NSF Proposal & Award Policies and Procedures (PAPPG): Significant Changes and Clarifications

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Overview

- Effective December 26, 2014


- Impacts both the Grant Proposal Guide and the Award and Administration Guide
Grant Proposal Guide

Special Exceptions to the Deadline Date Policy

- **Natural or Anthropogenic Disaster**
  - Request to submit late should be granted in advance of the deadline when possible
  - Request should be sent to the cognizant Program Officer
  - Decisions will be made on a case by case basis
  - Generally, NSF permits extension of deadline by five business days
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Special Exceptions to the Deadline Date Policy, continued

• Closure of NSF
  – Due to inclement weather or other reason
  – Deadline(s) occurring during the closure will be extended to the following business day after the closure ends
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Non Compliant Proposals

• Proposals will not be accepted or will be returned without review for the following reasons:
  – Inappropriate for funding by NSF
  – Submitted with insufficient lead-time before the activity is scheduled to begin
  – Proposer was not invited to submit after submission of a preliminary proposal
  – Is a duplicate of, or substantially similar to, a proposal already under consideration
Proposals will not be accepted or will be returned without review for the following reasons:

- Is not responsive to the NSF funding opportunity
- Does not meet an announced proposal deadline date
- Was previously reviewed and declined and has not been substantially revised
- Duplicates another proposal already awarded
Grant Proposal Guide
Non Compliant Proposals, continued

• Proposals will not be accepted or will be returned without review for the following reasons:
  – Does not meet NSF proposal preparation requirements, such as page limitations, formatting instructions, and electronic submission, as specified in the Grant Proposal Guide or program solicitation
  – Does not contain each of the required sections of the proposal
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New Funding Mechanism

• Ideas Lab
  – Support the development and implementation of creative and innovative project ideas that have the potential to transform research paradigms and/or solve intractable problems
  – May run independently or in parallel with the issuance of an NSF funding opportunity on the same topic
  – Typically high-risk/high-impact for new and unproven ideas, approaches and/or technologies
  – Involves a four stage process to fund the proposal
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Letters of Intent (LOI)

• If required by the program solicitation and not submitted by the LOI deadline, the full proposal will not be accepted or will be returned without review
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Required Proposal Sections

• If the required sections are not included, the proposal will be returned without review.

• Proposals may deviate if required by the program solicitation or for specific types of proposals (RAPID, EAGER, etc.)
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Required Proposal Sections, continued

• Required Sections
  – Cover Sheet
  – Project Summary
  – Table of Contents
  – Project Description
  – References Cited
  – Biographical Sketch(es)
  – Budget & Justification
  – Current & Pending
  – Facilities, Equipment & Other Resources

  – Special Information and Supplementary Documentation
    • Data Management Plan
    • Postdoctoral Mentoring Plan (if applicable)
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Project Description

• **Broader Impacts**
  – Must be included as a separate section labeled “Broader Impacts of the Proposed Work”

• **Results from Prior NSF**
  – Must include a complete bibliographic citation for each publication for all publications resulting in the award in either this section or in the References Cited
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Biographical Sketch(es)

• Professional Preparation
  – Location of undergraduate, graduate and postdoctoral institution(s) must now be provided

• Collaborators & Co-Editors, Graduate Advisors & Postdoctoral Sponsors and Thesis Advisor and Postgraduate – Scholar Sponsor
  – The total number must be identified

• Other Non-Senior Personnel
  – Must clearly identify that the biosketch is for “Other Personnel”
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Budget and Budget Justification

- **Senior Personnel Salaries and Wages**
  - Proposal must adhere to NSF salary compensation limit
  - No more than two months of their regular salary in any one year
  - Includes compensation from all NSF-funded grants
  - Compensation in excess of two months must be disclosed in the budget, justification in the budget justification and specifically approved by NSF in the award notice budget
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Budget and Budget Justification, continued

• Senior Personnel Salaries and Wages, continued
  – However, effort can be increased or decreased\(^1\) after an award is made, even if it results in overall salary support in excess of two months in any year

\(^1\)Reductions in effort of 25% or more for the PI/PD or co-PI/co-PD require prior NSF approval
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Budget and Budget Justification, continued

• Administrative and Clerical Salaries
  – Allowable if all of the following conditions are met:
    • Integral to a project or activity
    • Individuals involved can be specifically identified with the project/activity
    • Costs are explicitly included in the approved budget or have prior written approval from NSF
    • Costs are not also recovered as indirect costs
• Travel
  – All travel must be specified, itemized and justified by destination and cost
  – Attendance at meetings or conferences must be necessary to accomplish proposal objectives, or disseminate its results
  – Temporary dependent care costs above and beyond regular dependent care directly related to conference travel may be allowable
Grant Proposal Guide
Budget and Budget Justification, continued

• Participant Support Costs
  – Stipends, subsistence and travel allowances and registration fees for participants or trainees (but not employees) in connection with conferences or training projects are allowable
  – Other cost categories must be justified in the budget justification and will be closely scrutinized
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Budget and Budget Justification, continued

• Materials and Supplies
  – Computing devices are allowable if they are essential and allocable, but not solely dedicated to the performance of the award

• Subawards
  – If the subrecipient does not have a U.S. federally negotiated indirect cost rate(s), the institution may use a de minimus indirect cost recovery of 10% of modified total direct costs
  – Budget justification is limited to no more than three pages
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Special Information and Supplementary Documentation

• Letters of Collaboration (formally Commitment)
  – Should be limited to stating the intent to collaborate and should not contain endorsements or evaluation of the proposed project
  – Letters of support should not be submitted
  – Proposals that contain letters which do not adhere to these instructions will be returned without review
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Special Guidelines

• Proposals for Equipment
  – References Cited section is no longer required
  – Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources section should include a brief description of other support services available

• Proposals to Conferences
  – NSF funds are not to be spent on meals and coffee breaks for intramural meetings or any of its components including but not limited to, laboratories, departments and centers
  – Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources section is now required
Award and Administration Guide
Award and Administration Guide

Requests for NSF Approval

• Prior NSF approval is now required for the following if not included and approved in the proposal:
  – Salaries of administrative or clerical staff
  – Travel costs for dependents
  – Additional categories of participant support costs other than those already described in the Uniform Guidance:
    • Stipends
    • Subsistence allowances
    • Travel allowances
    • Registration fees
  – Adding a subaward
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Requests for NSF Approval, continued

• Prior to rebudgeting funds to support a postdoctoral research, a mentoring plan must be sent to the cognizant program officer (if the original proposal did not include one)

• NSF notification is no longer required for the following:
  – Short-term absence of the PI/PD or co-PI/co-PD
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Program Income

- Registration fees collected under NSF-support conferences are now considered program income
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Fee Payments

• Payment of fees (profit) are allowable only if expressly authorized by the terms and conditions of the NSF award
• In unusual circumstances, small amounts of supplemental funding and up to six months of additional support may be requested to assure adequate completion of the original scope of work
  – If supplemental funding is requested to support a postdoctoral researcher and the original proposal did not include a mentoring plan, then the supplemental funding request must include the requisite mentoring plan
• All types of supplemental funding that include a postdoctoral researcher require a mentoring plan if not included in the original proposal
Award and Administration Guide

Reporting

• Mandatory Cost Sharing
  – Must be reported on an annual and final basis

• Financial Grant Closeout
  – NSF will financially closeout the grant on the first day of each month for all awards with expirations of 90 or more days
  – All obligations must be liquidated within 90 calendar days of the award end date