the Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE) the only one to appear as an option on the NSF cover sheet in FastLane? I normally apply to Geosciences and my proposal deals primarily with Geosciences?

Answer: The SBE Directorate is coordinating the management of all proposals submitted to the HSD Priority Area. Program Officers from all Directorates and Divisions will participate in the management of HSD proposals that fall into their areas of expertise. This allows flexibility in assignment of proposals to specific panels.

Question: Why does NSF only allow 4 co-PIs to be listed on the cover sheet of the Full Proposal? I would like for our project to have five (or more) co-PIs.

Answer: NSF policy limits the number of co-PIs that can be listed on the cover sheet of any Full Proposal to four. However, one should remember that when the Full Proposals are submitted, a collaborative proposal from multiple organizations may be done through simultaneous submission of proposals from the different organizations. In this way, four co-PIs could be listed on the cover sheet of each proposal. Alternatively, one could request a change in senior personnel through FastLane after an award is made if effective management of a project required such a change.

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