



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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NSF 20-109

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for [NSF 20-087](#), Dear Colleague Letter (DCL): Removal of Deadlines for Proposals for Small Projects Submitted to the Core Research Programs in the Directorate for Computer and Information Science and Engineering

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period our intended submission date?

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1. What does "no deadline" mean?

Beginning October 1, 2020, the core research programs in the Directorate for Computer and Information Science and Engineering's (CISE) divisions of Computing and Communication Foundations (CCF), Computer and Network Systems (CNS), and Information and Intelligent Systems (IIS) will accept Small proposals (up to \$500,000 and three years) at any time throughout the year. There will no longer be any restriction on when a Small proposal can be submitted for consideration to the core research programs. Note that this change to "no-deadlines" does not apply to proposals for Medium or Large projects submitted to the CISE core research programs, nor to proposals submitted to the Office of Advanced Cyberinfrastructure's (OAC) Core Research program.

2. Is the removal of deadlines a pilot or a permanent change?

The change is intended for the longer term.

3. What are "core research programs"?

Core research programs are standing programs that accept proposals across the range of CISE areas, as identified in [NSF 20-591](#). These core programs are generally managed by a single division/office (i.e. CCF, CNS, IIS and OAC) and until FY21 have had annual submission windows. With the publication of [NSF 20-591](#), proposals in the Small category (up to \$500,000, with a duration of up to three years) can be submitted at any time throughout the year. While the number, names and topics of core programs may evolve, at the time of posting these FAQs, the CISE core programs that are removing deadlines for Small proposals include:

CCF: Algorithmic Foundations (AF), Communications and Information Foundations (CIF), Foundations of Emerging Technologies (FET), and Software and Hardware Foundations (SHF);

CNS: CNS Core; and

IIS: Human-Centered Computing (HCC), Information Integration and Informatics (III), and Robust Intelligence (RI).

Note that this change does not apply to proposals for Medium or Large

projects submitted to the CISE core research programs, nor to proposals for projects submitted to the OAC Core Research program.

4. When will no deadline submissions begin?

Beginning October 1, 2020, full proposals may be submitted at any time for the Small project class noted in [NSF 20-591](#). Other project classes have deadlines as described in the solicitation.

5. Does the change to no-deadlines also apply to other solicitations in CISE at this time?

This change applies to the programs named in this solicitation only. Please consult relevant solicitations for policies regarding deadlines for other programs.

6. Why is this change being made?

By accepting proposals at any time, CISE is affording more time to prepare proposals, build strong collaborations, and to think more creatively without the pressure of a deadline. Spreading proposal submissions more evenly over the year may also reduce the burden on principal investigators (PIs), reviewers, and proposing organizations. This approach for the CISE core research programs is consistent with other efforts across NSF to remove deadlines in many research programs.

7. Will proposals still be panel and/or ad hoc reviewed?

As is present practice, proposals will undergo panel and/or ad hoc review as determined by the cognizant NSF program director(s). NSF relies on a merit-review process that incorporates consideration of both the intellectual merit and broader impacts of the proposed project. NSF Program Directors make every effort to conduct a fair, competitive, transparent merit-review process for the selection of projects to be funded.

8. Will the community be told the dates of panels?

Consistent with NSF policy, panel dates will not be announced to PIs.

9. Will it take longer to receive a decision on my proposal?

Based on experience with other programs that have undergone this switch, no change in average time to decision and release of reviews is expected with this transition to no-deadlines.

10. Will my chances of being funded be higher if I submit near the beginning, middle, or end of a given fiscal year?

Program officers will ensure that funding is allocated based on proposal quality, regardless of when during the year the proposal is submitted.

11. Do I need to alert the program if I intend to submit or when I submit a proposal?

No, PIs are not required to contact a program director before submitting a research proposal to a core program. However, the directorate recommends that PIs contact a cognizant NSF program director if they have questions about program fit.

12. Can I serve on a panel if I have submitted a proposal, or plan to submit a proposal to the solicitation?

Possibly. You may be contacted to serve if you are eligible per conflict-of-interest rules.

13. Can I revise and resubmit a declined proposal right away or do I have to wait a certain length of time to resubmit it?

A declined proposal may be resubmitted, but only after it has undergone substantial revision, as determined by the cognizant NSF program director. There is no specific time required between submissions. However, any proposal that is a duplicate of, or substantially similar to, a previous proposal will be returned without review (see [NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide \(PAPPG\)](#) Chapter IV.E).

A revision and resubmission of a proposal counts against the limits on number of submissions, so proposers should be cognizant of the time constraints associated with their proposal submissions. See question [#14](#) below.

14. Is there a limit on how many proposals I can submit as PI, co-PI, or senior personnel?

Yes. Individuals may participate as PI, co-PI or senior personnel in no more than two core proposals submitted during any 12-month period, starting with the publication of [NSF 20-591](#). This includes all project classes named in the solicitation: Small projects (which do not have deadlines), and Medium, Large, and OAC Core Research projects (which continue to have deadlines). The proposal limit will be based on the date of submission over a rolling 12-month window for each individual regardless of whether those proposals are pending, awarded or declined. As an example, if a PI submits a proposal to a CISE core program in November and another one the following March, then that PI may not submit another proposal to a CISE core program until the following November.

15. A team of investigators intend to submit a proposal. What will happen to our proposal if at least one member of the team has reached the submission limit within the 12-month period our intended submission date?

Up on submission of a proposal (including collaborative proposals from multiple institutions), the submission history of the PIs, co-PIs and senior personnel will be checked for the 12 months preceding the submission date. If the submission limits are violated for any PI, co-PI or senior personnel named in the proposal, then that proposal (and associated collaborative proposals) will be returned without review. The look-back window will not stretch prior to the date of publication of this solicitation, [NSF 20-591](#), so for purposes of calculating limits, proposers need not count submissions prior to the issuance of this solicitation. Proposers should delay submission of their proposals at least until their eligibility requirements can be satisfied.

16. What happens with proposals that are withdrawn by the PI or returned without review?

Proposals that are withdrawn by the PI or their Sponsored Research Office (SRO) prior to commencement of merit review, or those that are returned without review by NSF, will not count as submitted proposals for purposes of the limit of two proposals over a rolling 12-month window. To enable seamless processing of proposals, PIs are encouraged to carefully check solicitation requirements before submission.