Panelists

Jean Feldman
Head, Policy Office, Office of Budget, Finance & Award Management, Division of Institution & Award Support

George Hazelrigg
Deputy Division Director, Directorate for Engineering, Division of Civil, Mechanical & Manufacturing Innovation

Sonia Esperança
Program Director, Directorate for Geosciences, Division of Earth Sciences

Nigel Sharp
Program Director, Directorate for Mathematical & Physical Sciences, Division of Astronomical Sciences
Topics Covered

- Find Funding Opportunities
- Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide
- Types of Proposal Submissions
- Sections of an NSF Proposal
- Postdoctoral Mentoring Plans
- Data Management Plans
Find Funding Opportunities
Find Funding Opportunities

NSF Funding & Research Community

SPECIAL NOTICES

NSF Strategic Plan for FY 2014-2018
New NSF Proposal & Award Policies and Procedures Guide Issued, Effective for Proposals Submitted or Due On or After February 24, 2014

EVENT CALENDAR

17 JUN NSF ADVANCE Program New Solicitation Webinars WEBCAST
19 JUN CDL - The Future of Computing - Mediated Research and Innovation WEBCAST

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Search Funding Opportunities
Enter search term

Search by Program Area
Select One

VIEW ALL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide
Prepare a Proposal
Upcoming Due Dates
Submit Proposal to FastLane
NSF Website Organization
NSF Award Search

Awards Simple Search

Search award for: [ ]

Use double quotes for exact search. For example "water vapor".

Active Awards [ ] Expired Awards [ ]

Quick Links

FUNDING AWARDS DISCOVERIES NEWS PUBLICATIONS STATISTICS ABOUT NSF FASTLANE

Simple Search Advanced Search Popular Searches Download Awards Send Comments Award Search Help

Other Ways to Find Funding

Use Grants.gov’s search feature
What is the Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide?

The Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG) contains documents relating to NSF's proposal and award process. It has been designed for use by both our customer community and NSF staff and consists of two parts:
What is the Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide?

Part I is NSF’s proposal preparation and submission guidelines – the NSF Grant Proposal Guide (GPG) and the NSF Grants.gov Application Guide.
What is the Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide?

Part II is NSF’s award and administration guidelines – the documents used to guide, manage, and monitor the award and administration of grants and cooperative agreements made by NSF.
Grant Proposal Guide

• Provides guidance for preparation and submission of proposals to NSF

• Describes process – and criteria – by which proposals will be reviewed

• Outlines reasons why a proposal may be returned without review

• Describes process for withdrawals, returns, and declinations
Types of Funding Opportunities

Program Descriptions
Proposals for a Program Description must follow the instructions in the GPG.

Program Announcements
Proposals for a Program Announcement must follow the instructions in the GPG.

Program Solicitations
Proposals must follow the instructions in the Program Solicitation; the instructions in the GPG apply unless otherwise stated in the solicitation.

Dear Colleague Letters
Dear Colleague Letters are notifications of opportunities or special competitions for supplements to existing NSF awards.
What to Look for in a Program Announcement or Solicitation

- Goal of Program
- Eligibility
- Special proposal preparation and/or award requirements
Sample Cover Page of a Solicitation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation (LSAMP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **PROGRAM SOLICITATION**  
**NSF 12-564** |
| **REPLACES DOCUMENT(S):**  
**NSF 11-543** |
| **National Science Foundation** |
| Directorate for Education & Human Resources  
Division of Human Resource Development |
| **Full Proposal Deadline(s)** (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time): |
| August 28, 2012  
Bridge to the Doctorate |
| October 05, 2012  
First Friday in October, Annually Thereafter  
Bridge to the Doctorate |

Program Solicitation Number

NSF Directorates and Offices providing funding for this opportunity
Sample Cover Page of a Solicitation

**Award Information**

**Anticipated Type of Award:** Standard Grant or Continuing Grant or Cooperative Agreement

**Estimated Number of Awards:** 60

Up to 60 awards will be made across fiscal 2012 and 2013.

In FY 2012, up to 20 Bridge to the Doctorate (BD) grants will be made.

In FY 2013, 20 Alliance grants (this includes 5 B2B), up to 15 Bridge to the Doctorate (BD) grants and up to 5 Broadening Participation Research (BPR) in STEM Education grants.

**Anticipated Funding Amount:** $20,000,000

$20,000,000 across fiscal years 2012 and 2013; Subject to the availability of funds.

**Number of awards funded by the program per year**

**Funds available to the program per year**
# Eligibility Information

## Organization Limit:

Proposals may only be submitted by the following:

- Universities and Colleges - Universities and two- and four-year colleges (including community colleges) accredited in, and having a campus located in the US, acting on behalf of their faculty members. Such organizations also are referred to as academic institutions.

## PI Limit:

**Alliance (including B2B) and BD:** To promote institutional commitments to increase the quality and quantity of under-represented minorities in STEM disciplines, the President or Provost of the lead institution should serve as the Principal Investigator. A full explanation should be provided for a PI designation in variance with this requirement. Co-principal investigators from partner institutions may be designated, as appropriate, for the project.

**Broadening Participation Research in STEM Education:** Eligible PI/co-PI(s) for proposals applying for educational research or evaluation support should be the individual conducting or responsible for the research or evaluation project. Other potential co-Principal Investigators include collaborators on the research project. At least one of the PI's must have experience in educational research.

## Limit on Number of Proposals per Organization:

- **Alliances (including B2B) and BD:** 1
- **Broadening Participation Research in STEM Education:** No limit.

## Limit on Number of Proposals per PI:

- **Alliances (including B2B):** 1
- **Bridge to the Doctorate:** 1
- **Broadening Participation Research in STEM Education:** No limit.
Types of Proposal Submissions

No Deadlines – Proposals may be submitted at any time

Proposers should allow adequate time for NSF review and processing of proposals (see GPG Chapter I.H for further information). Many NSF programs accept proposals at any time. Other programs, however, establish due dates for submission of proposals. The following types of due dates are utilized by NSF:

1. **Target dates**: dates after which proposals will still be accepted, although they may miss a particular panel or committee meeting.

2. **Deadline dates**: dates after which proposals be returned without review by NSF. The deadline date will be waived only in extenuating circumstances. Such a deviation only may be authorized in accordance with GPG Chapter II.A.
Types of Proposal Submissions

Target Dates – Talk to the Program Office if you think you might miss the date

F. When to Submit Proposals

Proposers should allow adequate time for NSF review and processing of proposals (see GPG Chapter 1.H for further information). Many NSF programs accept proposals at any time. Other programs, however, establish due dates for submission of proposals. The following types of due dates are utilized by NSF:

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Types of Proposal Submissions

Deadline Dates – Proposals will not be accepted after this date and time (5 p.m. submitter’s local time)

F. When to Submit Proposals

Proposers should allow adequate time for NSF review and processing of proposals (see GPG Chapter I.H for further information). Many NSF programs accept proposals at any time. Other programs, however, establish due dates for submission of proposals. The following types of due dates are utilized by NSF:

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Types of Proposal Submissions

Submission Windows – Closing date converts to a deadline date

3. **Submission windows:** designated periods of time during which proposals will be accepted for review by NSF. It is NSF’s policy that the end date of a submission window converts to, and is subject to, the same policies as a deadline date.
Types of Proposal Submissions

Letters of Intent – Enables better management of reviewers and panelists

1. Letter of Intent

Some NSF program solicitations require or request submission of a letter of intent (LOI) in advance of submission of a full proposal. A LOI is not binding. The predominant reason for its use is to help NSF program staff to gauge the size and range of the competition, enabling earlier selection and better management of reviewers and panelists. In addition, the information contained in a LOI is used to help avoid potential conflicts of interest in the review process.

A LOI normally contains the PI’s and co-PI’s names, a proposed title, a list of possible participating organizations (if applicable), and a synopsis that describes the work in sufficient detail to permit an appropriate selection of reviewers. A LOI is not externally evaluated or used to decide on funding. The requirement to submit a LOI will be identified in the program solicitation, and such letters are submitted electronically via the NSF FastLane System.
Types of Proposal Submissions

Preliminary Proposals – Sometimes required, sometimes optional

2. Preliminary Proposal

Some NSF program solicitations require or request submission of a preliminary proposal in advance of submission of a full proposal. The two predominant reasons for requiring submission of a preliminary proposal are to:

- reduce the proposers’ unnecessary effort in proposal preparation when the chance of success is very small. This is particularly true of exploratory initiatives where the community senses that a major new direction is being identified, or competitions that will result in a small number of actual awards; and
- increase the overall quality of the full submission.
Proposals Not Accepted

- Proposals that do not contain the following required sections will not be accepted by FastLane:
  - Project Summary
  - Project Description
  - References Cited
  - Biographical Sketch(es)
  - Budget
  - Budget Justification
  - Current and Pending Support
  - Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources
  - Data Management Plan
  - Postdoctoral Mentoring Plan (if applicable)

- If submission instructions do not require one of the above sections to be provided, proposers must insert text or upload a document in that section of the proposal that states, “Not Applicable.”
Before You Begin to Write

• Get to know yourself - write a strategic plan for your life

• A strategic plan is a roadmap
  - Where are you?
  - Where do you want to go?
  - How can you get there?

• Base your plan on actions over which you have control

• Fit your research into the context of your strategic plan

• Learn to say “no” where appropriate
Sections of an NSF Proposal

Cover Sheet (Required)
Many of the boxes on the cover sheet are electronically prefilled as part of the FastLane login process.

Example from FastLane
Sections of an NSF Proposal

Project Summary (Required)
Text boxes must contain an Overview and Statements on Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts.

Proposals that do not separately address the Overview and both merit review criteria in text boxes will not be accepted by FastLane.

Project summaries with special characters must be uploaded as a PDF document.

Text from the GPG

- Beginning Investigator (See GPG I.G.2)
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (See GPG II.C.1.e)
- Proprietary or Privileged Information (See GPG I.D.3 & II.C.1.d)
- Historic Places (See GPG II.C.2.i)
- Vertebrate Animals (See GPG II.D.4)
- Human Subjects (See GPG II.D.7)
- International Activities Country Name(s) (See GPG II.C.2.i)

b. Project Summary

Each proposal must contain a summary of the proposed project not more than one page in length. The Project Summary consists of an overview, a statement on the intellectual merit of the proposed activity, and a statement on the broader impacts of the proposed activity.

The overview includes a description of the activity that would result if the proposal were funded and a statement of objectives and methods to be employed. The statement on intellectual merit should describe the potential of the proposed activity to advance knowledge. The statement on broader impacts should describe the potential of the proposed activity to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes.

The Project Summary should be written in the third person, informative to other persons working in the same or related fields, and, insofar as possible, understandable to a scientifically or technically literate lay reader. It should not be an abract of the proposal.

Proposals that do not contain the Project Summary, including an overview and separate statements on intellectual merit and broader impacts will not be accepted by FastLane or will be returned without review.

If the Project Summary contains special characters it may be uploaded as a Supplementary Document. Project Summaries submitted as a PDF must be formatted with separate headings for the overview, statement on the intellectual merit of the proposed activity, and statement on the broader impacts of the proposed activity. Failure to include these headings may result in the proposal being returned without review.

Additional instructions for preparation of the Project Summary are available in FastLane.

c. Table of Contents

A Table of Contents is automatically generated for the proposal by FastLane. The proposer cannot edit this form.

d. Project Description (Including Results from Prior NSF Support)

(i) Content

The Project Description should provide a clear statement of the work to be undertaken and must include: objectives for the period of the proposed work and expected significance; relation to longer-term goals of the PI’s project; and relation to the present state of knowledge in the field, to work in progress by the PI under other support and to
Project Summary Template

Paragraph 1: “The research objective of this proposal is… The approach will be…” (Focus – do not begin with a State-of-the-Union address)

Paragraph 2: Intellectual Merit – describe the contribution to the field of science or engineering. What new or additional research will the proposed work enable?

Paragraph 3: Broader Impact – describe the benefit to society or importance to the nation of the proposed work assuming success (this is not an imperative to teach quantum chromodynamics to a fourth grade class)

For CAREER proposals, be sure to include educational objectives and approach

Do not include irrelevant materials
Sections of an NSF Proposal

Project Description (Required)
Proposers should address what they want to do, why they want to do it, how they plan to do it, how they will know if they succeed, and what benefits could accrue if the project is successful.

A separate section within the narrative must include a discussion of the broader impacts of the proposed activities.

Text from the GPG
What is research?

- *Research is the process of finding out something we (everyone) don’t already know.*
- NSF funds scientific research:
  - Methodical
  - Repeatable
  - Verifiable
- If your research objective is about an artifact (a device, product, system, process), it’s probably development.
- If your research objective is about knowledge, it’s probably research.
Four Ways to Frame a Research Objective

• The research objective of this proposal is to test the hypothesis $H$.

• The research objective of this proposal is to measure parameter $P$ with accuracy $A$.

• The research objective of this proposal is to prove conjecture $C$.

• The research objective of this proposal is to apply method $M$ from field $Q$ to solve problem $X$ in field $R$. 
The Research Plan

• A comprehensive plan to accomplish the stated objective, e.g., a plan to test an hypothesis
  - What are the key variables?
  - Over what range of variables will the hypothesis be tested?
  - How many tests are appropriate?
• Understand what comprises a valid scientific hypothesis—it must be testable and falsifiable
• Ref: Karl Popper
A Word on Ethics

• Persons submitting proposals to the Federal government are held to high standards of conduct

• Inappropriate conduct: plagiarism, falsification, fabrication, double charging, release of confidential information

• Maximum penalty: $250,000 fine and 5 years in prison (Grimes)

• Rules apply to annual/final reports

• Many PIs have ruined their careers through unethical conduct, don’t be the next one
Sections of an NSF Proposal

References Cited (Required)
Reference information is required, and proposers must follow accepted scholarly practices in providing citations for source materials.

Text from the GPG
Biographical Sketches (Required)
Biographical sketches are required for all senior project personnel and must not exceed two pages in length, per individual.

Text from the GPG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(f) Biographical Sketch(es)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) Senior Personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A biographical sketch (limited to two pages) is required for each individual identified as senior project personnel. (See GPG Exhibit II-7 for the definitions of Senior Personnel.) The following information must be provided in the order and format specified below. Inclusion of additional information beyond that specified below may result in the proposal being returned without review. Do not submit personal information such as home address; home telephone, fax, or cell phone numbers; home e-mail address; date of birth; citizenship; drivers’ license numbers; marital status; personal hobbies; and the like. Such personal information is irrelevant to the merits of the proposal. If such information is included, NSF will make every effort to prevent unauthorized access to such material, but the Foundation is not responsible or in any way liable for the release of such material. (See also GPG Chapter III.G).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If biographical sketch(es) are not required, insert text or upload a document in this section of the proposal that states, “Not Applicable.” In FastLane, if biographical sketches for all senior personnel are uploaded in a single PDF file associated with the PI, insert text or upload a document that states, “Not Applicable” for any co-PI or Senior Person.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) Professional Preparation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A list of the individual’s undergraduate and graduate education and postdoctoral training as indicated below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undergraduate Institution(s)</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Degree &amp; Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Institution(s)</td>
<td>Major</td>
<td>Degree &amp; Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postdoctoral Institution(s)</td>
<td>Area</td>
<td>Inclusive Dates (years)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(b) Appointments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A list, in reverse chronological order, of all the individual’s academic/professional appointments beginning with the current appointment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(c) Products</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A list of: (i) up to five products most closely related to the proposed project; and (ii) up to five other significant products, whether or not related to the proposed project. Acceptable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sections of an NSF Proposal

Budget (Required)
Each proposal must contain a budget for each year of support requested. The budget justification should be no more than three pages for all years of the project combined.

Example from FastLane

![Budget Table Example](image-url)
Budgetary Guidelines

Information regarding budgetary guidelines can be found in both the GPG and in the Award & Administration Guide (AAG), as well as NSF program solicitations.

Amounts should be:

- Realistic and reasonable
- Well-justified and should establish need
- Consistent with program guidelines

Eligible costs consist of:

- Personnel
- Equipment
- Travel
- Participant support
- Other direct costs (e.g., subawards, consultant services, computer services, and publication costs)
NSF Cost Sharing Policy

• Inclusion of voluntary *committed* cost sharing is prohibited in solicited & unsolicited proposals.
  
  – To be considered voluntary committed cost sharing, the cost sharing must meet all of the standards of [2 CFR § 215.23](#), to include identification of cost sharing on the NSF budget.
  – Line M will be “grayed out” in FastLane.

• Organizations may, at their own discretion, continue to contribute any amount of voluntary uncommitted cost sharing to NSF-sponsored projects.
Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources (Required)
This section of the proposal is used to assess the adequacy of the organizational resources available to perform the effort proposed.

Instructions: Upload an aggregated description of the internal and external resources (both physical and personnel) that the organization and its collaborators will provide to the project, should it be funded. Describe only those resources that are directly applicable. The description should be narrative in nature and must not include any quantifiable financial information. If there are no Facilities, Equipment, or Other Resources identified, a statement to that effect should be indicated in this section and uploaded into FastLane. See GPG II.C.2.i for more information.

Upload File
Sections of an NSF Proposal

Current and Pending Support (Required)
This section of the proposal calls for information on all current and pending support for ongoing projects and proposals.

Example from FastLane
Sections of an NSF Proposal

Special Information and Supplementary Documentation

This segment should alert NSF officials to unusual circumstances that require special handling; more information can be found in the GPG Chapter II.C.2.j.

Text from the GPG

Although these resources are not considered cost sharing as defined in 2 CFR § 215.23 (OMB Circular A-110), the Foundation does expect that the resources identified in the Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources section will be provided, or made available, should the proposal be funded. AAG Chapter II.B.1 specifies procedures for use by the awardee when there are postaward changes to objective, scope or methodology.

If there are no Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources to describe, insert text or upload a document in this section of the proposal that states, "Not Applicable."

j. Special Information and Supplementary Documentation

Except as specified below, special information and supplementary documentation must be included as part of the Project Description (or part of the budget justification), if it is relevant to determining the quality of the proposed work. Information submitted in the following areas is not considered part of the 15-page Project Description limitation. This Special Information and Supplementary Documentation section also is not considered an appendix. Specific guidance on the need for additional documentation may be obtained from the organization’s sponsored projects office or in the references cited below.

- Postdoctoral Researcher Mentoring Plan. Each proposal[33] that requests funding to support postdoctoral researchers[33] must include, as a supplementary document, a description of the mentoring activities that will be provided for such individuals. If a Postdoctoral Researcher Mentoring Plan is required, FastLane will not permit submission of a proposal if the Plan is missing. In no more than one page, the mentoring plan must describe the mentoring that will be provided to all postdoctoral researchers supported by the project, irrespective of whether they reside at the submitting organization, any subawardee organization, or at any organization participating in a simultaneously submitted collaborative project. Proposers are advised that the mentoring plan may not be used to circumvent the 15-page project description limitation. See GPG Chapter II.D.4 for additional information on collaborative proposals. Mentoring activities provided to postdoctoral researchers supported on the project will be evaluated under the Broader Impacts review criterion.

Examples of mentoring activities include, but are not limited to: career counseling; training in preparation of grant proposals, publications and presentations; guidance on ways to improve teaching and mentoring skills; guidance on how to effectively collaborate with researchers from diverse backgrounds and disciplinary areas; and training in responsible professional practices.

- Plans for data management and sharing of the products of research. Proposals must include a supplementary document of no more than two pages labeled "Data Management Plan". This supplement should describe how the proposal will conform to NSF policy on the dissemination and sharing of research results (see AAG Chapter VI.D.4), and may include:

1. the types of data, samples, physical collections, software, curriculum materials, and other materials to be produced in the course of the project;
Special Information and Supplementary Documentation

• Letters of Support versus Letters of Commitment

• Postdoctoral Mentoring Plans

• Data Management Plans
Mentoring for Postdoctoral Researchers

• Proposals that include funding to support postdoctoral researchers must include a description of the mentoring activities that will be provided for such individuals.

• Proposed mentoring activities will be evaluated as part of the merit review process, under NSF’s Broader Impacts merit review criterion.
Mentoring for Postdoctoral Researchers

• Mentoring activities may include:
  – Providing career counseling, training in the preparation of grant proposals, or training in responsible professional practices
  – Developing publications and presentations
  – Offering guidance on techniques to improve teaching and mentoring skills
  – Providing counseling on how to effectively collaborate with researchers from diverse backgrounds and disciplinary areas
Mentoring for Postdoctoral Researchers

• Proposals that identify a postdoc on the budget but do not include a maximum one-page mentoring plan as a supplementary document will be prevented from submission in FastLane.

• For collaborative proposals, the lead organization must submit a mentoring plan for all postdoctoral researchers supported under the entire collaborative project.
Data Management Plan Requirements

- All proposals are required to include, as a supplementary doc, a data management plan of up to two pages.
- Plan should describe how the proposal will conform to NSF policy on dissemination and sharing of research results.
- A valid Data Management Plan may include only the statement that no detailed plan is needed, as long a clear justification is provided.
- Plan will be reviewed as part of the Intellectual Merit and/or Broader Impacts of the proposal.
Data Management Plan Requirements

Dissemination and Sharing of Research Results

NSF Data Sharing Policy

Investigators are expected to share with other researchers, at no more than incremental cost and within a reasonable time, the primary data, samples, physical collections, and other supporting materials created or gathered in the course of work under NSF grants. Grantees are expected to encourage and facilitate such sharing. See Award & Administration Guide (AAG) Chapter 11.2.5.

NSF Data Management Plan Requirements

Proposals submitted on or after January 1, 2011, must include a supplementary document of no more than two pages labeled “Data Management Plan.” This supplementary document should describe how the proposal will conform to NSF policy on the dissemination and sharing of research results. See Grant Proposal Guide (GPG) Chapter 11.2 for full policy implementation.

Requirements by Directorate, Office, Division, Program, or other NSF Unit

Links to data management requirements and plans relevant to specific Directorates, Offices, Divisions, Programs, or other NSF units, are provided below. If guidance specific to the program is not provided, then the requirements established in Grant Proposal Guide, Chapter 11.2 apply.

Please note that if a specific program solicitation provides guidance on preparation of data management plans, such guidance must be followed.

- Engineering Directorate (EIE)
  - Directorate-wide Guidance
- Geological Sciences Directorate (GES)
  - Division of Earth Sciences
  - Integrated Ocean Drilling Program
  - Division of Ocean Sciences
- Mathematical and Physical Sciences Directorate (MPS)
  - Division of Astronomical Sciences
  - Division of Atmospheric Sciences
  - Division of Chemistry
  - Division of Polar Programs
  - Division of Mathematical Sciences
  - Division of Physics
- Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Directorate (SBE)
  - Directorate-wide Guidance

Data Management & Sharing Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) - updated November 30, 2018

For More Information

Ask Early, Ask Often!

nsf.gov/staff
nsf.gov/staff/orglist.jsp
nsf.gov/about/career_opps/rotators/index.jsp