



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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NSF 19-060

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for NSF 19-562, Planning Grants for Engineering Research Centers (ERC)

GENERAL

1. What is the goal of the ERC planning grants?
2. Do I need to complete the proposed planning grant activities before I can submit a proposal to the ERC competition?
3. Will submitting or receiving a planning grant for an ERC be a requirement for participating in any forthcoming ERC competition?
4. Must the original ERC planning-grant topic/title and team (PIs and co-PIs) be carried forward to an actual ERC proposal?
5. Does the planning grant need to include multiple institutions like a normal ERC grant would need?
6. Are there any targeted research areas of interest to the NSF in this solicitation?
7. Does the ERC program support building international collaborations to work on issues that have societal impact globally as well as nationally?

ELIGIBILITY

8. Must the PI of a planning grant eventually be the PI of the proposed ERC, i.e. must the PI of the planning grant be from what will eventually be the ERC lead institution?
9. In regard to PI eligibility stated in the solicitation as "Who May Serve as PI: Engineering faculty whose main appointment is in an engineering school/college." Does this eligibility apply to all the PIs and co-PIs in the proposal?
10. Can a PI or institution who was previously awarded a planning grant apply for a new planning grant?
11. Can an institution with a current ERC apply for a planning grant?

12. Are there any limits on the number of proposals per PI and Co-PI?
13. If the planning grant requires several experts beyond the one PI and four Co-PIs, can the experts serve as senior personnel?

AWARD INFORMATION

14. What is the duration of a planning grant award?
15. Are there any budget limitations for planning grants?
16. What is the estimated number of awards?

PROPOSALS AND PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

17. What is the anticipated start date of the planning grants for ERC?
18. Can I use either FastLane or Grants.gov for my proposal submission?
19. Will separately submitted collaborative proposals be accepted for this competition?
20. Is the submission deadline flexible?

GENERAL

1. What is the goal of the ERC planning grants?

The Planning Grants for ERC solicitation is a mechanism for increasing capacity across the engineering academic community to develop ideas, facilitate team formation, and foster stakeholder community networks. As a result of planning grant activities, potential ERC teams should be better equipped to carry out center-scale convergent engineering research with large societal impact.

2. Do I need to complete the proposed planning grant activities before I can submit a proposal to the ERC competition?

No. The planning grant and the ERC competition are independent.

3. Will submitting or receiving a planning grant for an ERC be a requirement for participating in any forthcoming ERC competition?

No. Submitting or receiving a planning grant for an ERC will not be a requirement for participating in any forthcoming ERC competition.

4. Must the original ERC planning-grant topic/title and team (PIs and co-PIs) be carried forward to an actual ERC proposal?

No. Participation in the planning grants program should not be construed as a proposal for the next ERC competition, and the information presented in a submitted planning grant will not limit in any way a future ERC proposal submission.

5. Does the planning grant need to include multiple institutions like a normal ERC grant would need?

No, there are no requirements for institutional composition.

6. Are there any targeted research areas of interest to the NSF in this solicitation?

No, there are no priority areas established for the planning grants. However, the ERC program is placing greater emphasis on research that leads to societal impact, including convergent approaches, engaging stakeholder communities, and strengthening team formation, in response to the 2017 NASEM study recommendations. The planning grant initiative is designed to foster and facilitate the engineering community's thinking about how to form convergent research collaborations.

7. Does the ERC program support building international collaborations to work on issues that have societal impact globally as well as nationally?

Yes. The proposed ERC Team can have international collaborators as long as it addresses a problem with highly societal impact both nationally and globally. Foreign institutions may not serve as core partners for an ERC. However, individuals from foreign institutions may be listed as senior personnel. For further guidance about international collaboration, please refer to the [NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide \(PAPPG\)](#).

ELIGIBILITY

8. Must the PI of a planning grant eventually be the PI of the proposed ERC, i.e. must the PI of the planning grant be from what will eventually be the ERC lead institution?

No. The planning grants are intended to build capacity in the engineering community for center-scale, convergent engineering research. To participate in the upcoming ERC competition, one is not required to submit a planning grant proposal or to receive a planning grant. Prospective Principal Investigators are encouraged to read the solicitation carefully for planning grant proposal submission requirements and the ERC program priorities.

9. **In regard to PI eligibility stated in the solicitation as "Who May Serve as PI: Engineering faculty whose main appointment is in an engineering school/college." Does this eligibility apply to all the PIs and co-PIs in the proposal?**

No. The stated eligibility requirement applies only to the Lead PI for a Planning Grant proposal. The Co-PIs or Non-Lead PIs may be affiliated with any department, school, or college. This is purposefully different from PI eligibility for the ERC competition ([NSF 19-503](#)) so that the Planning Grants can better serve the intended purpose of building capacity to define and develop convergent problems within the engineering community, while providing flexibility at the ERC leadership level to facilitate convergence.

10. **Can a PI or institution who was previously awarded a planning grant apply for a new planning grant?**

Yes. There is no restriction on PIs or institutions previously awarded a planning grant.

11. **Can an institution with a current ERC apply for a planning grant?**

Yes. There are no restrictions on awarding planning grants to proposing institutions with currently active ERCs.

12. **Are there any limits on the number of proposals per PI and Co-PI?**

Yes. An individual may be listed as a PI or Co-PI on only one planning grant proposal.

13. **If the planning grant requires several experts beyond the one PI and four Co-PIs, can the experts serve as senior personnel?**

Yes. The proposals must comply with the current [NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide \(PAPPG\)](#).

AWARD INFORMATION

14. **What is the duration of a planning grant award?**

The planning grant is for one year.

15. **Are there any budget limitations for planning grants?**

The proposed budget for each planning grant should not exceed \$100,000. The awarded proposals will not be given additional supplemental funding.

16. **What is the estimated number of awards?**

The number of awards is dependent upon the proposals received and the degree to

which proposals meet the solicitation goals, NSF merit review criteria, and solicitation-specific review criteria. The expected number of awards is 30 to 40.

PROPOSALS AND PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

17. What is the anticipated start date of the planning grants for ERC?

The anticipated start date of the planning grants is September 1, 2019.

18. Can I use either FastLane or Grants.gov for my proposal submission?

Yes. The option to use either FastLane or Grants.gov has been provided for this competition. The policy and procedural guidance contained in the NSF Grants.gov Application Guide should be followed when preparing and submitting proposals to NSF via Grants.gov.

19. Will separately submitted collaborative proposals be accepted for this competition?

No, separately submitted collaborative proposals will not be accepted for this competition and subawards should be used if funding goes to non-lead institutions.

20. Is the submission deadline flexible?

No.