

NSF Guidance on Financial Assistance

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Summary of Changes

The key changes to the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) financial assistance policies and procedures can be found below.

Overall Document Changes

The *NSF Guidance on Financial Assistance* (GFA) replaces the *NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide* (PAPPG) (version 24-1). The GFA enhances use for proposers and recipients of NSF grants and cooperative agreements by:

- Aligning NSF policy with applicable Executive Orders, including EO 14222, *Implementing the President's "Department of Government Efficiency" Cost Efficiency Initiative*; EO 14332, *Improving Oversight of Federal Grantmaking*; and EO 14303, *Restoring Gold Standard Science*.
- Aligning with the proposed revisions to the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 through the proposed rule published on May 29, 2026 (see 91 Fed. Reg. 32, 198, May 29, 2026).
- Streamlining financial assistance policies and procedures to reduce administrative burden and eliminate duplicative content.
- Distinguishing policies from procedures to improve clarity and usability.
- Organizing content by topic rather than by chapter to improve access to information.
- Using plain language to improve readability and accessibility.
- Distinguishing responsibilities for different users (e.g., Principal Investigators, Authorized Organizational Representatives, and Sponsored Project Offices).

Guide-Specific Changes

Guide 1. Introduction to NSF and Financial Assistance Concepts

- Replaces directorate and office descriptions with links to NSF webpages to provide more current organizational structures and allow for more timely updates.
- Removes references to fixed-price awards to align with proposed revisions to 2 CFR 200.

Guide 2. Getting Ready to Apply for NSF Funding

- Adds the terms Broad Program Solicitation and Targeted Solicitation and retires the terms Program Description and Program Announcement.
- Adds the definition of Small Business Innovation Research/Small Business Technology Transfer (SBIR/STTR) Project Pitch.
- Expands the definition of Senior/Key Personnel and adds a definition for Faculty Associates to support research security requirements.
- Replaces the term Tribal Nations with Indian Tribes and revises the definition to align with current 2 CFR 200.
- Clarifies that institutions of higher education with a Confucius Institute agreement are ineligible for NSF funding, consistent with the CHIPS and Science Act.

Guide 3. Preparing Your Proposal – Formatting and Disclosures

- Removes the restriction that prohibited duplicate submissions to the Biological Sciences Directorate and another federal agency for simultaneous consideration.
- Adds requirement for former NSF staff or IPAs who left the agency within the past two years to disclose whether they have worked on a proposal to align with proposed revisions to 2 CFR 200.

Guide 4. Preparing Your Proposal – Budgets

- Adds coverage of the American Security Drone Act of 2023, which prohibits the use of NSF funds for certain covered drones and services beginning December 22, 2025.

Guide 5. Preparing Your Proposal – Facilities, Equipment, Personnel, Data Management, and Other Supporting Documents

- Updates Individual Development Plan requirements for postdoctoral scholars and graduate students by adding a definition of "substantial support."
- Clarifies that proposers must include a mentoring plan when requesting salary or stipend support for postdoctoral scholars or graduate students.
- Further implements public access requirements through revisions to Data Management and Sharing Plan requirements that align with NSF's Gold Standard Science Implementation Plan.

Guide 6. Special Processing Topics

- Replaces NSF's implementation of the U.S. Government Policy for Oversight of Dual Use Research of Concern and Pathogens with Enhanced Pandemic Potential with new requirements for Dangerous Gain of Function set forth in Executive Order 14292, *Improving the Safety and Security of Biological Research*.

Guide 7. Other Proposal Types

- Increases funding thresholds for selected proposal types:
 - Planning Proposals: up to \$200,000.
 - RAPID Proposals: up to \$300,000.
 - EAGER Proposals: up to \$400,000.

Guide 8. Proposal Processing and Merit Review

- No significant changes are made to this guide.

Guide 9. Proposal Withdrawals, Declinations, and Appeals

- Removes the rationale to return a proposal without review solely because it presents a potential research security concern based on credible national security information. It pilots the Trusted Research Using Safeguards and Transparency (TRUST) framework as an alternative risk mitigation approach.

Guide 10. Award Acceptance and Period of Performance

- No significant changes are made to this guide.

Guide 11. Managing Project Performance and Changes in Project Direction

- Removes Special Creativity Extensions with requests allowed for no-cost extensions and supplements when appropriate.

Guide 12. Cost Principles and Allowability

- Updates the Prior Approval Matrix to align with NSF's implementation of 2 CFR 200.
- Updates Build America, Buy America and Made in America requirements to align with 2 CFR 184.
- Revises the de minimis indirect cost rate to 15% consistent with 2 CFR 200.
- Disallows publication costs consistent with proposed revisions to 2 CFR 200.

Guide 13. Conflicts of Interest, Responsible Conduct of Research, and Scientific Integrity

- Expands Responsible Conduct of Research training requirements to include research security awareness, export controls, disclosure obligations, and federal reporting requirements, and preventing and reporting research misconduct.

Guide 14. Research Security

- Clarifies disclosure, reporting, and documentation requirements.
- Codifies NSF's research security training and risk assessment authorities.
- Updates restrictions related to Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Programs.
- Incorporate foreign financial disclosure requirements involving foreign countries of concern.

Guide 15. Property Management

- Revises property management requirements to align with changes to equipment title provisions in current 2 CFR 200.313.
- Updates requirements for Excess Government Personal Property to reflect current federal requirements.

Guide 16. Financial Management and Payments

- Eliminates references to paper checks to align with Executive Order 14247, *Modernizing Payments To and From America's Bank Account*.

Guide 17. Renewal and Supplemental Funding Support

- Removes accomplishment-based renewals and refocuses recipients to request renewal funding through existing renewal processes.

Guide 18. Award Reporting and Closeout

- Revises Foreign Financial Disclosure Report requirements based on implementation experience, including the addition of new definitions to improve clarity, updates reporting requirements related to tuition, and alignment with reporting dates to the federal fiscal year.

Guide 19. Discrimination, Sexual Assault, and Harassment

- Removes references and requirements to revoked executive orders, including certain non-discrimination, limited English proficiency, and environmental justice requirements.
- Removes references to U.S. Department of Education requirements for institutions of higher education to maintain Section 504 coordinators, Title IX coordinators, and age discrimination evaluations.

Guide 20. Research Safety and Protection of Living Organisms

- Revises requirements for research involving recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules to align with EO 14292, *Improving the Safety and Security of Biological Research*.

Guide 21. Intellectual Property

- Streamlines intellectual property requirements and refers readers to implementing regulations, where appropriate.
- Updates public access requirements by removing the 12-month publication delay for peer-reviewed journal articles and conference proceedings.

Guide 22. International Activities

- Removes references to charter flights.

- Streamlines international travel requirements by referring recipients to applicable GSA travel regulations.

Guide 23. Publication of Award Materials and Handling of Information

- Incorporates NSF Brand Standards and the NSF Brand Standards Manual.
- Removes requirements to separately send copies of publications and other materials to NSF as it duplicates requirements set forth in project reporting and Data Management and Sharing Plan submissions.

Guide 24. Other Administrative and Operational Provisions

- Removes references to intergovernmental review requirements and tax status.
- Streamlines Davis-Bacon Act and bonding requirements and refer readers to the NSF *Research Infrastructure Guide* where appropriate.

Guide 25. Suspensions, Terminations, and Research Misconduct

- Aligns termination provisions with the proposed revisions to 2 CFR 200.
- Clarifies research misconduct requirements by including reference to artificial intelligence tools.

Guide 26. Appeals

- Consolidates proposal financial and administrative decline appeals with post-award appeals involving suspensions, terminations, and other award disputes into a single guide.
- Streamlines appeal procedures and places related requirements in one location.

Guide 1: Introduction to NSF and Financial Assistance Concepts

Version 27-1: Effective [Month Day, Year]

This guide explains:

- The overall structure and purpose of the U.S. National Science Foundation's (NSF) financial assistance (grant and cooperative agreement) policy framework.
- How the agency manages research and education funding.
- How the *NSF Guidance on Financial Assistance* (GFA or Guides) is organized, including how to use terms and definitions, policies, and procedures to prepare proposals and manage awards.
- NSF's relationship with award recipients and the authorities that govern NSF funding.
- General background information about NSF programs, assistance listings, and commonly used acronyms.

Prospective Principal Investigators (PIs) should use this guide to learn more about the NSF and its programs and understand how the guides are structured.

Authorized Organization Representatives (AORs) and Sponsored Project Offices (SPOs) should use this guide to understand financial assistance concepts and how NSF will implement this guidance to ensure appropriate oversight of federal funds.

A. About the U.S. National Science Foundation

NSF is a federal agency created through an Act "to promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; [and] to secure the national defense." NSF funds research and education in most fields of science and engineering. It does this through grants and cooperative agreements to institutions of higher education, K-12 school systems, for-profit organizations, informal science organizations and other research organizations throughout the U.S. NSF does not normally support technical assistance, research requiring security classification, the development of products for commercial marketing, or market research for a particular project or invention. NSF supports fundamental research in all areas of science and engineering, including research that has major impacts on health; however, NSF generally does not support research focused exclusively on understanding human diseases and their treatment. Similarly, NSF does not fund research and development involving nuclear energy, unless in coordination with the U.S. Department of Energy. For additional guidance, see NSF's [Notices of Funding Opportunities \(NOFOs\)](#) and contact relevant program staff listed in the NOFOs.

Consult NSF.gov for more information about [the agency's organizational structure](#) and the NSF [FY 2026-2030 Strategic Plan](#) for more information on agency priorities.

B. NSF Guidance on Financial Assistance Overview

The *NSF Guidance on Financial Assistance* (GFA or Guides) cover the agency's proposal and award lifecycle processes for its financial assistance programs. These guides, in conjunction with the applicable standard award conditions incorporated by reference in an NSF award and award specific terms and conditions (see [Guide 10](#) for more information), serve as NSF's implementation of title 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part 200, [Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#). The GFA does not

address all requirements of 2 CFR 200. Proposing organizations and recipients must be familiar with and follow all applicable requirements at 2 CFR 200, whether or not discussed in the guides. 2 CFR 200 takes precedence over any requirements in the GFA as outlined in 2 CFR 200.105, except to the extent that they are required by statute or authorized in accordance with 2 CFR 200.102.

There are 26 guides organized by topical areas, which apply to all NSF grants and cooperative agreements. They do not apply to NSF procurement contracts, prize competitions, other arrangements, or other transactions. For information relating to NSF contracts or other arrangements, consult the [Contracting With NSF](#) page on NSF.gov.

Additional information about special requirements of individual NSF programs may be obtained from the appropriate NSF directorate or office.

C. How to Read the Guides

NSF has established these guides, which transform the former Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide (PAPPG) into streamlined, accessible, user-friendly documents that are organized by topic area. Each guide is organized into three key areas:

- 1) Terms and Definitions: Defines key concepts used within the respective section of the guide.
- 2) Policies: Explains policies and implementation requirements for the proposer, recipient, or the Principal Investigator/senior key personnel.
- 3) Procedures: Explains steps that may be taken to submit or prepare information or documentation to accomplish a policy or requirement. These steps may explain how to take action in proposal preparation or award management.

Each guide also contains references to the significant authorities, including statutes, regulations, executive orders, or external or internal policies, that govern the content.

The following guides and topics organized by section provide information on key concepts and information before one prepares a proposal for submission:

- [Guide 1: Introduction to NSF and Financial Assistance Concepts](#)
- [Guide 2: Getting Ready to Apply for NSF Funding](#)

The following guides and topics organized by section provide information on proposal submission and on processing once a proposal is submitted to NSF:

- [Guide 3: Preparing Your Proposal – Formatting and Disclosures](#)
- [Guide 4: Preparing Your Proposal – Budgets](#)
- [Guide 5: Preparing Your Proposal – Facilities, Equipment, Personnel, Data Management, and Other Supporting Documents](#)
- [Guide 6: Preparing Your Proposal – Special Processing and Compliance Topics](#)
- [Guide 7: Preparing Your Proposal – Other Proposal and Supplemental Funding Types](#)
- [Guide 8: Proposal Processing and Merit Review](#)
- [Guide 9: Proposal Withdrawals and Declinations](#)

The following guides and topics organized by section provide information on NSF award management:

- [Guide 10: Award Acceptance and Period of Performance](#)
- [Guide 11: Monitoring Project Performance and Changes in Project Direction](#)
- [Guide 12: Cost Principles and Allowability](#)
- [Guide 13: Conflicts of Interest, Responsible Conduct of Research, and Scientific Integrity](#)
- [Guide 14: Research Security](#)
- [Guide 15: Property Management](#)
- [Guide 16: Financial Management and Payments](#)
- [Guide 17: Renewal and Supplemental Funding Support](#)
- [Guide 18: Award Reporting and Closeout](#)
- [Guide 19: Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and Assault](#)
- [Guide 20: Research Safety and Protection of Living Organisms](#)
- [Guide 21: Intellectual Property](#)
- [Guide 22: International Activities](#)
- [Guide 23: Publication of Award Materials and Handling of Information](#)
- [Guide 24: Other Administrative and Operational Provisions](#)
- [Guide 25: Suspensions, Terminations, and Research Misconduct](#)
- [Guide 26: Appeals](#)

D. Key Terms and Definitions

While each guide contains a set of terms and definitions, the terms and definitions presented below apply across each of them and should be referenced accordingly. When a definition is set in 2 CFR 200, NSF links to the respective term and definition to ensure that the most recent content is available. Where NSF defines its own terms, a definition is provided with it.

1. Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR)

The administrative official who, on behalf of the proposing organization or recipient, is empowered to make certifications and representations; can accept an NSF award; and can commit the organization to adhere to various NSF policies and award requirements.

2. Award

An NSF grant or cooperative agreement.

3. Continuing Grant

A type of grant in which NSF agrees to provide a specific level of support for an initial specified period of time, usually a year, with a statement of intent to provide additional support for the project for additional periods, provided funds are available and the results achieved warrant further support.

4. Cooperative Agreement

See [2 CFR 200.1](#).

5. Grant Agreement

See [2 CFR 200.1](#).

6. Institution of Higher Education (IHE)

[See 20 USC 1001](#). This definition is inclusive of two- and four-year IHEs (including community colleges) accredited in and having a campus located in the United States.

7. Principal Investigator (PI)

For purposes of these guides, when used throughout, the term PI also includes Project Director, and the term co-PI also includes co-Project Director.

8. Proposer

The applicant seeking NSF support for their project.

9. Recipient

[See 2 CFR 200.1](#). NSF awards are normally made to organizations rather than to individuals, including the PI and any co-PIs identified on a proposal.

10. Standard Grant

A type of grant in which NSF agrees to provide a specific level of support for a specified period of time with no statement of NSF intent to provide additional future support without submission of another proposal.

E. NSF Financial Assistance Award Types and Recipient Relationships

The Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977 governs NSF use of financial assistance agreements.

1. Grants

Grants will be used by NSF when accomplishing the project objectives requires minimal NSF involvement during performance of the activities. Grants establish a relationship between NSF and the recipient in which:

- a) NSF agrees to provide up to a specified amount of financial support for the project to be performed under the conditions and requirements of the award. NSF will monitor progress and assure compliance with applicable standards.
- b) The recipient agrees to perform the project as proposed, prudently manage the funds provided, and carry out the supported activities in accordance with the provisions of the award.

2. Cooperative Agreements

Cooperative agreements will be used by NSF when the accomplishment of the project objectives requires substantial ongoing agency involvement during the project performance period. Substantial agency involvement may be necessary when an activity is technically and/or managerially complex and requires extensive or close coordination between NSF and the recipient. The doctrine of substantial involvement is set forth in the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977. NSF uses two types of cooperative agreements:

- a) Standalone Cooperative Agreement (CA), which consists of a cooperative agreement for a single unified award where there is no need to provide separate, discrete funding and oversight for the projects or programs under that award.

- b) Master Cooperative Agreement/Cooperative Support Agreement (CA/CSA), which consists of an overall agreement having separate and specific awards (CSAs) that are funded individually under the umbrella of the CA. CSAs have their own terms and conditions in addition to those of the overall agreement. The scope of CSAs falls within the scope of the CA, but each CSA has its own distinct award number and funding based on its approved budget; no funding is attached to the overall CA.

Examples of projects suitable for cooperative agreements include management of research centers, large curriculum projects, multi-user facilities, or when NSF believes that agency involvement is necessary to the outcome of a project. Projects which involve complex subcontracting, construction or operations of major in-house institution of higher education (IHE) facilities and major instrumentation development and in which NSF participates with other stakeholder agencies or organizations that have influence over project direction and/or development may be appropriate.

Under a cooperative agreement, the recipient has primary responsibility for the conduct of the project. To the extent that NSF does not reserve responsibility for coordinating or integrating the project activities with other related activities or does not assume a degree of shared responsibility for certain aspects of the project, all such responsibilities remain with the recipient. NSF will monitor and be substantially involved in a cooperative agreement in accordance with the terms and conditions of the award; however, NSF will not assume overall control of a project or unilaterally change or direct the project activities. Substantial involvement is not a substitute for and does not affect NSF's right to unilaterally suspend or terminate an award under its applicable terms and conditions.

The cooperative agreement terms and conditions will specify the extent to which NSF will advise, review, approve or otherwise be involved with project activities, as well as NSF's right to require clearly defined deliverables. NSF may provide advice, guidance, or assistance of a technical, management, or coordinating nature. NSF may also require that the recipient obtain NSF prior approval of specific decisions, milestones, or project activities. Substantial involvement is incorporated in key areas of accountability in both financial and programmatic award terms. Examples of substantial involvement include prior agency approval requirements, type and frequency of project plans, special reporting requirements, or project and recipient reviews that NSF will conduct during the term of the award.

Many Major Facility awards, including those for NSF-supported Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs), consist of a cooperative agreement as an umbrella award, establishing the overall basic provisions of the award over separate cooperative support agreements. The cooperative support agreements contain specific terms and conditions for design and construction activities, management and operations, research activities that are co-sponsored by other agencies, or any other focused activities that NSF needs to monitor separately from the overall objectives of the cooperative agreement.

F. Assistance Listings

The System for Award Management (SAM) provides detailed public descriptions of all [Federal Financial Assistance Listings](#). Each Assistance Listing is associated with a unique five-digit CFDA number. NSF programs fall under the following listings on [SAM.gov](#):

47.041 – Engineering

47.049 – Mathematical and Physical Sciences

DRAFT

47.050 – Geosciences
47.070 – Computer and Information Science and Engineering
47.074 – Biological Sciences
47.075 – Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences
47.076 – STEM Education
47.078 – Polar Programs
47.079 – International Science and Engineering
47.083 – Integrative Activities
47.084 – Technology, Innovation, and Partnerships

G. Accessibility

NSF has Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) and Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) capabilities that enable individuals with hearing or speech impairments to communicate with the Foundation about NSF programs, employment, or general information. TDD may be accessed at (703) 292-7900 and (800) 281-8749, FIRS at 711.

The NSF Information Center may be reached at (703) 292-5111.

Any questions or comments regarding the guides should be sent to policy@nsf.gov.

H. Acronyms

The following acronyms are used throughout the guides and may be referenced below.

ACH	Automated Clearing House (U.S. Treasury)
ACM\$	Award Cash Management Service
APHIS	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
AOR	Authorized Organizational Representative
CA	Cooperative Agreement
CAFATC	Cooperative Agreement Financial/Administrative Terms and Conditions
CAPTC	Cooperative Agreement Programmatic Terms and Conditions
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CGI	Continuing Grant Increment
COA	Collaborators and Other Affiliations
COI	Conflict of Interest
co-PI	co-Principal Investigator
CSA	Cooperative Support Agreement
DCL	Dear Colleague Letter
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
DURC	Dual Use Research of Concern
EAGER	EARly-Concept Grants for Exploratory Research
EFT	Electronic Funds Transfer
E.O.	Executive Order
F&A	Facilities & Administrative (Costs)
FAR	Federal Acquisition Regulation
FASED	Facilitation Awards for Scientists and Engineers with Disabilities
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FFRDC	Federally Funded Research and Development Centers
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
FOP	Federally Owned Property

DRAFT

FWA	Federal-Wide Assurance
GC-1	Grant General Conditions
GOALI	Grant Opportunities for Academic Liaison with Industry
GSA	General Services Administration
IACUC	Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
IBC	Institutional Biosafety Committee
IHE	Institution of Higher Education
IPA	Intergovernmental Personnel Act
IRB	Institutional Review Board
LOI	Letters of Intent
MREFC	Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction
NASEM	National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act
NIH	National Institutes of Health
NSF	National Science Foundation
OCR	Office of Civil Rights
OGC	Office of the General Counsel
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OLAW	Office for Laboratory Animal Welfare
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
PAR	Public Access Repository
PEPP	Pathogens with Enhanced Pandemic Potential
PHS	Public Health Service
PI	Principal Investigator
PNAG	Prospective New Awardee Guide
POR	Project Outcomes Report for the General Public
PPOP	Primary Place of Performance
R&D	Research and Development
RAISE	Research Advanced by Interdisciplinary Science and Engineering
RAPID	Rapid Response Research
RCR	Responsible Conduct of Research
RIG	Research Infrastructure Guide
ROA	Research Opportunity Awards
RTC	Research Terms and Conditions
RUI	Research in Undergraduate Institutions
SAM	System for Award Management
SBIR	Small Business Innovation Research
SF	Standard Form
SPO	Sponsored Project Office
SSN	Social Security Number
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
STTR	Small Business Technology Transfer
TDD	Telephonic Device for the Deaf
TTY	Text Telephone
UEI	Unique Entity Identifier
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture

Guide 2: Getting Ready to Apply for NSF Funding

Version 27-1 Effective [Month Day, Year]

This guide explains:

- How the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) posts and shares funding opportunities.
- The types of NSF funding opportunities.
- The pre-submission steps NSF may require.
- Who can submit proposals.
- Deadlines and exceptions.
- Required registrations.
- How to prepare and submit proposals.

Prospective Principal Investigators (PIs) should use this guide to help identify appropriate NSF funding opportunities, understand proposal submission requirements, and register in NSF and other federal systems.

Authorized Organization Representatives (AORs) and Sponsored Project Offices (SPOs) should use this guide to register in NSF and other federal systems, ensure eligibility to apply, and ensure proposals meet disclosure and certification requirements before submission.

A. Categories of Funding Opportunities

This section explains the different types of NSF funding opportunities used to communicate agency priorities and invite proposals in particular areas of science and engineering. It also provides basic steps for staying informed regarding funding opportunities, such as subscribing to NSF updates and using NSF.gov to find and track opportunities.

Terms and Definitions

1. Broad Topic Solicitations

General funding opportunities that invite proposals in broad science and engineering areas. They follow *NSF Guidance on Financial Assistance* policies and review criteria.

2. Dear Colleague Letters (DCLs)

Notices to researchers about new or special funding opportunities, to clarify or amend existing policies or documents, announce possible supplements, or encourage submission of particular proposal types like Planning, Rapid Response Research (RAPID), EARly-concept Grants for Exploratory Research (EAGER), or Research Advanced by Interdisciplinary Science and Engineering (RAISE).

3. Targeted Solicitations

Focused, often time-limited, funding opportunities with specific eligibility limitations and additional proposal requirements beyond the standard proposal requirements provided in the *NSF Guidance on Financial Assistance*.

Procedures

1. How to Subscribe to Email Updates

Subscribe to [NSF's email updates](#) to receive alerts about new funding opportunities, policy changes, and NSF publications that match your interests.

2. How to Use NSF.gov Resources

Use the [Getting Started](#) page to find notices of funding opportunities (NOFOs).

B. Pre-Submission Types

This section explains pre-submission documents and materials that NSF may require before a full proposal. These early steps help NSF determine whether a project is a good fit, manage the review process, and reduce unnecessary workload for proposers. This section also emphasizes that when these steps are required, they must be completed correctly — otherwise, the full proposal may not be accepted.

Terms and Definitions

1. Concept Outline

A short project synopsis, generally limited to two pages, to check fit with a funding opportunity and avoid unnecessary full proposals.

2. Letter of Intent (LOI)

A one-page synopsis (including names of PI(s), title, participating organizations, if any) used by NSF to identify appropriate reviewers and gauge the competition.

3. Preliminary Proposal

An initial, shorter proposal considered under the NSF merit review criteria to manage the competition size and review burden of full proposals.

4. Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)/Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Project Pitch

The initial submission or first step in the NSF SBIR/STTR submission process before a proposal can be submitted.

Policies

1. Concept Outline

For proposal types/funding opportunities requiring a Concept Outline, it must be submitted to the cognizant Program Director provided in the funding opportunity. A Concept Outline may be voluntarily submitted via email at any time to the cognizant Program Director by prospective PIs seeking early feedback on the general appropriateness of a project idea and potentially relevant funding opportunities prior to developing a full proposal.

2. Letter of Intent (LOI)

The predominant reason for its use is to help NSF program staff gauge the size and range of the competition, enabling earlier selection and better management of reviewers and panelists. In addition, the information contained in an LOI is used to help avoid potential conflicts of interest in the review process. An LOI is not a binding document. However, proposals submitted without an LOI required by the funding opportunity will be returned without review.

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Multi-organization collaborations must submit one LOI covering the entire project. NSF considers a collaborative proposal to be a unified research project.

3. Preliminary Proposals

NSF funding opportunities will specify content and submission requirements when preliminary proposals are to be submitted. The proposer completes only the sections appropriate to the funding opportunity-specific preliminary proposal requirements.

4. SBIR/STTR Project Pitch

Small businesses may only submit one Project Pitch per submission deadline.

Procedures

1. How to Submit a Concept Outline

- a) Check the funding opportunity to see whether a concept outline is required and for submission steps.
- b) Draft the concept outline, which usually includes the following:
 - Title.
 - Proposal type.
 - PI(s) information.
 - Potentially relevant NSF organizational unit(s).
 - Keywords.
 - A brief narrative description of the idea, which may outline the goals and approaches of the project and anticipated uses of funding.
 - A brief description of how the idea fits the proposed proposal type or funding opportunity.
- c) If approved, the cognizant NSF Program Director will provide a concurrence email. Do not submit a full proposal unless the funding opportunity or Program Director concurrence permits it. For voluntary submissions, the prospective PI will receive feedback via email or follow-up discussion with a cognizant NSF Program Director; however, a "Program Director Concurrence Email" is typically not provided.
- d) When submitting the full proposal, include the "Program Director Concurrence Email" in the submission, where appropriate.

2. How to Submit a Letter of Intent

- a) Follow the specific funding opportunity's LOI instructions.
- b) Prepare the LOI in the LOI module on Research.gov. For additional information, refer to the [About Proposal Preparation and Submission](#) page on Research.gov.
- c) For collaborative projects, submit one LOI for the whole project.

3. How to Submit a Preliminary Proposal

- a) Follow the funding opportunity's instructions.

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- b) Prepare the preliminary proposal in the preliminary proposal module on Research.gov. For additional information, refer to the [About Proposal Preparation and Submission](#) page on Research.gov.
- c) Include only the sections requested.
- d) Have your Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) submit by the deadline.
- e) Watch for the decision type:
 - Invite/Not Invite: Final decision. Only invited proposers may submit full proposals. The proposer is required to include their Related Preliminary Proposal Number. Refer to the [About Proposal Preparation and Submission](#) page on Research.gov for more information.
 - Encourage/Discourage: Advisory decision. The proposer may still submit a full proposal, though NSF will state a recommendation.

4. How to Submit an SBIR/STTR Project Pitch

- a) Read guidance on seedfund.nsf.gov.
- b) Submit via the [Project Pitch Portal](#).
- c) Project Pitches are reviewed by SBIR/STTR staff.
- d) If approved, the proposer will be invited to submit a Phase I or Fast-Track proposal.

C. Eligibility

This section explains who can submit NSF proposals. It outlines which types of entities are eligible while noting that others may be eligible depending on the funding opportunity, and that individuals unaffiliated with an eligible organization are not eligible. It also highlights key requirements, including special justification for involving foreign organizations and prohibitions related to malign foreign talent recruitment programs, ensuring that proposals align with NSF's research, policy, and national interest standards.

Terms and Definitions

1. Federal Agency

[See 2 CFR 200.1](#).

2. For-Profit Organization

[See 2 CFR 200.1](#).

3. Foreign Country of Concern

The People's Republic of China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, the Islamic Republic of Iran, or any other country deemed to be a country of concern as determined by the U.S. Secretary of State.

4. Foreign Organization or Foreign Public Entity

[See 2 CFR 200.1](#).

5. Indian Tribe

[See 2 CFR 200.1](#). This definition also includes Alaska Native village or regional or village-corporation as defined or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

6. Institution of Higher Education (IHE)

[See 20 USC 1001](#). This definition is inclusive of two- and four-year IHEs (including community colleges) accredited in and having a campus located in the United States.

7. Local Government

[See 2 CFR 200.1](#).

8. Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Program

A foreign-sponsored program, position, or activity that offers compensation or benefits — such as funding, travel, jobs, titles, or other incentives — in exchange for activities that could improperly influence, compromise, or conflict with U.S. federally funded research or institutional responsibilities. These programs may involve requirements to transfer nonpublic research information, recruit others into the program, conceal participation, duplicate federally funded work, violate award terms and conditions, or create conflicts of interest or commitment. The term also includes programs sponsored by foreign countries of concern, certain designated foreign institutions, or organizations identified by the U.S. government as problematic foreign talent recruitment programs. The full definition of a [malign foreign talent recruitment program](#) can be found on NSF.gov.

9. Nonprofit, Non-Academic Organization

[See 2 CFR 200.1](#). This definition is inclusive of independent museums, observatories, research laboratories, professional societies, and similar organizations located in the United States that are directly associated with educational or research activities.

10. State Government

[See 2 CFR 200.1](#).

11. Unaffiliated Individual

An individual not affiliated with eligible organizations mentioned above regardless of whether they are citizens of the United States.

Policies

1. Eligible Entities

Institutions of higher education; nonprofit, non-academic organizations; and Indian Tribes are eligible to submit proposals. For-profit organizations, state and local governments, foreign organizations, and federal agencies may be eligible if a funding opportunity specifically allows it.

2. IHE International Branch Campuses

If the proposal includes funding to an international branch campus of a U.S. IHE (including the use of subawards and consultants), the proposer must explain in the Project Description the benefit(s) to the project at the international branch campus and why the project cannot be completed at the U.S. campus.

3. For-Profit Organizations

A proposal from a for-profit organization may be funded when the project is of special concern from a national point of view, special resources are available for the work, or the proposed

project is especially meritorious. NSF is interested in supporting projects that couple industrial use-inspired challenges and research resources with those of IHEs. Specific NSF funding opportunities also may make for-profit organizations eligible to submit proposals. U.S.-based affiliates or subsidiaries of foreign organizations must contact the cognizant NSF Program Director prior to preparing and submitting a proposal to NSF.

4. Foreign Organizations

NSF may support collaborative projects between U.S. and foreign organizations as expressly authorized by statute, but generally only funds the U.S. portion of the work. If funding is requested for a foreign organization or individual (e.g., through a subaward or consultant), the proposer must clearly justify why this is necessary and beneficial to U.S. research and education and in the national interest of the United States. At a minimum, the justification must explain:

- a) The extent to which the proposed international element is necessary to achieve the scientific or technical objectives of the project and is integral to the scientific rationale of the program.
- b) The extent to which the international element provides access to unique expertise, facilities, data, study populations, environmental conditions, or other resources that are not reasonably available within the United States.
- c) The likelihood that the proposed international element will enhance the scientific enterprise of the United States, including through the development of new knowledge, methodologies, technologies, or collaborative networks that can be applied domestically.
- d) The adequacy of the facilities, equipment, personnel, and administrative capacity at the international site, or of any foreign entities that would perform work, to carry out the proposed scope of work under the Federal award at a level comparable to that of a domestic recipient performing similar activities.

5. Other Federal Agencies

NSF does not normally support research or education activities by scientists, engineers or educators employed by federal agencies or Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs). Under unusual circumstances, other federal agencies and FFRDCs may submit proposals directly to NSF. A proposed project is only eligible for support if it meets one or more of the following exceptions, as determined by a cognizant NSF Program Director in advance of proposal submission:

- a) Special Projects: Research or education projects that can make unique contributions to the needs of researchers elsewhere or to other specific NSF objectives may receive support.
- b) National and International Programs: Research or logistical support activities directed at meeting the goals of special national and international research programs, such as the U.S. Antarctic Program may receive support.

Proposers who think their project may meet one of the exceptions listed above must contact the cognizant NSF Program Director before preparing a proposal for submission. In addition, a scientist, engineer, or educator who has a joint appointment with an IHE and a federal agency or FFRDC may submit proposals through the IHE and may receive support if the individual is a faculty member (or equivalent) of the IHE, even though part of the individual's salary may be provided by the federal agency or FFRDC. Preliminary inquiry must be made to the appropriate program before preparing a proposal for submission.

6. Ineligible Entities

The following entities are not eligible to apply unless a waiver is approved by the NSF Director:

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- a) Unaffiliated individuals.
- b) Individuals or entities involved in malign foreign talent recruitment programs.
- c) IHEs with a Confucius Institute agreement.

For further information on items b and c, please refer to [Guide 14](#).

D. Deadlines and Exceptions for Proposal Submission

This section explains how proposal deadlines work, the different types of due dates, and when limited exceptions may apply.

Terms and Definitions

1. [Deadline Date](#)

The final date after which proposals will not be accepted or will be returned without review.

2. [Faculty Associate](#)

An individual other than the PI or co-PI considered by the performing institution to be a member of its faculty (or equivalent) or who holds an appointment as a faculty member at another institution, and who will participate in the project being supported.

3. [Senior/Key Personnel](#)

Individuals designated by the proposer/recipient organization and approved by NSF who contribute in a substantive, meaningful way to the scientific development or execution of a research and development project proposed to be carried out with a research and development award. There are two primary categories of senior/key personnel, (1) PIs and co-PIs and (2) faculty associates (faculty member) (or equivalent). Senior/key personnel typically do not include graduate students.

4. [Submission Window](#)

A defined time period for submissions; the closing date functions as a hard deadline.

5. [Target Date](#)

A suggested submission date; proposals may still be accepted afterward but could be reviewed after the next round of proposals is requested.

Policies

1. [Deadlines](#)

Proposals must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. local time of the submitting organization unless stated otherwise on the established deadline date listed in the funding opportunity. Late submissions will not be accepted.

2. [Weekends and Holidays](#)

If a due date falls on a weekend or a federal holiday, it will be extended to the next business day.

3. [Exceptions - Medical Leave](#)

If senior/key personnel are on medical leave (self or immediate family), NSF may allow proposal submission up to five business days past the deadline.

4. Exceptions - Natural or Human-Caused Event

If a natural or human-caused event affects proposal submission, NSF may allow proposal submission up to five business days past the deadline.

5. Exceptions - NSF Closures

During NSF closures, because of inclement weather or other unpredictable events, deadlines are automatically extended. NSF will issue separate guidance due to closures from a lapse in appropriation.

Procedures

1. How to Submit a Proposal Past Deadline Due to Medical Leave

- a) Check the "Special Exception to the Deadline Date Policy" box on the NSF Cover Sheet.
- b) The AOR certifies that the individual was on approved medical leave and requests approval from the cognizant NSF Program Director. This is done outside the Research.gov system. Do not upload private medical information into Research.gov.
- c) The AOR uploads written approval from the cognizant NSF Program Director as documentation in the "Nature of Natural or Anthropogenic Event" on the Cover Sheet.

2. How to Submit a Proposal Past Deadline Due to Natural or Human-Caused Events

- a) Check the "Special Exception to the Deadline Date Policy" box on the NSF Cover Sheet.
- b) Upload written approval from the cognizant NSF Program Director and a brief explanation in the 'Nature of Natural or Anthropogenic Event' section in Research.gov.

E. System Registrations

This section explains that both organizations and individuals must complete and maintain required registrations before submitting proposals or receiving funding. These registrations ensure that NSF can verify organizational information, process awards, and manage payments.

Terms and Definitions

1. Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR)

The administrative official who, on behalf of the proposing organization, is empowered to make certifications and representations and can commit the organization to the conduct of a project that NSF is being asked to support as well as adhere to various NSF policies and award requirements.

2. NSF ID

A unique identifier for individuals used across NSF systems.

3. System for Award Management (SAM)

The federal system used to store and verify organizational information (e.g., name, address, financial data).

Policies

1. System for Award Management (SAM) Registration

Organizations must register on SAM.gov and obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). Individual PI(s) and senior/key personnel do not register in SAM.gov.

2. SAM Registration Maintenance

SAM registrations must remain active for proposals and awards to be processed.

3. NSF ID Registration

A SAM.gov point of contact must register new organizations in the NSF Research.gov Account Management system to submit proposals. Administrators, AORs, PIs, and co-PIs must also register for an individual NSF ID. Organizations must annually review and recertify that all user accounts and roles are current and valid. Social Security Numbers will only be requested when required for business purposes, such as financial reimbursement. Use of another individual's email address and password to access Research.gov is prohibited.

4. Subrecipient Registration

Subrecipients must have a UEI and an NSF ID but do not need full SAM.gov registration. GSA has implemented a process by which an organization that will only be a subrecipient may receive a UEI without undergoing a complete SAM registration.

Procedures

1. How to Register and Update Information in SAM.gov

- a) Register your organization on [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov). Registrations become active after SAM validation.
- b) Organizations and proposers can verify registration status at SAM.gov.
- c) Update your SAM.gov account whenever information about your organization changes, including business name or mailing address.
- d) Organizations can upload representations and certifications to their SAM.gov account.
- e) Before proposal submission, organizations must review and certify compliance with governmentwide representations and certifications in SAM.gov.

2. How to Register for an NSF ID

- a) Register for an NSF ID at [Research.gov](https://research.gov).
- b) Use only one NSF ID per person. Contact the Help Desk if duplicates exist.
- c) Use multi-factor authentication (MFA) when logging into NSF systems to improve security. If an account is compromised, contact the NSF IT Service Desk.
- d) Inactive or incomplete registrations can prevent proposal submission or delay awards.
- e) Annually review and recertify that all user accounts are active and valid in NSF systems.

F. Proposal Preparation

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This section explains how to prepare and submit NSF proposals using approved systems like Research.gov or Grants.gov.

Terms and Definitions

1. Grants.gov

The governmentwide portal for applying to federal funding opportunities.

2. Research.gov

NSF's system for preparing, submitting, and tracking proposals and awards.

Policies

1. Duplicative Work/Proposals

NSF will not accept or fund duplicate or substantially similar work or proposals submitted to multiple funding opportunities at the same time. If the proposer envisions review by multiple programs, more than one program may be designated. The submission of duplicate or substantially similar proposals concurrently for review by more than one program will result in the return of the redundant proposals.

2. Electronic Submissions

Proposals must be submitted through Research.gov or Grants.gov unless stated otherwise. The AOR must complete required certifications at the time of submission.

Procedures

1. How to Submit a Proposal in Either Research.gov or Grants.gov

- a) For Research.gov, for additional information, refer to the [About Proposal Preparation and Submission](#) page on Research.gov.
- b) For Grants.gov, use the [Grants.gov Application Guide](#).

2. How to Check the Status of a Proposal

- a) PIs can track proposals through Research.gov after submission.
- b) If no proposal number appears in the Research.gov system, submit a help request using the [NSF IT Service Desk](#) form or emailing rgov@nsf.gov.
- c) Direct questions to the NSF Program Director and include the proposal number. Always start with Research.gov to confirm submission status.

Authorities

The following authorities govern this guide:

- National Science Foundation Act of 1950
- Higher Education Act of 1965
- Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977
- Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994
- CHIPS and Science Act of 2022

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- 2 CFR 200

Guide 3: Preparing Your Proposal – Proposal Formatting and Disclosures

Version 27-1 Effective [Month Day, Year]

This guide explains:

- Proposal requirements that must be met and the actions required to remain compliant with U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) policies.
- Proposal preparation standards and required disclosures.
- How to follow NSF proposal instructions.
- When and how to request accommodations.
- What information must be provided to support proposal review and funding decisions.

Prospective Principal Investigators (PIs) should use this guide to understand the required elements of an NSF research proposal and how to prepare a proposal that can be accepted by NSF for review.

Authorized Organization Representatives (AORs) and Sponsored Project Offices (SPOs) should use this guide to ensure that proposals meet formatting, content, disclosure and certification requirements before submission.

A. Organizations New to NSF

This section explains NSF requirements for organizations new to NSF or without an active NSF award in the past five years, and outlines the documentation and reviews required before an award can be made.

Policies

1. New Organization Preparation

Organizations new to NSF or without an active NSF award within the previous five years must be prepared to provide basic organizational, management, and certification information to the cognizant NSF Grants Officer upon request when their proposal is recommended for funding.

Procedures

1. How to Prepare for an Award as a New Organization to NSF

- a) Review and compile documentation from the [NSF Prospective New Awardee Guide](#).
- b) If your proposal is recommended for funding from the cognizant NSF Program Director, the cognizant Grants Officer will contact you for the information in this guide.
- c) The cognizant Grants Officer will conduct an administrative and financial review of the organization based on this information to determine the organization's capabilities before making an award.

B. Accessibility and Accommodations for Proposal Preparation

This section explains NSF's policies and procedures for requesting reasonable accommodations or accessibility assistance during the proposal process.

Policies

1. Reasonable Accommodation

Individuals with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations as part of the proposal process must contact NSF at least 30 calendar days prior to the proposal deadline date.

2. Information Confidentiality

The information provided in support of reasonable accommodation requests is confidential and available only to designated agency staff that are responsible for providing and/or coordinating accommodation services.

3. Undue Hardship

NSF is not required to provide accommodations that impose an undue hardship on the operation of the organization or that fundamentally alters the nature of its programs or activities. Requests for reasonable accommodations or accessibility assistance may not include personal-use items or extensions to proposal deadline dates. All proposals must be received by the deadline in the NSF funding opportunity.

4. Electronic Submission

Before a document is electronically submitted to NSF, the proposer should ensure that those with disabilities can access and use the document effectively. Documents submitted to NSF should be created and verified as accessible prior to submission.

Procedures

1. How to Request Accessibility or Reasonable Accommodation for Proposal Preparation

- a) At least 30 calendar days before the proposal deadline, individuals with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations must email the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) at rarequest@nsf.gov for a reasonable accommodation.
- b) At least 30 calendar days before the proposal deadline, individuals must send an email to the [NSF Section 508 Compliance Officer](#) for an accessibility accommodation to access NSF proposal submission and award management systems, websites and other digital content.
- c) Submit supporting materials if requested. For reasonable accommodation requests, the NSF Section 508 Compliance Officer may request medical documentation signed and dated by the individual's physician that describes:
 - The nature, severity, and duration of the impairment.
 - The activities the impairment limits.
 - Why and how the particular reasonable accommodation requested will assist the individual.
- d) The information provided in support of a reasonable accommodation request is confidential and available only to designated agency staff that are responsible for providing and/or coordinating accommodation services.
- e) Decisions on reasonable accommodations are made by the NSF Disability Program Manager, in concert with applicable agency officials and based on the information provided.

C. Pre-Award and Post-Award Disclosures Required in Proposals

This section explains expectations that senior personnel must follow to disclose biographical, funding, and foreign-support information and complete required certifications and training. It also outlines submission procedures for those disclosures and warns that violations may result in administrative, civil, or criminal consequences.

Terms and Definitions

1. Biographical Sketch

A document that summarizes an individual's qualifications and professional history including education and training, appointments and positions, publications and other scholarly outputs.

2. Current and Pending (Other) Support

A disclosure of all current (ongoing projects, funding, or resources in receipt) and planned (proposals or requests for funding under review) research support from any source.

3. Faculty Associate

An individual other than the PI or co-PI considered by the performing institution to be a member of its faculty (or equivalent) or who holds an appointment as a faculty member at another institution, and who will participate in the project being supported.

4. Foreign Financial Disclosure

Annual reporting of foreign financial support, the cumulative value of which is \$50,000 or more per source, including gifts and contracts, received directly or indirectly from a foreign source which is associated with a foreign country of concern.

5. Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Program

A foreign-sponsored program, position, or activity that offers compensation or benefits — such as funding, travel, jobs, titles, or other incentives — in exchange for activities that could improperly influence, compromise, or conflict with U.S. federally funded research or institutional responsibilities. These programs may involve requirements to transfer nonpublic research information, recruit others into the program, conceal participation, duplicate federally funded work, violate award terms and conditions, or create conflicts of interest or commitment. The term also includes programs sponsored by foreign countries of concern, certain designated foreign institutions, or organizations identified by the U.S. government as problematic foreign talent recruitment programs. The full definition of a [malign foreign talent recruitment program](#) can be found on NSF.gov.

6. Senior/Key Personnel

Individuals designated by the proposer/recipient organization and approved by NSF who contribute in a substantive, meaningful way to the scientific development or execution of a research and development project proposed to be carried out with a research and development award. There are two primary categories of senior/key personnel, (1) PIs and co-PIs and (2) faculty associates (faculty member) (or equivalent). Senior/key personnel typically do not include graduate students.

Policies

1. Senior/Key Personnel

Senior/key personnel on potential awards must provide Biographical Sketch, Current and Pending (Other) Support, Collaborators and Other Affiliations, and Synergistic Activities information as part of the proposal submission process. NSF will require all senior/key personnel on potential awards to submit updated Current and Pending (Other) Support information prior to making a funding recommendation. See [Guide 5](#) for more information.

2. Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Program

Organizations must certify that senior/key personnel are not part of a malign foreign talent recruitment program and that the required research security training is completed.

3. Foreign Financial Disclosure

Each institution of higher education that receives NSF funding must disclose annually all current financial support, the cumulative value of which is \$50,000 or more per source, including gifts and contracts, received directly or indirectly from a foreign source which is associated with a foreign country of concern.

4. Former NSF Staff

A recipient or subrecipient must disclose whether any employees who worked on an application for, or proposal in support of, a resulting Federal award, or are anticipated to work on activities under the Federal award, were employed at NSF during the preceding two years. This disclosure must be provided to NSF for informational purposes.

Procedures

1. How to Complete Pre-Award Disclosures

- a) Collect the information for the Biographical Sketch, Current and Pending (Other) Support, and Collaborators and Other Affiliations (see [Guide 5](#) for instructions).
- b) Enter and upload disclosures in [Research.gov](#) or [Grants.gov](#).
- c) Confirm that all disclosures are accurate and complete.
- d) Ensure required research security training is complete.

D. Violations of Pre- and Post-Award Disclosure Requirements

This section explains that NSF requires accurate pre- and post-award disclosures and may investigate failures to disclose. It explains the consequences of nondisclosure or false disclosure and the factors that NSF will consider when determining appropriate consequences.

Policies

1. Violations

Violations of pre- and post-award disclosure requirements may lead to criminal, civil, and/or administrative consequences as may be deemed appropriate based upon the particular facts of the violation. The NSF Office of Inspector General (OIG) has the authority to thoroughly investigate violations and refer violations to criminal and/or civil offices within the U.S. Department of Justice, when warranted.

2. Consequences

In response to violations of disclosure requirements, NSF may:

- a) Not accept proposals.
- b) Remove personnel from an award.
- c) Suspend or terminate awards.
- d) Deem individuals ineligible to serve as an NSF reviewer.
- e) Report violations of the individual or the organization government wide.

3. Agency Decision Factors

NSF may consider the following factors, where relevant and consistent with applicable laws and regulations, in determining the appropriate consequences for violations of disclosure requirements:

- a) Harm or potential harm to NSF, the federal government, U.S. taxpayers, and other national interests.
- b) Intent of the offender.
- c) The offender's knowledge of requirements.
- d) Pattern of violation versus isolated incident.
- e) Existence and timing of self-disclosure.
- f) Policies, procedures, and training available to the offender.
- g) Any other mitigating factors.

E. Formatting of Proposals

This section explains NSF's required proposal formatting and readability standards and the pre-submission checks that ensure compliance. Before submitting a proposal, proposers should ensure they comply with these guidelines or with the NSF [Grants.gov Application Guide](#).

The [Proposal Preparation Checklist](#) may be used to assist in this review. The checklist is not intended to be an all-inclusive repetition of the required proposal contents and associated proposal preparation guidelines. Research.gov checks proposals for compliance with applicable requirements, however not all requirements can be validated automatically before they are submitted.

Policies

1. Pagination

Page numbers must not be included in uploaded proposal sections unless specifically directed by Research.gov, as pagination is applied automatically.

2. Approved Fonts and Sizes

Proposers must use only NSF-approved fonts and minimum sizes, including Arial, Courier New, or Palatino Linotype at 10-point or larger; Times New Roman at 11-point or larger; or Computer Modern fonts at 11-point or larger.

3. Font Size Exceptions for Special Content

Smaller font sizes may be used for formulas, tables, figures, and captions, and specialized fonts may be used for equations and symbols. Other fonts not specified above, such as Cambria Math, may be used for mathematical formulas, equations, or when inserting Greek letters or special characters.

4. Accessibility

Documents must include descriptive alternative text for images, graphs, and charts and be submitted in a machine-readable format (e.g., PDF).

5. Line Spacing

Text must not exceed six lines within one vertical inch.

6. Margins

Margins of at least one inch must be used on all sides, with no content placed within the margins.

7. Page Size

Standard letter paper size (8.5" × 11") must be used.

8. Applicability to All Sections

All formatting requirements apply to every uploaded section, including supplementary documents.

9. Readability and Compliance

Proposals that do not comply with readability and formatting requirements may be returned without review.

10. Single-Column Format

Proposers must use a single-column format for proposal text.

Procedures

1. How to Select the Appropriate Proposal Type

- a) During completion of the proposal setup wizard in Research.gov, the PI will be prompted to select the applicable response that describes the nature and type of proposal being developed. For more information on proposal types ii through xiii below, see [Guide 7](#).
 - i. Research.
 - ii. Planning Proposal.
 - iii. Rapid Response Research (RAPID).
 - iv. EARly-concept Grants for Exploratory Research (EAGER).
 - v. Research Advanced by Interdisciplinary Science and Engineering (RAISE).
 - vi. Grant Opportunities for Academic Liaison with Industry (GOALI).
 - vii. Ideas Lab.
 - viii. Conference.
 - ix. Equipment.
 - x. Travel.
 - xi. Research Infrastructure (see relevant funding opportunity).
 - xii. Postdoctoral Fellowship (see relevant funding opportunity).

And whether the proposal is:

- xxvii. A collaborative proposal from one organization.
 - xxviii. A collaborative proposal from multiple organizations.
 - xxix. Not a collaborative proposal.
- b) The requested proposal information noted above will be used to determine the applicable proposal preparation requirements that must be followed. Proposers are

strongly advised to review the applicable guide (this guide for research proposals or [Guide 7](#) for other types of proposals).

- c) Research.gov checks proposals for compliance with applicable requirements before they are submitted. Additional information on [NSF auto-compliance checks](#) is available on NSF.gov.

F. Single Copies and Substitute Negotiators

This section explains required proposal elements for research proposals, including the use and submission of Single-Copy Documents, optional suggested reviewer and exclusion lists, and special procedures for proposals involving former NSF staff. This section also explains how to supply a substitute negotiator if conflicts of interest arise.

Terms and Definitions

1. Single-Copy Document

A document submitted for NSF use only that is not provided to proposal reviewers.

2. Substitute Negotiator

An individual designated to communicate with NSF on behalf of a former NSF employee involved in a proposal.

Policies

1. Single-Copy Documents

Single-Copy Documents can be submitted through Research.gov or Grants.gov. Single-Copy Documents are for NSF use only, and NSF will not provide these materials to reviewers.

2. Suggested Reviewers

Proposers may include a list of suggested reviewers (including email address and organizational affiliation) who they believe are especially well qualified to review the proposal. Proposers also may include a separate list of persons they would prefer not to review the proposal. These suggestions are optional. This is a Single-Copy Document.

3. Former NSF Staff

For one year following separation from NSF, any communication with NSF by a former employee or Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) assignees must be done through use of a "substitute negotiator."

4. Substitute Negotiator

A substitute negotiator must be from the same organization and must be documented by the AOR. This information must be submitted as a Single-Copy Document and uploaded into the "Additional Single-Copy Documents" category. NSF will not process proposals involving a former NSF employee or IPA as PI or co-PI without a designated substitute negotiator.

Procedures

1. How to Prepare Reviewer Lists

- a) Compile a list of suggested reviewers (include their email and organizational affiliation).

- b) Compile a separate list of reviewers to exclude, if needed.
- c) Review conflict of interest guidance before submission.

2. How to Submit Single-Copy Documents in Research.gov

- a) Log in to [Research.gov](https://www.research.gov) and navigate to proposal submission.
- b) Some sections in a proposal are automatically designated as Single-Copy documents. Files uploaded to these designated sections do not need to be uploaded separately to the "Additional Single-Copy Documents" section. Those sections are:
 - "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities" when the "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities" box is checked on the Cover Sheet.
 - "Proprietary or Privileged Information" when the "Proprietary or Privileged Information" box is checked on the Cover Sheet.
 - "Nature of Natural or Anthropogenic Event" when the "Special Exception to the Deadline Date Policy" box is checked on the Cover Sheet.
 - "Collaborators and Other Affiliations" in Senior/Key Personnel Documents.
 - "List of Suggested Reviewers" under the Optional section in Research.gov.
 - "List of Reviewers not to Include" under the Optional section in Research.gov.

If a document that needs to be single copy does not have a designated section as listed above, upload it under "Additional Single-Copy Documents" in the "Optional" section on Research.gov.

- c) Verify documents are not included in reviewer-visible sections.

3. How to Designate a Substitute Negotiator

- a) Confirm whether any PI or co-PI on the proposal left NSF within the past year.
- b) Obtain AOR documentation designating a substitute negotiator.
- c) Ensure the negotiator is from the same organization.
- d) Upload documentation as a Single-Copy Document under "Additional Single-Copy Documents" in Research.gov.

G. Proposal Certifications Required for Organizations

This section outlines organizational certifications required for NSF proposals, stating that the AOR must certify accuracy, compliance, and acceptance of award obligations and must confirm the institution's policies and plans in key areas. The AOR must use the authorized organizational representative function to sign and submit these certifications and ensure only properly authorized individuals perform this role.

Policies

1. General

Governmentwide certifications and representations are provided by the proposer on an annual basis in SAM (see [Guide 1](#)). The AOR must certify accuracy and compliance, as well as certify that the organization (or individual) agrees to comply with award terms and conditions.

2. Conflicts of Interest

The AOR must certify that the organization has implemented and is enforcing a written policy on conflicts of interest (COI). See [Guide 13](#) for more information.

3. Flood Hazard Insurance

AORs for prospective recipients located in FEMA-designated special flood hazard areas must certify that adequate flood insurance has been or will be obtained in the following situations:

- a) For NSF proposals for the construction of a building or facility, regardless of the dollar amount of the award.
- b) For other NSF awards when more than \$25,000 has been budgeted in the proposal for repair, alteration, or improvement (construction) of a building or facility.

Proposers should contact their local government or a federally insured financial institution to determine what areas are identified as having special flood hazards and the availability of flood insurance in their community.

4. Responsible Conduct of Research

This requirement is only applicable to institutions of higher education (IHEs). The AOR must certify that the IHE has a plan to provide appropriate training and oversight in the responsible conduct of research to undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, faculty, and other senior/key personnel who will be supported by NSF to conduct research. Training must be provided for mentorship, potential research security threats, and federal export control, disclosure, and reporting requirements. See [Guide 13](#) for more information.

5. Organizational Support

The AOR must certify that the organization supports the proposal, including the portion of the proposal developed to satisfy the Broader Impacts and Intellectual Merit review criteria, as well as any other criteria specified in the funding opportunity. This certification is required by Section 526 of the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010.

6. Dual Use Research of Concern

The AOR must certify that the organization is, or will be, in compliance with all aspects of the *United States Government Policy for Institutional Oversight of Life Sciences Dual Use Research of Concern*. See [Guide 20](#) for more information.

7. Current and Pending (Other) Support (William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021)

The AOR must certify that proposers applying for federal research and development funding have disclosed all current and pending (other) research support, including the amount, type, and source (both domestic and foreign) and update the disclosure when required before award and during the period of performance. The AOR must certify that personnel have been informed of these requirements. See [Guide 5](#) for more information.

8. Safe and Harassment-Free Working Environments for Off-Campus or Off-Site Research

If the proposal involves off-campus or off-site research, the AOR must certify that the organization has a plan in place for safe and harassment-free working environments for the project. See [Guide 19](#) for more information.

9. Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Programs

The AOR must certify that all individuals identified as senior/key personnel have been made aware of and have complied with their responsibility to certify that the individual is not a party to a malign foreign talent recruitment program. PIs and co-PIs on active awards made on or after May 20, 2024, must certify annually thereafter. See [Guide 14](#) for more information.

10. Research Security Training for Federal Research Award Personnel

The AOR must certify that all individuals identified as senior/key personnel have completed the requisite research security training within one year prior to proposal submission. See [Guide 14](#) for more information.

11. IHEs Hosting or Supporting Confucius Institutes

The AOR must certify that, absent a waiver granted by the NSF Director, the IHE does not maintain a contract or agreement between the institution and a Confucius Institute. See [Guide 14](#) for more information.

Reminder: The AOR must use the "Authorized Organizational Representative" function to sign and submit the proposal, including NSF-specific proposal certifications. It is the proposing organization's responsibility to ensure that only properly authorized individuals perform this function.

H. Proposal Components for Research Proposals (Not Other Proposal Types)

This section explains the required components and content standards for NSF research proposals, including required documents. It emphasizes page, format, and content limits, rules for former staff and unfunded collaborations, and notes that proposers must upload all required sections in machine readable format and pass NSF's automated compliance checks before submission. For information on required components and content standards for other proposal types, refer to [Guide 7](#).

Terms and Definitions

1. Collaborative Proposal

A unified research project involving investigators from two or more organizations, submitted either as one proposal with subawards or as simultaneous linked proposals from multiple organizations.

Policies

1. General

The sections described below represent the body of a research proposal submitted to NSF. Failure to submit the required sections will result in the proposal not being accepted or being returned without review.

2. Cover Sheet

The Cover Sheet is the first section of a proposal. It is completed directly in Research.gov or Grants.gov. Some fields will auto-populate from the proposing organization's profile. Not all items are required for every proposal.

There are seven components of the Cover Sheet. The Cover Sheet data elements are as follows:

Requested Start Date and Proposal Duration

- i. Proposal Duration: The proposed duration for which support is requested should be consistent with the nature and complexity of the proposed activity. NSF encourages proposers to request funding for durations of three to five years when such durations are necessary for completion of the proposed work and are technically and managerially advantageous.
- ii. Requested Start Date: The requested start date should allow at least six months for NSF review, processing, and decision. PIs should consult their organization's Sponsored Project Office (SPO) for unusual situations (e.g., a long lead time for procurement) that create problems regarding the proposed start date. Specification of a desired start date for the project is important and helpful to NSF staff; however, requests for specific start dates may not be met.

Related Letter of Intent (LOI)

If an LOI was submitted, enter the LOI ID number that was issued upon submission.

Related Preliminary Proposal

If a preliminary proposal was submitted, and the organization was either invited or encouraged/discouraged to submit a full proposal, provide the Preliminary Proposal Number issued upon submission.

Prime Organization

The proposing organization's name, address, NSF organization code, UEI and Employer Identification Number/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN) will be auto-filled from SAM.gov and NSF records on the Cover Sheet.

Organizations must identify their status by checking all the applicable boxes on the Cover Sheet:

- i. For profit: U.S.-based commercial organizations, including small businesses with capabilities in scientific or engineering research or education.
- ii. Small business: Organized for-profit, independently owned and operated (not a subsidiary of, or controlled by, another firm), with no more than 500 employees, and not dominant in its field.

Primary Place of Performance (PPOP)

This information will default to the organization's physical address. If the project will be performed at a location other than the recipient organization, provide the following information (where applicable):

- i. Organization Name (identify the organization name of the primary site where the work will be performed, if different than the recipient).
- ii. Country.
- iii. Street Address.
- iv. City, State/Territory, 9-digit Postal Code.

Note that not all fields listed above are required. Research.gov specifies the fields that are required for projects that will be performed at locations other than that of the proposing organization.

For research infrastructure projects, the project/performance site should correspond to the physical location of the asset. For research infrastructure that is mobile or geographically distributed, information for the primary site or organizational headquarters (as defined by the proposer) should be provided.

Other Federal Agencies

If the same proposal is being submitted for consideration by another federal agency, the abbreviated name(s) of the federal agency(ies) must be identified in the space provided.

Other Information

If any of the following items on the Cover Sheet are applicable to the proposal being submitted, the relevant box(es) must be checked:

- i. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities
- ii. Proprietary or Privileged Information
- iii. Special Exception to the Deadline Date Policy
- iv. Historic Places
- v. Live Vertebrate Animals
- vi. Human Subjects
- vii. Funding of an International Branch Campus of a U.S. IHE – If this box is checked, the proposer also must enter the name of the applicable country(ies) in the International Activities Country Name(s) box described below.
- viii. Funding of a Foreign Organization or Foreign Individual – If this box is checked, the proposer also must enter the name of the applicable country(ies) in the International Activities Country Name(s) box described below.
- ix. International Activities Country Name(s) – for each proposal that describes an international activity, proposers must list the primary countries involved. An international activity is defined as research, training, and/or education carried out in cooperation with international counterparts either overseas or in the U.S. using virtual technologies. Proposers also must enter the country/countries with which project participants will engage and/or travel to attend international conferences. If the specific location of the international conference is not known at the time of the proposal submission, proposers should enter "Worldwide".
- x. Potential Life Sciences Dual Use Research of Concern (DURC)
- xi. Off-Campus or Off-Site Research – For purposes of this requirement, off-campus or off-site research is defined as data/information/samples being collected off-campus or off-site, such as fieldwork and research activities on vessels and aircraft.
- xii. Potential Impacts on Tribes

3. Project Summary

Each proposal must contain a summary of the proposed project not more than one page in length. The Project Summary must have three clearly labeled sections, each on its own line:

- a) Overview: A description of the activity that would result if the proposal were funded and a statement of objectives and methods to be employed.
- b) Intellectual Merit: A description of the potential of the proposed activity to advance knowledge.
- c) Broader Impacts: A description of the potential of the proposed activity to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes.

The Project Summary should be informative to other persons working in the same or related fields, and, insofar as possible, understandable to a broad audience within the scientific domain. It should not be an abstract of the proposal.

4. Table of Contents

The Table of Contents is automatically generated and cannot be edited.

5. Project Description

The Project Description must provide a clear statement of the work to be undertaken. It must include the objectives for the period of the proposed work and expected significance; the relationship of this work to the present state of knowledge in the field, and work in progress by the PI under other support

Contents

The Project Description must outline the general plan of work, including the broad design of activities to be undertaken, and, where appropriate, provide a clear description of experimental methods and procedures. 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. The project activities may be based on previously established and/or innovative methods and approaches, but in either case must be well justified. These issues apply to both the technical aspects of the proposal and the way in which the project may make broader contributions.

The Project Description must contain a section labeled "Broader Impacts." This heading must appear on its own line. This section should provide a discussion of the broader impacts of the proposed activities. See [Guide 8](#) for more information on Merit Review principles, including information on "Broader Impacts" examples.

For proposals that include funding to an International Branch Campus of a U.S. IHE or to a foreign organization or foreign individual (including through use of a subaward or consultant arrangement), the proposer must provide the requisite explanation/justification in the project description. See [Guide 1](#) on eligibility.

Page Limitations

The Project Description (including Results from Prior NSF Support, which is limited to five pages) may not exceed 15 pages. Visual materials, including charts, graphs, maps, photographs, and other pictorial presentations are included in the 15-page limitation.

PIs are cautioned that the Project Description must be self-contained, and that URLs must not be used because:

- The information could circumvent page limitations.
- The reviewers are under no obligation to view the sites.
- The sites could be altered or deleted between the time of submission and the time of review.

Results from Prior NSF Support

A proposal must include a 'Results from Prior NSF Support' section if any PI or co-PI identified on the proposal has current NSF funding or has received an NSF award with an end date in the last five years. This section counts toward the 15-page Project Description limit and is limited to 5 pages.

In cases where the PI or any co-PI has received more than one award (excluding amendments to existing awards), they need only report on the one award that is most closely related to the proposal. Support means salary support, as well as any other funding awarded by NSF, including research, Graduate Research Fellowship, Major Research Instrumentation, conference, equipment, travel, etc.

The following information must be provided for each PI or co-PI that meets the above criteria:

- i. The NSF award number, amount and period of support.
- ii. The title of the project.
- iii. A summary of the results of the completed work, including accomplishments, supported by the award. The results must be separately described under two distinct headings: Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts.
- iv. A listing of the publications resulting from the NSF award (a complete bibliographic citation for each publication, together with their NSF Public Access Repository (PAR) ID number, must be provided either in this section or in the References Cited section of the proposal). If none, state "No publications were produced under this award."
- v. Evidence of research products and their availability, including, but not limited to data, publications, samples, physical collections, software, and models, as described in any Data Management and Sharing Plan.
- vi. If the proposal is for renewed support, a description of the relation of the completed work to the proposed work.

If the project was recently awarded and therefore no new results exist, describe the major goals and broader impacts of the project.

Note that the proposal may contain up to five pages to describe the results. Results may be summarized in fewer than five pages, which would give the balance of the 15 pages for the Project Description.

Unfunded Collaborations

Any substantial collaboration with individuals not included in the budget should be described in the Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources section of the proposal and documented in a letter of collaboration from each collaborator. Such letters should be provided in the supplementary documentation section of Research.gov. Collaborative activities that are identified in the budget should follow the instructions in [Guide 7](#).

Group Proposals

NSF encourages submission of proposals by groups of investigators; often these are submitted to carry out interdisciplinary projects. Unless stipulated in a specific program funding opportunity, however, each proposal will be subject to the 15-page Project Description limitation established in Section b above.

6. References Cited

Reference information is required except for conference and travel proposals. Each reference must include (as applicable):

- a) The names of all authors (in the same sequence in which they appear in the publication).
- b) The article and journal title.
- c) Book title.
- d) Volume number.
- e) Page numbers.
- f) Year of publication.
- g) If the proposer has a website address readily available, that information should be included in the citation. It is not NSF's intent, however, to place an undue burden on proposers to search for the URL of every referenced publication. Therefore, inclusion of a website address is optional. A proposal that includes reference citation(s) that do not specify a URL is not considered to be in violation of NSF proposal preparation guidelines and the proposal will still be reviewed.

Proposers must be especially careful to follow accepted scholarly practices in providing citations for source materials relied upon when preparing any section of the proposal. While there is no established page limitation for the references, this section must include bibliographic citations only and must not be used to provide parenthetical information outside of the 15-page Project Description.

7. Budget

See [Guide 4](#).

8. Budget Justification

See [Guide 4](#).

9. Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources

See [Guide 5](#).

10. Senior/Key Personnel Documents

See [Guide 6](#).

11. Data Management and Sharing Plan

See [Guide 6](#).

12. Mentoring Plan (if applicable)

See [Guide 6](#).

13. Other Proposal Types

The proposal preparation instructions for Planning, RAPID, EAGER, RAISE, GOALI, Ideas Lab, Conference, Equipment, Travel, Research Infrastructure proposal types and supplemental funding mechanisms may deviate from the above content requirements. See [Guide 7](#) for more information.

Procedures

1. How to Complete Compliance Checks and Submit

- a) Save documents in an accessible, machine-readable and searchable format (e.g., searchable PDF).
- b) Confirm all sections (including supplementary documents) follow formatting rules.
- c) Upload all proposal components into [Research.gov](#) or [Grants.gov](#).
- d) Verify all required proposal sections are included.
- e) Run system validations (auto-compliance checks).
- f) Resolve any errors identified by the system.
- g) Submit the proposal once all checks are passed.
- h) Proposals that fail compliance checks cannot be submitted.

Authorities

The following authorities govern this guide:

- National Science Foundation Act of 1950
- National Flood Insurance Act of 1968
- Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 2017
- CHIPS and Science Act of 2022
- 2 CFR 200

Guide 4: Preparing Your Proposal – Budgets

Version 27-1 Effective [Month Day, Year]

This guide provides a clear framework for developing, justifying, and submitting proposal budgets for the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF). It explains:

- What costs are allowable.
- How to categorize and document costs.
- The specific requirements for personnel, travel, subawards, and indirect costs.
- How to build a compliant budget in NSF systems, ensuring proposals are accurate, well-supported, and aligned with federal regulations and NSF policy.

Prospective Principal Investigators (PIs), Authorized Organization Representatives (AORs), and Sponsored Project Officers (SPOs) should use this guide to prepare detailed, accurate budgets aligned with project needs, ensure all requested costs are allowable and justified, and follow system and documentation requirements. Additional information can be found on the [Preparing Your Proposal Budget](#) page on NSF.gov.

A. General Budget Requirements

This section defines the core requirements for NSF proposal budgets, including key terms like allowable costs and budget justification.

The proposal budget sets forth how much money the proposer is requesting, by category, to complete the project. The budget justification provides a more detailed breakdown of proposed spending in each category as well as a justification supporting the numbers provided in each budget category. This information is relied upon by NSF in formulating the total award amount and final award budget that is incorporated into any resultant award.

Terms and Definitions

1. Allowable Cost

Costs that are necessary, reasonable, allocable, and compliant with federal regulations and NSF policy. For criteria of allowable costs, see [2 CFR 200.403](#).

2. Budget

See [2 CFR 200.1](#).

3. Budget Justification

A narrative explanation (limited to five pages) of proposed spending supporting each cost category and amount requested in the proposal budget.

Policies

1. Budget and Budget Justifications

Proposals must include a budget for each year of support requested and a budget justification not exceeding five pages. The amounts for each budget line item requested must be documented and justified in the budget justification as specified below.

2. Allowability and Reasonableness

Costs must be necessary, reasonable, allocable, and allowable and must comply with federal cost principles applicable to the proposer and/or proposing subrecipient. See [2 CFR 200 Subpart E](#). For-profit organizations must use [FAR 31.201-2](#) to determine allowable costs.

Some nonprofit organizations, due to their size and nature of operations, are exempt from complying with the cost principles provided in [2 CFR 200 Subpart E](#) and must alternatively comply with cost principles provided in [FAR Part 31.2](#) as provided in [2 CFR 200.401\(c\)](#).

3. Proposing Organization Policies, Procedures, and Practices

Amounts and expenses budgeted must be consistent with the proposing organization's policies and procedures and cost accounting practices used in accumulating and reporting costs.

4. Collaborative Proposals

For collaborative proposals submitted by multiple organizations, each organization must include a separate budget and budget justification of no more than five pages.

5. Mid-Scale Research Infrastructure and Major Facilities

Proposals for Mid-scale and Major Facilities should consult NSF [Research Infrastructure Guide \(RIG\)](#) for additional guidance on preparation of plans describing how proposed construction or implementation project is to be planned, executed, and managed, including project definition (scope, schedule, budget), change control, cost estimating, and risk and Earned Value Management (EVM). Besides guidance for construction and implementation projects, the RIG also provides guidance for NSF Major Facilities and research infrastructure project development, design, Operations and Maintenance (O&M), and divestment.

6. For-Profit Submissions

For-profit entities are subject to the cost principles contained in the [FAR, Part 31](#).

B. Types of Costs

This section outlines the cost categories that may be included in an NSF proposal budget and explains how each must be calculated, justified, and managed. It covers key areas such as personnel, travel, equipment, participant support, subawards, and indirect costs, including limits, allowability conditions, and when prior NSF approval is required. It also includes procedures for building a compliant budget in NSF systems, ensuring all costs are properly categorized, documented, and aligned with project objectives.

Terms and Definitions

The terms and definitions below are applicable to all NSF grant awards. For-profit entities, and certain non-profit organizations exempt from the cost principles provided in 2 CFR 200 Subpart E will alternatively refer to the definitions provided in FAR Part 31.

1. Consultant Service

Services rendered by persons who are members of a particular profession or possess a special skill, and who are not officers or employees of the proposing organization.

2. Cost Sharing

See [2 CFR 200.1](#).

DRAFT

3. Data Curation Cost

An expense associated with preparing data into a form that others can use.

4. Data Deposit Cost

A one-time charge paid at the time a data set is deposited into a data repository.

5. Direct Cost

See [2 CFR 200.413](#).

6. Equipment

See [2 CFR 200.1](#) and [2 CFR 200.439](#).

7. Faculty Associate

An individual other than the PI or co-PI considered by the performing institution to be a member of its faculty (or equivalent) or who holds an appointment as a faculty member at another institution, and who will participate in the project being supported.

8. Fringe Benefits

See [2 CFR 200.431](#).

9. Indirect Costs (F&A)

See [2 CFR 200.414](#).

10. Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC)

See [2 CFR 200.1](#) and [2 CFR 200.414\(f\)](#).

11. Participant Support Cost

See [2 CFR 200.1](#) and [2 CFR 200.456](#).

12. Person-Months

The amount of time devoted to a project, expressed in months of effort during a given year or budget period.

13. Senior/Key Personnel

Individuals designated by the proposer/recipient organization and approved by NSF who contribute in a substantive, meaningful way to the scientific development or execution of a research and development project proposed to be carried out with a research and development award. There are two primary categories of senior/key personnel, (1) PIs and co-PIs and (2) faculty associates (faculty member) (or equivalent). Senior/key personnel typically do not include graduate students.

14. Subaward

See [2 CFR 200.1](#), [2 CFR 200.331](#), and [2 CFR 200.332](#).

Policies

B1. Salaries and Wages (Lines A and B on the Proposal Budget)

1. Senior/Key Personnel Salary Limits

NSF considers research part of regular duties. Salary support for senior/key personnel is limited to no more than two months of their regular salary in any one year unless justified and approved by NSF. This limit includes salary compensation received from all NSF-funded grants. Senior/key personnel typically do not include graduate students.

2. "Year" Definition

It is the organization's responsibility to define and consistently apply the term "year," and to specify this definition in the budget justification.

3. Compensation in Excess of Two Months

Compensation for senior/key personnel in excess of two months must be disclosed in the proposal budget, justified in the budget justification, and must be specifically approved by NSF in the award notice budget.

4. Administrative and Clerical Salaries and Wages

Administrative and clerical salaries should normally be treated as indirect costs and may be charged directly only if all the specific criteria are met:

- a) Services are integral to the project.
- b) Individuals can be specifically identified with the project.
- c) Costs are explicitly included in the approved budget or pre-approved by NSF.
- d) Costs are not also recovered as indirect costs.

The proposer must ensure conditions (a), (b), and (d) are considered at budget preparation.

5. Salary Data Disclosure

The proposer may request that salary data on senior/key personnel not be released to persons outside the government during the review process. If this option is exercised: NSF will not forward the detailed information to reviewers and will hold it privileged to the extent permitted by law. The information on senior/key personnel salaries will be used as the basis for determining the salary amounts shown in the budget.

B2. Fringe Benefit Costs (Line C on the Proposal Budget)

1. General

If the proposer's usual accounting practices provide that its contributions to employee benefits (leave, employee insurance, social security, retirement, other payroll-related taxes, etc.) be treated as direct costs, recipients may request funds to support fringe benefits as a direct cost. These costs are typically determined by application of a calculated fringe benefit rate for a particular class of employee (full time or part-time) applied to the salaries and wages requested. They also may be paid based on actual costs for individual employees if that institutional policy has been approved by NSF.

B3. Equipment Costs (Line D on the Proposal Budget)

1. Types

The acquisition cost of equipment includes equipment purchases as well as modifications, attachments, and accessories necessary to make an item of equipment usable for the purpose

for which it will be purchased. Items of needed equipment must be adequately justified and listed individually with a description and an estimated cost.

2. General Purpose

Allowable items ordinarily will be limited to research equipment and apparatuses not already available for the conduct of the work. General purpose equipment such as office equipment and furnishings, and information technology equipment and systems are typically not eligible for direct cost support.

3. Special Purpose

Special-purpose or scientific-use computers or associated hardware and software may be requested as items of equipment when necessary to accomplish the project objectives and not otherwise reasonably available. Any request to support such items must be clearly disclosed in the proposal budget, the budget justification, and the NSF award budget.

4. Prohibitions of Procurement and Operation of Prohibited Unmanned Aircraft Systems

NSF funds must not be used to (a) procure unmanned aircraft systems (drones) that are manufactured or assembled by a covered foreign entity; or (b) in connection with the operation of such a drone or unmanned aircraft systems. Prohibited sources of drones include entities identified on the [Consolidated Screening List](#) and entities from the People's Republic of China or subject to influence or control by the government of the People's Republic of China or the Communist Party of the People's Republic of China, as determined by the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security. See [2 CFR 200.216](#) for more information.

B4. Travel Costs (Line E on the Proposal Budget)

1. General

When anticipated, travel and its relation to the proposed activities must be specified, itemized, and justified by destination and cost.

2. Purpose

Funds may be requested for field work, attendance at meetings and conferences, and other travel associated with the proposed work, including subsistence. To qualify for support, however, attendance at meetings or conferences must be necessary to accomplish proposal objectives or disseminate research results.

3. Dependents

Travel support for dependents of senior/key personnel may be requested only when the travel is for a duration of six months or more either by inclusion in the approved budget or with the prior written approval of the cognizant NSF Grants Officer. Temporary dependent care costs above and beyond regular dependent care that directly result from travel to conferences are allowable costs.

4. Travel Status Coverage

Travel, meal, and hotel expenses of proposing organization employees who are not on travel status are unallowable.

5. Airfare

Allowance for air travel normally will not exceed the cost of round-trip, economy airfares.

6. Domestic Travel

Persons traveling under NSF awards must travel by U.S.-Flag Air carriers, if available. Domestic travel includes travel within and between the U.S., its territories, and possessions.

7. Foreign Travel

Travel outside the U.S., its territories and its possessions is considered foreign travel. When anticipated, the proposer must enter the names of countries and dates of visit on the proposal budget justification, if known. See [Guide 22](#) for more information.

B5. Participant Support Costs (Line F on the Proposal Budget)

1. General

Participant support costs must be separately identified, justified, and are generally excluded from indirect cost calculations. Any additional categories of participant support costs other than those described in [2 CFR 200.1](#) (such as incentives, gifts, souvenirs, t-shirts, and memorabilia), must be justified in the budget justification.

2. Conferences

If the primary purpose of an individual's attendance at a conference is learning and receiving training as a participant, then the costs must be included under participant support.

If the primary purpose of an individual's attendance at a conference is to speak or assist with management of the conference, then such costs must be budgeted in appropriate categories other than participant support.

3. Educational Projects

For some educational projects conducted at local school districts, the participants being trained are employees. In such cases, the costs must be classified as participant support if payment is made through a stipend or training allowance method. The school district must have an accounting mechanism in place (i.e., sub-account code) to differentiate between regular salary and stipend payments.

4. Meals, Lodging, and Transportation

Where meals or lodgings are furnished without charge or at a nominal cost (e.g., as part of a conference registration fee), the per diem or subsistence allowance must be correspondingly reduced.

5. Local Participant Conference Attendance

Although local participants may participate in conference meals and coffee breaks, funds may not be proposed to pay per diem or similar expenses for local participants attending a conference.

6. Transportation

In training activities that involve off-site field work, costs of transportation of participants are allowable. The number of participants to be supported must be entered on the proposal budget.

7. Indirect Cost Application

Indirect costs are not generally allowed on costs budgeted as participant support unless the recipient's current, federally approved indirect cost rate agreement provides for allocation of them to participant support costs.

B6. Other Direct Costs (Lines G1-G6 on the Proposal Budget)

1. General

The budget must identify and itemize other anticipated direct costs, including incentive payments, materials and supplies, and computer and vendor services. Additional examples include aircraft rental, space rental at research establishments away from the proposing organization, minor building alterations, payments to human subjects, and service charges. Reference books and periodicals only may be included on the budget if they are allocable to the project. Contracts for the purpose of obtaining goods and services for the proposer's own use are another example of a direct cost.

2. Materials and Supplies (Line G1 on the Proposal Budget)

The budget must indicate the types of expendable materials and supplies. A computing device is considered a supply if the acquisition cost is less than the lesser of the capitalization level established by the proposer or \$10,000, regardless of the length of its useful life. In the specific case of computing devices, charging as a direct cost is allowable for devices that are essential and allocable, but not solely dedicated, to the performance of the project. Details and justification must be included for items requested. See [2 CFR 200.314](#) for more information.

3. Documentation and Printing (Line G2 on the Proposal Budget)

The budget may request funds for the costs of documenting, preparing, or printing findings and products of the work to be conducted under the award. This generally includes:

- Reports, reprints, page charges and illustrations.
- Documenting, storing, cleanup and indexing data or databases.
- Software development, documentation and debugging.
- Preserving, storing, documenting and indexing physical specimens, collections or fabricated items.
- Data deposit and curation costs.

4. Consultant Services (also referred to as Professional Service Costs) (Line G3 on the Proposal Budget)

The proposal budget may request costs for professional and consultant services. Consultants' travel costs, including subsistence, may be included. If requested, the proposer must be able to justify that the proposed rate of pay is reasonable.

5. Computer Services (Line G4 on the Proposal Budget)

The cost of computer services, including computer-based retrieval of scientific, technical, and educational information, may be requested only where it is institutional policy to charge such

costs as direct charges. A justification based on the established computer service rates at the proposing organization must be included. The proposal budget also may request costs for leasing of computer equipment.

B7. Subawards (Line G5 on the Proposal Budget)

1. General

Subawards must be disclosed in the proposal, include separate budgets and justifications, and comply with subrecipient determination requirements. Each subaward budget justification must be no more than five pages.

2. NSF Prior Authorization

Except for the purpose of obtaining goods and services for the proposer's own use which creates a procurement relationship with a contractor, no portion of the proposed activity may be subawarded or transferred to another organization without prior written NSF authorization. If the subaward organization is changed, prior approval of the new subaward organization must be obtained from the cognizant NSF Grants Officer.

3. Subrecipients Versus Contractors

All proposing organizations are required to make a case-by-case determination regarding the role of a subrecipient versus contractor for each agreement it makes, in accordance with [2 CFR 200.331](#). Inclusion of a subaward or contract in the proposal budget or submission of a request after issuance of an NSF award to add a subaward or contract will document the required organizational determination.

4. Indirect Cost Rates for Subrecipients

NSF does not negotiate rates for organizations that are not direct recipients of NSF funding. Proposers must use the proposed subrecipient's applicable U.S. federally negotiated indirect cost rate(s) in preparing the proposal budget. If no such rate exists, the proposer must determine the appropriate rate in collaboration with the subrecipient. The appropriate rate will be one of the following:

- A negotiated rate between the proposer and the subrecipient.
- A prior rate negotiated between a different pass-through entity and the same subrecipient.
- The "de minimis" indirect cost recovery rate of up to 15% of modified total direct costs (MTDC).

5. Foreign Subrecipients

NSF does not normally make direct awards to foreign organizations except as expressly authorized by statute. Foreign subrecipient organizations that do not have a current U.S. federally negotiated indirect cost rate(s) are limited to a "de minimis" indirect cost rate recovery of up to 15% of MTDC. Foreign subrecipients that have a U.S. federally negotiated indirect cost rate(s) may recover indirect costs at the current negotiated rate.

Reminder: Proposers are responsible for ensuring that proposed subrecipient costs, including indirect costs, are reasonable and appropriate.

B8. Other Direct Costs (Line G6 on the Proposal Budget)

1. General

Any other direct costs not specified in lines G1 through G5 must be identified on line G6. Such costs must be itemized and detailed in the budget justification. Examples include contracts for the purpose of obtaining goods and services for the proposer's own use (see [2 CFR 200.331](#) for more information) and incentive payments.

2. Incentive Payments

Incentive payments such as payments to human subjects or incentives to promote completion of a survey must be proposed in accordance with organizational policies and procedures. Indirect costs should be calculated on incentive payments in accordance with the organization's approved U.S. federally negotiated indirect cost rate(s). Note that performance-based incentive payments to employees should not be included in this section of the NSF proposal budget.

4. Meals and Coffee Breaks

Meals that are an integral and necessary part of a conference may be included in the budget, provided that the costs are reasonable, necessary, and managed in manner that minimizes costs to the federal award. NSF funds may not be included or spent for meals or coffee breaks for intramural meetings of an organization or any of its components.

B9. Indirect Costs (also known as Facilities and Administrative Costs (F&A)) (Line I on the Proposal Budget)

1. General

Organizations must use their federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement to prepare the proposal budget, if one exists. The amount for indirect costs must be calculated by applying the current negotiated indirect cost rate(s) to the approved base(s), and such amounts must be specified in the budget justification. NSF program staff may not negotiate indirect costs as a separate budget item and may not suggest or request that PIs reduce or waive indirect costs.

2. De Minimis Rate

Domestic proposing organizations that do not have a current negotiated rate agreement with a cognizant federal agency should generally apply the "de minimis" rate of up to 15% to a base of MTDC. No supporting documentation is required for proposed rates of 15% or less of MTDC.

3. Agency Rate Application and Negotiation

Institutions of higher education (IHEs) are required to use the negotiated F&A rate that is in effect at the time of the initial award throughout the life of the sponsored agreement. Non-IHE proposers are not subject to this requirement.

NSF formally negotiates indirect cost rates for the organizations for which NSF has rate cognizance. NSF does not negotiate rates for entities that do not yet hold direct NSF funding, nor does NSF negotiate rates for subrecipients. Visit the [NSF Indirect Cost Rate Policies](#) page on NSF.gov for more information.

4. Award-Specific Rate Negotiations

In certain circumstances, NSF may negotiate an award-specific rate to be used only on the award currently being considered for funding. In these cases, and at the request of the cognizant NSF Program Director or Grants Officer, the proposing organization may be asked to prepare an indirect cost rate proposal based on expenditures from its most recently completed fiscal year.

5. Foreign Organizations

NSF does not normally make direct awards to foreign organizations except as expressly authorized by statute. Foreign subrecipient organizations that do not have a current U.S. federally negotiated indirect cost rate(s) are limited to a "de minimis" indirect cost rate recovery of up to 15% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). Foreign subrecipients that have a U.S. federally negotiated indirect cost rate(s) may recover indirect costs at the current negotiated rate.

B10. Cost Sharing (Line M on the Proposal Budget)

For information on NSF's policy on cost sharing, see the National Science Board (NSB) report [Investing in the Future: NSF Cost Sharing Policies for a Robust Federal Research Enterprise](#).

1. Voluntary Committed and Uncommitted Cost Sharing

Voluntary committed cost sharing are binding commitments by proposing organizations that appear on the NSF proposal budget and are specifically identified in the approved NSF budget. Voluntary committed cost sharing is prohibited in NSF awards, and Line M on the proposal budget will not be available for use by the proposer. While not required by NSF, the recipient may, at its own discretion, continue to contribute voluntary uncommitted cost sharing to NSF-sponsored projects.

2. Mandatory Cost Sharing

Mandatory cost sharing will only be required for NSF programs when explicitly authorized by the NSF Director, the NSB, or legislation. A complete listing of NSF programs that require cost sharing is available on the [Cost-Sharing Policy](#) page on NSF.gov. In these programs, cost-sharing requirements will be clearly identified in the funding opportunity and must be included on line M of the proposal budget. See [Guide 18](#) for more information.

3. Mandatory Commitment Targets

Mandatory cost-sharing commitment targets, as specified on an award's first year approved budget, must be met prior to the award end date. Mandatory cost sharing commitments will be considered as an eligibility item for a proposal, rather than a review criterion. Proposers are advised not to exceed the mandatory cost sharing level or amount specified in the funding opportunity.

4. Binding Agreement

When mandatory cost sharing is included, the commitment of funds becomes legally binding and is subject to audit. The estimated value of any in-kind contributions also should be included on line M. An explanation of the source, nature, amount, and availability of any proposed cost sharing must be provided in the budget justification.

5. Federal Funds

Contributions derived from other federal funds or counted as cost sharing toward projects of another federal agency must not be counted towards meeting the specific cost sharing requirements of the NSF award.

Procedures

1. How to Develop a Proposal Budget

- a) Identify and document all required cost categories (personnel, equipment, travel, participant support, etc.) aligned with project scope.
- b) Enter annual budget amounts by category in the NSF proposal system, either Research.gov or Grants.gov. For additional information, refer to the [How to Enter Proposal Budgets](#) guide on Research.gov.
- c) Personnel Direct Costs (Senior/Key Personnel):
For each year, enter senior/key personnel effort and salaries on Line A. Each senior/key person included in the proposal budget must be listed separately. Include the person's name, estimated person-months, and total salary amounts.

If no salary is requested for a specific senior/key person, remove them from the budget and describe their role elsewhere.

- d) Personnel Direct Costs (Other Personnel):
For each year, enter other personnel effort and salaries on Line B.
 - For postdoctoral scholars and other professionals, enter the total number of persons for each position, the number of full-time-equivalent person-months, and the total amount of salaries requested per year.
 - For graduate and undergraduate students, secretarial, clerical or technical staff whose time will be charged directly to the project, enter only the total number of persons and total amount of salaries requested per year in each category.
- e) Fringe Benefits:
For each year, enter fringe benefit costs on Line C. Use approved institutional rates and apply them consistently to eligible cost bases (see [2 CFR 200.431](#) and [2 CFR 200.414](#)).
- f) Equipment:
For each year, enter equipment costs on Line D. List each item with a per-unit acquisition cost that is \$10,000 or more, with an item description and estimated cost; confirm it is not general-purpose equipment unless justified.
- g) Travel:
For each year, enter travel costs on Line E, distinguishing between domestic travel (in U.S., its territories and possessions) and foreign travel.
- h) Participant Support Costs:
For each year, enter participant support costs on Line F. Enter the number of participants and itemize costs (stipends, travel, etc.) based on the type and duration of the activity. Ensure separation from other cost categories.

- i) Other Direct Costs:
For each year, enter other direct costs, where appropriate, on the following lines:
- Materials and Supplies (Line G1).
 - Documentation and Printing (Line G2).
 - Consultant Services (Line G3).
 - Computer Services (Line G4).
 - Subawards (Line G5): Identify subawards and include separate budgets for each subrecipient.
 - Other Direct Costs (Line G6).
- j) Indirect Costs:
For each year, enter indirect costs on Line I. The amount for indirect costs must be calculated by applying the current negotiated indirect cost rate(s) to the approved base(s), and such amounts must be specified in the budget justification.
- k) Fees:
Line K is available for use only by the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs and Major Facilities programs, when specified in the funding opportunity. For these proposals, enter fees for each year on line K.
- NSF will generally not fund fee or Facilities Capital Cost of Money (FCCM) on its awards.
- l) Cost Sharing:
Line M is available only for funding opportunities that require cost sharing. For these proposals, enter the cumulative cost-sharing amount (including in-kind contributions) on line M of the first year of the proposal budget.
- m) Review for compliance and consistency. Verify all costs are allowable, justified, and consistent with organizational policies and accounting practices.
- n) If exercising the option to not release salary data on senior/key personnel outside the government, see procedures in [Guide 6](#).

2. How to Develop a Budget Justification

- a) Provide detailed explanations for each budget category. Provide enough detail for NSF staff and reviewers to understand and evaluate the requested amounts. Include rates, assumptions, and necessity of costs.
- b) Senior/Key Personnel:
For each senior/key person listed in the budget, describe their role in the project, their level of effort, and the salary requested.
- c) Other Personnel:
For each category of other personnel, explain the type of personnel, the number of people, their level of effort, roles in the project, and salary/wages requested.
- d) Fringe Benefits:

Explain how fringe benefits were calculated for personnel in the budget. Provide the rates or basis used and confirm they are consistent with the organization's standard policies.

- e) **Equipment:**
For each piece of equipment requested in the budget, describe the item, its estimated cost and why it is needed for the project.
- f) **Travel:**
For any travel funds requested, explain the purpose of the planned trip and specify the destination, purpose, and cost. If funds are requested for international travel, specify the countries that will be visited.
- g) **Participant Support Costs:**
For any participant support costs requested, explain the type of activity, number of participants, and what costs are covered.
- h) **Other Direct Costs:**
Itemize and detail the costs budgeted in this category.

For consultant services, provide a justification, including information on the consultant's expertise, primary organizational affiliation, normal daily compensation rate, and number of days of expected service.

For subawards, provide a separate budget justification (each no longer than five pages) for each budgeted subaward.

- i) **Indirect Costs:**
Describe the amount budgeted for indirect costs, the rate(s) applied, and the base(s). Organizations with more than one negotiated rate (for example, on-campus vs. off-campus) should specify which one applies to the project.
- j) If the budget includes mandatory cost-sharing, describe the source of the funds, the nature of the contributions (e.g., cash, in-kind, etc.), the amount of the contributions, and the availability of the contributions at the time of award.
- k) Upload the budget justification with the full proposal in Research.gov or Grants.gov.

Reminder:

- The Budget Justification is limited to five pages for the prime organization.
- Each subaward must include its own Budget Justification, limited to five pages.
- For collaborative proposals submitted by multiple organizations, each organization must include its own Budget Justification, limited to five pages.

3. [How to Determine Other Common Unallowable Costs Identified by NSF](#)

- a) Review [2 CFR 200.410](#) for comprehensive information regarding allowable costs. The following categories of unallowable costs are highlighted because of their sensitivity:

- i. Do not request funds for entertainment (e.g., tickets to shows or sporting events, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and gratuities) unless they are necessary to accomplish project objectives.
- ii. Do not request funds for meals or coffee breaks for intramural meetings of an organization or any of its components, including, but not limited to, laboratories, departments, and centers. See [2 CFR 200.432](#) for more information.
- iii. Do not request funds for airfare above economy rates. First-class and business-class airfare may not be charged to NSF awards unless justified, per criteria stated in [2 CFR 200.475](#) where applicable. Awardees should charge airfare related to NSF awards at coach or economy rates. Upgrades may be taken to use frequent flyer miles or other promotions, but the rate charged to the federal award should be made at the coach rates. Length of travel, position within the awardee organization (e.g., executive director travel), and/or size of the traveler are not acceptable justifications for using first-class airfare.
- iv. Do not request funds for alcoholic beverages.
- v. Do not request funds for rental of any property owned by individuals or entities affiliated with NSF recipients (including commercial or residential real estate), for use as home office workspace (see [2 CFR 200.465\(f\)](#)). NSF will also not generally reimburse for other costs associated with working from home to include utilities (see [2 CFR 200.445\(b\)](#)).

Authorities

The following authorities govern this guide:

- American Drone Security Act of 2023
- Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 31 (for-profit entities)
- National Science Board Cost Sharing Policy - Investing in the Future: NSF Cost Sharing Policies for a Robust Federal Research Enterprise of 2009
- 2 CFR 200

Guide 5: Preparing Your Proposal – Facilities, Equipment, Personnel, Data Management, and Other Supporting Documents

Version 27-1 Effective [Month Day, Year]

This guide explains how to prepare the information on facilities, equipment, personnel, data management, and other supporting documents sections of a proposal to the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF), focusing on what information must be included, where it should go, and how it will be reviewed. It explains:

- How to describe project resources.
- How to prepare required documents for senior/key personnel (such as biographical sketches and Current and Pending (Other) Support) using SciENCv.
- How to disclose collaborations, affiliations, and potential conflicts of interest.
- Requirements for key proposal components like synergistic activities, mentoring plans, and data management and sharing plans.
- When supplementary materials are allowed or required, ensuring proposals are complete, accurate, and do not include prohibited or unnecessary information.

Prospective Principal Investigators (PIs) should use this guide to prepare complete and accurate proposal documentation that describes resources that will support a project; required documents for senior/key personnel; documentation regarding data management and sharing; and any allowed or required supplementary documentation.

Authorized Organization Representatives (AORs) and Sponsored Project Offices (SPOs) should use this guide to ensure that the above proposal components are included in a proposal before submission.

A. Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources

This section explains how to describe the resources that will support a project. It requires a clear, combined description of only the resources directly needed for the work, without including any dollar amounts. It also emphasizes that these resources must be available if the project is funded and must be included only in the designated section of the proposal.

Terms and Definitions

1. Cost Sharing
See [2 CFR 200.1](#).

Policies

1. Information Required

Proposers must describe only those internal and external resources (both physical and personnel) that are directly relevant to the proposed work, including those to be provided by collaborators and subrecipients. The description must provide a single, aggregated description of all relevant resources that the proposing organization, collaborators, and subrecipients will provide or make available if the project is funded. Such information must be provided in this section, in lieu of other parts of the proposal (e.g., Budget Justification, Project Description). The description must be narrative in nature and must not include quantifiable financial information.

2. Availability Expectation

The resources described in this Guide are not considered voluntary committed cost sharing under [2 CFR 200.1](#). Proposers must not represent them as cost sharing, and they must ensure the identified resources will be provided or made available if the award is made.

3. Post-Award Changes

If changes in resources materially affect project objectives, scope, methods, or procedures after award, the recipient must follow NSF post award change procedures.

Procedures

1. How to Prepare the Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources Section

- a) Identify the facilities (e.g., laboratories, animal facilities), equipment, personnel (e.g., consultant and administrative services), and other resources that are directly relevant to the proposed work. Gather this information from the proposing organization, collaborators, and subrecipients, confirming that the resources described can and will be made available if the project is funded.
- b) Combine all resources into a single, aggregated narrative description.
- c) Describe only resources that will directly support the project if funded.
- d) Place this information only in the Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources section, not in the Project Description or Budget Justification.
- e) Upload under "Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources" in Research.gov or Grants.gov.

B. Biographical Sketches

This section explains the policies and procedures for the biographical sketch, which must be completed for everyone identified as a senior/key person on the proposal. These instructions serve as NSF's implementation of the Biographical Sketch Common Form developed by the National Science and Technology Council's Research Security Subcommittee. The Biographical Sketch is used to assess how well qualified the individual, team, or organization is to conduct the proposed activities and for research security risk assessments.

Terms and Definitions

1. Auxiliary User

A non-Principal Investigator (PI) who helps prepare, edit, or update a specific proposal, budget, or progress report.

2. Biographical Sketch

A document summarizing an individual's qualifications and professional history, including education and training, appointments and positions, publications and other scholarly outputs.

3. Collaborators and Other Affiliations (COA)

Formatted lists of an individual's personal and professional relationships used for reviewer selection, conflict management, and research security risk assessments.

4. Faculty Associate

An individual other than the PI or co-PI considered by the performing institution to be a member of its faculty (or equivalent) or who holds an appointment as a faculty member at another institution, and who will participate in the project being supported.

4. Open Researcher and Contributor (ORCID) ID

A unique and persistent 16-digit digital identifier for individuals used to distinguish researchers, scholars, and innovators from one another.

5. Science Experts Network Curriculum Vitae (SciENCv)

NSF-required system for preparing personnel documents.

6. Senior/Key Personnel

Individuals designated by the proposer/recipient organization and approved by NSF who contribute in a substantive, meaningful way to the scientific development or execution of a research and development project proposed to be carried out with a research and development award. There are two primary categories of senior/key personnel, (1) PIs and co-PIs and (2) faculty associates (faculty member) (or equivalent). Senior/key personnel typically do not include graduate students.

Policies

1. Required Systems

Senior/key personnel must prepare the Biographical Sketch through [SciENCv](#) so that an NSF-compliant PDF is generated.

2. Who Must Submit

Each individual who serves as senior/key personnel on the project must provide a separate Biographical Sketch. A proposal submitted to NSF must include a PI and a maximum of four co-PIs.

3. Products

The Biographical Sketch may include up to five products most closely related to the proposed project and up to five other significant products. Acceptable products must be citable and accessible.

4. Foreign Government Sponsorship and Support

Senior/key personnel must identify domestic and foreign professional appointments and positions outside the primary organization for up to three years before proposal submission. Further, if an individual receives direct or indirect support that is funded by a foreign government-sponsored talent recruitment program, even where the support is provided through an intermediary and does not require membership in the foreign government-sponsored talent recruitment program, that support must be disclosed. Individuals must also report other foreign government-sponsored or affiliated activities.

5. Foreign Talent Program Restrictions

Individuals must disclose required foreign government-sponsored and affiliated activities and must certify that they are not parties to a malign foreign talent recruitment program.

6. Personal Information

Individuals must not include personal information such as home address, home or cell phone numbers, personal email, driver's license number, marital status, hobbies, or similar personal details. NSF is not responsible or in any way liable for the release of such material.

7. Citations

Products must include full citation information and must be citable and accessible.

8. Certifications

Each senior/key person must certify that the information is current, accurate, and complete, that they are not a party to a malign foreign talent recruitment program, and that they have completed the required research security training within 12 months prior to proposal submission.

9. Other Personnel

Proposals may include biographical information for other personnel when appropriate, provided it is clearly labeled as "Other Personnel." Other personnel include postdoctoral scholars, other professionals and students (research assistants).

10. Equipment Proposals

For equipment proposals, auxiliary users must have supporting biographical information submitted. For each auxiliary user, the proposal must include: (a) a short biographical sketch; and (b) up to five publications most closely related to the proposed acquisition.

Procedures

1. How to Prepare Biographical Sketches for Senior/Key Personnel, Other Personnel, and Auxiliary Users for Equipment Proposals

- a) Prepare each Biographical Sketch using [SciENCv: Science Experts Network Curriculum Vitae](#). [Review the data schema](#) to determine what information to collect. For additional information, refer to the National Institutes of Health [NSF Biographical Sketch](#) guide.
- b) Enter the following information. Information marked with an asterisk (*) is required:
 - i. Identifying Information
 - Name*: Enter the name of the senior/key person (Title, Last name, First name, Middle name, including any applicable suffix).
 - ORCID ID: Enter the ORCID ID of the senior/key person. Visit <https://orcid.org> for information on obtaining an ORCID ID.
 - Position Title*: Enter the current position title of the senior/key person.
 - i. Organization and Location
 - Name*: Enter the official name of the primary organization of the senior/key person. Do not use abbreviations.
 - Location*: Enter the City, State/Province, and Country where the primary organization is located. If the State/Province is not applicable, enter N/A.
 - Start Year*
 - End Year
 - ii. Professional Preparation*

Provide a list of the senior/key person's professional preparation (e.g., education and training), listed in reverse chronological order by start date. Include all postdoctoral and fellowship training, as applicable, listing each separately. Also

include the baccalaureate degree or other initial professional education. For each entry provide:

- Type of professional preparation.
- The official name of the organization (no abbreviations).
- The location of the organization: City, State/Province, and Country. If the State/Province is not applicable, enter N/A.
- The degree or training received (if applicable).
- The start month and year of the degree or fellowship program.
- The month and year the degree or training was received (or expected receipt date).
- The field of study.

iii. Appointments and Positions*

Provide a list, in reverse chronological order by start date, of all the senior/key person's [academic](#), [professional](#), or [institutional](#) appointments and positions, beginning with the current appointment (including the associated organization and location). Appointments and positions include any titled academic, professional, or institutional position whether remuneration is received, and whether full-time, part-time, or voluntary (including adjunct, visiting, or honorary). Senior/key personnel must identify all domestic and foreign professional appointments and positions outside of the primary organization for a period of up to three years from the date the proposer submits the proposal to NSF for funding consideration. For each entry provide:

- Start date*: YYYY
- End date: YYYY
- Appointment or position title*
- Official name of organization (no abbreviations)*
- Location of organization*: City, State/Province, Country

iv. Products*

Provide a list of: (i) up to five products most closely related to the proposed project; and (ii) up to five other significant products that demonstrate the senior/key person's qualifications to carry out the project. It is up to the individual to determine how to best organize this listing to demonstrate their ability to carry out the project. Acceptable products must be citable and accessible, including but not limited to:

- Publications, conference papers, and presentations.
- Website(s) or other internet site(s).
- Technologies or techniques.
- Inventions, patents, patent applications, and/or licenses.
- Other products, such as data, databases, or datasets, physical collections, audio or video products, software, models, educational aids or curricula, instruments or equipment, research material, interventions (e.g., clinical or educational), or new business creation.

Only the list of ten will be used in the review of the proposal. Each product listing must include full citation information including names of authors; product title; date of publication or release; website URL; other persistent identifier (if available) and other relevant citation information (e.g., in the case of publications,

title of enclosing work such as journal or book, volume, issue, pages). If any of the items specified above is not applicable, enter N/A.

Senior/key personnel who wish to include publications in the products section of the biographical sketch that include multiple authors may, at their discretion, choose to list one or more of the authors and then "et al" in lieu of including the complete listing of authors' names.

- v. Certification*
Each senior/key person is required to complete certifications regarding the information provided in their Biographical Sketch. Misrepresentations and/or omissions may be subject to prosecution and liability.
- c) Determine whether including biographical information for other personnel is appropriate to demonstrate exceptional qualifications. Clearly label it as "Other Personnel" in the "Other Personnel Biographical Information."
- d) For equipment proposals, prepare required auxiliary user information, including a short biographical sketch and up to five related publications for each user. Such information should be clearly identified as "Equipment Proposal" biographical information and uploaded in the Other Supplementary Documents section of the proposal.
- e) SciENCv will generate an NSF-compliant PDF that you must upload to the proposal submission system.
- f) Download and upload the NSF-compliant PDF under "Senior/Key Personnel Documents" in Research.gov or Grants.gov.

C. Current and Pending (Other) Support

NSF uses this information to assess a proposer's capacity to carry out the proposed project, identify conflicts of commitment, perform research security risk assessments, and detect scientific, budgetary, or effort overlap. These instructions serve as NSF's implementation of the Current and Pending (Other) Support Common Form. This section explains how to report Current and Pending (Other) Support so NSF can assess whether individuals have the time and capacity to carry out the proposed work and identify any potential overlap or conflicts.

Terms and Definitions

1. Current and Pending (Other) Support

A disclosure of all current (ongoing projects, funding, or resources in receipt) and planned (proposals or requests for funding under review) research support from any source.

2. In-Kind Contribution

See [2 CFR 200.1](#). An in-kind contribution may include but is not limited to real property; laboratory space; equipment; data or data sets; supplies; other expendable property; goods and services; employee or student resources.

Policies

DRAFT

1. Who Must Submit

Each senior/key person must provide a Current and Pending (Other) Support document.

2. Separate Reporting

Within the Current and Pending (Other) Support document, each proposal, active project, and covered in-kind contribution must be listed separately.

3. Required System

Current and Pending (Other) Support forms must be prepared through [SciENcv](#).

4. Consulting Disclosure

Consulting activities must be disclosed when the following scenarios apply:

- a) The consulting activity will require the senior/key person to perform research as part of the consulting activity.
- b) The consulting activity does not involve performing research, but is related to the senior/key person's research portfolio and may have the ability to impact funding, alter time or effort commitments, or otherwise impact scientific integrity.
- c) The consulting entity has provided a contract that requires the senior/key person to conceal or withhold confidential financial or other ties between the senior/key person and the entity, irrespective of the duration of the engagement.

5. Foreign Support Disclosure

Senior/key personnel are required to disclose contracts associated with participation in programs sponsored by foreign governments, instrumentalities, or entities, including [foreign government-sponsored talent recruitment programs](#). Further, if an individual receives direct or indirect support that is funded by a foreign government-sponsored talent recruitment program, even where the support is provided through an intermediary and does not require membership in the foreign government-sponsored talent recruitment program, that support must be disclosed. Senior/key personnel must also report other foreign government-sponsored or affiliated activities. Individuals are prohibited from being a party in a [malign foreign talent recruitment program](#).

6. In-Kind Contributions

Proposers must disclose all in-kind contributions with an estimated dollar value of \$5,000 or more and that requires a commitment of the individual's time.

7. Personal Information

Individuals must not include personal information such as home address, home or cell phone numbers, personal email, driver's license number, marital status, hobbies, or similar personal details. NSF is not responsible or in any way liable for the release of such material.

8. Certifications

Each senior/key person must certify that the information is current, accurate, and complete, that they are not a party to a malign foreign talent recruitment program, and that they have completed the requisite research security training within one year prior to proposal submission.

Procedures

1. How to Prepare Current and Pending (Other) Support

- a) Prepare Current and Pending (Other) Support using SciENCv for each senior/key person. For additional information, refer to the NIH [NSF Current & Pending \(Other\) Support](#) guide.
- b) The format for submission of the two types of support: (a) proposals and active projects and (b) in-kind contributions is provided below. Information marked with an asterisk (*) is required:
 - i. Identifying Information*
 - Name: Enter the name of the senior/key person (Title, Last name, First name, Middle name, including any applicable suffix).
 - ORCID ID: Enter the ORCID ID of the senior/key person. Visit orcid.org for information on obtaining an ORCID ID.
 - Position Title: Enter the current position title of the senior/key person.
 - ii. Organization and Location*
 - Name: Enter the official name of the primary organization of the senior/key person without abbreviations.
 - Location: City, State/Province, and Country. If the State/Province is not applicable, enter N/A.
 - iii. Proposals/Active Projects

In this section, disclose all proposals and active projects in accordance with the definitions for [current and pending \(other\) support](#).

 - Title*: Enter the title of each proposal/active project being reported.
 - Status of Support*: Select the appropriate status type as defined below:
 - Current: All active projects, or projects with ongoing obligations, from whatever source irrespective of whether such support is provided through the proposing organization or is provided directly to the individual.
 - Pending: Any proposal that is being considered for funding from a potential funding organization (including this proposal) irrespective of whether such support is provided through the proposing organization or is provided directly to the individual.
 - Proposal/Active Project Award Number (if available): Enter the applicable proposal/active project award number for each proposal and/or active project, if available.
 - Source of Support*: Identify the entity for each proposal and/or active project that is providing the support. Use the official name. Do not use abbreviations. Enter the City, State/Province, and Country where the entity is located. Include all federal, state, Tribal, territorial, local, foreign, public or private foundations, non-profit organizations, industrial or other commercial organizations, or internal funds allocated toward specific projects.
 - Primary Place of Performance*: Identify the primary location where the proposal and/or active project is being executed. Enter the City,

State/Province, and Country where the organization is located. If the State/Province is not applicable, enter N/A.

- Proposal/Active Project Start Date*: Indicate the start date (MM/YYYY) of the project, as proposed/awarded.
- Proposal/Active Project End Date*: Indicate the end date (MM/YYYY) of the project, as proposed/awarded.
- Total Anticipated Proposal/Project Amount*: Enter the total award amount for the entire period of performance, inclusive of indirect costs, rounded to the nearest dollar. If the dollar value is not readily ascertainable, a reasonable estimate should be provided. If the support is in a foreign country's currency, convert to U.S. dollars at time of submission.
- Person-Month(s) (or Partial Person-Months) Per Year Devoted to the Proposal/Active Project*: Enter how much time the individual anticipates is necessary to complete the scope of work on the proposal and/or active project. Enter the number of person-months (even if unsalaried) for the current budget period and enter the proposed person-months for each subsequent budget period. If the time commitment is not readily ascertainable, a reasonable estimate should be provided.
- Overall Objectives*: Provide a brief statement of the overall objectives of the proposal/active project.
- Statement of Potential Overlap*: Enter a description of the potential overlap with any pending proposal or active foreign or domestic project and this proposal in terms of scope, budget, or person-months planned or devoted to the project by the individual. If there is no potential overlap, enter "none" in this field.

iv. In-Kind Contributions*

- Status of Support: Select the appropriate status type as defined below:
 - Current: All in-kind contributions obligated from whatever source irrespective of whether such support is provided through the proposing organization or is provided directly to the individual.
 - Pending: All in-kind contributions currently under consideration from potential funding organizations irrespective of whether such support is provided through the proposing organization or is provided directly to the individual.
- Receipt (or Anticipated Receipt) Date of In-Kind Contribution: Enter the receipt date (or anticipated receipt date) (MM/YYYY) of the in-kind contribution.
- Source of Support: Identify the entity (entities) providing the in-kind contribution. Use the official name, do not use abbreviations. Enter the City, State/Province, and Country where the entity is located. Include, for example, federal, state, Tribal, territorial, local, foreign, public or private

foundations, non-profit organizations, industrial or other commercial organizations, or internal funds allocated toward specific projects.

- Summary of In-Kind Contribution(s): Enter a summary of the in-kind contribution not intended for use on the proposal/active project. In-kind contributions with an estimated value of less than \$5,000 need not be reported.
- Person-Month(s) (or Partial Person-Months) Per Year Devoted to the In-Kind Contribution: Enter how much time the individual anticipates is necessary to complete the scope of work associated with use of the in-kind contribution. Enter the number of person-months (even if unsalaried) for the current budget period and enter the proposed person-months for each subsequent budget period. If there is no associated time commitment, the in-kind contribution need not be reported.
- U.S. Dollar Value of In-Kind Contribution: Enter the U.S. dollar value of the in-kind contribution. If the dollar value is not readily ascertainable, a reasonable estimate should be provided. If the support is in a foreign country's currency, convert to U.S. dollars at time of submission rounded to the nearest dollar.
- Overall Objectives: Provide a brief statement of the overall objectives of the in-kind contribution(s).
- Statement of Potential Overlap: Enter a description of the potential overlap with any current or pending foreign or domestic in-kind contribution and this proposal in terms of scope, budget, or person-months planned or devoted to the project by the individual. If there is no overlap, enter "none" in the field.

v. Certification*

Each senior/key person is required to complete certifications regarding the information provided in their Current and Pending (Other) Support.

Misrepresentations and/or omissions may be subject to prosecution and liability

- c) Disclose covered consulting activities and required foreign government-sponsored or affiliated activities. The [Disclosures Relating to the Biographical Sketch and Current and Pending \(Other\) Support](#) page on NSF.gov provides helpful reference information regarding pre-award and post-award disclosures. The page includes the types of activities to be reported, where such activities must be reported in the proposal, as well as when updates are required in the proposal and award lifecycle. The page also identifies activities that are not required to be reported.
- d) SciENcv will generate an NSF-compliant PDF that you must upload to the proposal submission system. Download and upload the NSF-compliant PDF under "Senior/Key Personnel Documents" in Research.gov or Grants.gov.

D. Collaborators and Other Affiliations (COA) (Single-Copy Document)

NSF uses COA information to assist with reviewer selection, conflict of interest management, and research security risk assessment. This section explains how to prepare and submit COA information to help NSF select reviewers and manage conflicts of interest.

Policies

1. Who Must Submit

COA information must be provided separately for each senior/key person.

Procedures

1. How to Prepare Collaborators and Other Affiliations (COA) Information

- a) Prepare separate COA information for each senior/key person. NSF requires the use of the [Collaborators and Other Affiliations template](#) for identifying this information. There are five separate categories of information which correspond to the five tables in the COA template:
 - COA template Table 1: List the individual's last name, first name, middle initial, and official name of their organizational affiliation (no abbreviations), including the Country where the organization is located, in the last 12 months.
 - COA template Table 2: List names of individuals (last name, first name, middle initial), for whom a personal, family, or business relationship would otherwise preclude their service as a reviewer. In the "Type of Relationship" column please specify the personal, family, or business relationship involved.
 - COA template Table 3: List names (last name, first name, middle initial), and provide organizational affiliations, if known, for the following:
 - The individual's Ph.D. advisors.
 - All the individual's Ph.D. thesis advisers.
 - COA template Table 4: List names (last name, first name, middle initial) and provide organizational affiliations (use official name without abbreviations) for the following:
 - Co-authors on any book, article, report, abstract or paper with collaboration in the last 48 months (publication date may be later).
 - Collaborators on projects in the last 48 months.
 - COA template Table 5: List editorial board, editor-in chief, and co-editors with whom the individual interacts. An editor-in-chief must list the entire editorial board. List the name(s) of editor-in-chief and journal in the past 24 months; and other co-editors of journal or collections with whom the individual has directly interacted in the last 24 months. The Editorial board does not include Editorial Advisory Board, Scientific Editorial Board, or any other subcategory of Editorial Board. It is limited to those individuals who perform editing duties or manage the editing process (i.e., editor in chief).
- b) Upload the completed COA under "Senior/Key Personnel Documents." This is a Single-Copy Document.
 - If submitting through Research.gov, save the completed template in .xlsx format (Research.gov will convert it to PDF).

- If submitting through Grants.gov, upload the completed template as a PDF attachment.
- Do not change the template structure. Altering the format may cause errors.

E. Synergistic Activities

This section explains how to prepare the Synergistic Activities document, which highlights the broader impacts of an individual's work.

Terms and Definitions

1. Synergistic Activities

A document demonstrating the broader impacts of an individual's professional and scholarly activities.

Policies

1. Synergistic Requirement

Each senior/key person must submit a Synergistic Activities document. Each document is limited to one page. It may contain up to five distinct examples that demonstrate the broader impact of the individual's professional and scholarly activities that focus on the integration and transfer of knowledge as well as its creation. Examples may include, among others:

- a) Innovations in teaching and training.
- b) Contributions to the science of learning.
- c) Development and/or refinement of research tools.
- d) Computation methodologies and algorithms for problem-solving.
- e) Development of databases to support research and education.
- f) Participation in international research collaborations.
- g) Participation in national and/or international standards development efforts.
- h) Service to the scientific and engineering community outside of the individual's immediate organization.

Procedures

1. How to Prepare Synergistic Activities Documents

- a) Prepare a separate Synergistic Activities document for each senior/key person.
- b) Ensure the document does not exceed one page and contains no URLs.
- c) Upload under "Senior/Key Personnel Documents" in Research.gov or Grants.gov.

F. Other Supplementary Documentation

This section explains the rules for submitting other supplementary documents with a proposal.

Policies

1. General

Required supplementary documentation must be included in the designated supplementary documentation section and must not be used to replace or extend the Project Description or

Budget Justification. Required supplementary documents are not counted toward the Project Description page limit.

G. Mentoring Plans and Individual Development Plans

Mentoring activities are evaluated under the Broader Impacts review criterion. This section explains the requirement for a Mentoring Plan when proposals include funding for graduate students or postdoctoral scholars.

Terms and Definitions

1. Individual Development Plan

A plan that maps the educational goals, career exploration, and professional development of the individual for postdoctoral scholars or graduate students supported by the award.

2. Mentoring Plan

A plan describing mentoring activities for postdoctoral scholars or graduate students supported by the award.

Policies

1. Mentoring Plan

A Mentoring Plan is required for proposals requesting salary or stipend for postdoctoral scholars or graduate students. It must be developed regardless of whether these individuals reside at the submitting organization, any subrecipient organization, or at any organization participating in a simultaneously submitted collaborative proposal. The plan may specify how different components of the mentoring program will be enacted for the two types of researchers. The Mentoring Plan cannot exceed one page.

Examples of mentoring activities include but are not limited to career counseling; training in preparation of 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.

2. Individual Development Plan

For each NSF award that provides substantial support to postdoctoral scholars and graduate students, each individual must have an Individual Development Plan. NSF defines "substantial support" as funding received by an individual during the annual reporting period under the NSF award as either one person month or more of salary or at least one academic term (e.g., semester or quarter) of stipend support associated with an expected average time commitment of at least 10 hours per week. This plan is not required to be submitted to NSF but must be maintained in organizational records.

Procedures

1. How to Prepare and Upload a Mentoring Plan

- a) If required, prepare one Mentoring Plan covering all supported individuals, including those at subrecipients and collaborating organizations. A single plan may address both postdoctoral scholars and graduate students, and may explain differences in mentoring as needed.

- b) Ensure that the plan does not exceed one page. It must not be used to circumvent the Project Description page limit.
- c) Upload under "Mentoring Plan" in Research.gov.

H. Data Management and Sharing Plan (DMSP) of the Products of Research

The Data Management and Sharing Plan is reviewed as an integral part of the proposal and may be considered under Intellectual Merit, Broader Impacts, or both. This section explains how to prepare this plan, which describes how data and other research products produced during the project will be managed and shared.

Terms and Definitions

1. Data Management and Sharing Plan (DMSP)

A document describing management and sharing of research outputs.

Policies

1. General

Proposals must include a DMSP. The plan must describe how the proposal will conform to NSF policy on dissemination and sharing of research results.

2. Program-Specific Requirements

Program-specific requirements apply where provided. Otherwise, general NSF requirements apply.

3. Required Content

The DMSP must include information about how data and research products produced during the project will be made available consistent with NSF policies and procedures governing intellectual property created under NSF awards (see [Guide 21](#)). The DMSP should separately describe plans for up to four categories of data and research products to be produced during the project.

4. Collaborative Proposals

Collaborative proposals must include one combined plan.

Procedures

1. How to Prepare a Data Management and Sharing Plan

- a) Prepare the DMSP using the webform implemented in Research.gov. Information on directorate-specific data requirements can be found on the [Preparing Your Data Management and Sharing Plan](#) page on NSF.gov.
- b) Add a maximum of four data or research product categories. Similar types of products may be grouped into the same category. Each data or research product category of the DMSP is comprised of the following data fields:
 - i. Data or Research Product Category: This field includes information regarding the specific category of data, samples, physical collections, software, curriculum materials, or other material to be produced during the project. A

title for the research product must be provided and subsequent text providing a short description.

- ii. **Access Policies and Limitations:** This field identifies any pertinent limitations on access, including but not limited to legal, privacy, ethical, technical, confidentiality, security, and intellectual property concerns. Any limitations arising from data use agreements or institutional review board stipulations also must be identified. Text identifying the concern and providing a brief explanation and justification must be provided.
- iii. **Data Standards and Metadata:** This field provides details on the standards that will be used for any data, metadata, and/or other content. The granularity of the data to be provided (e.g., raw data, averages) must be specified, and if raw data will not be made available, then metadata must be shared that describes in detail what processing the raw data underwent to produce the shared data. Where existing standards are absent or deemed inadequate, this must be documented along with any proposed solutions or remedies. Metadata must be included, which enables datasets to be discovered, interpreted, and used by other researchers (e.g., FAIR data principles). Whenever possible, this metadata must include sufficient detail to replicate any published analyses from the archived data. This section should specifically identify the relevant standards and granularity of the data, if applicable.
- iv. **Data or Research Product Provenance:** This field provides details regarding the source of the data and research products (e.g., new data collection, reused data from a preexisting source, data from a shared facility). If data is coming from a preexisting source or a shared facility it must be identified.
- v. **Public Archiving:** This field provides details regarding how the data and research products will be made publicly available. Wherever practicable, researchers should make use of online digital repositories that conform to the [Desirable Characteristics of Data Repositories for Federally Funded Research](#). This section must identify the specific method/repository by which the item will be made publicly available, and any persistent identifiers already acquired.
- vi. **Timeline for Public Accessibility:** This field should be used to provide information about when data or research products associated with the category will be shared (if applicable). In many cases, the data or research products associated with the category will be shared at the time of publication, though other options are allowable as needed. PIs are responsible for confirming that the selections they make are consistent with data management and sharing guidance for the unit of consideration for the proposal.
- vii. **Data Availability:** This field provides details regarding how long the research products will be publicly available past the anticipated completion of the project (retention time). If the repository has a standard retention policy, it must be specified. If the retention time is less than 2 years after the

completion of the project or deviates from the standard retention policy of the repository, a justification must be provided.

viii. **Accountability:** This field provides details regarding who in the research team (PI or co-PI) will be accountable for the data management and sharing of this item specified in the preceding sections.

c) Simultaneously submitted collaborative proposals and proposals that include subawards are a single unified project and must include only one DMSP.

I. Letters of Collaboration and Letters of Support

This section explains the difference between letters of collaboration and letters of support and how they can be used in proposals.

Terms and Definitions

1. Letter of Collaboration

A statement of intent to collaborate or provide resources.

2. Letter of Support

A statement of endorsement (generally not allowed unless required), typically from a key stakeholder such as an organization, collaborator, or congressional representative, that is used to convey a sense of enthusiasm for the project and/or to highlight the qualifications of the PI or co-PI.

Policies

1. Letters of Collaboration

Letters may document collaborative arrangements relevant to the proposal. Letters must be limited to statements of intent to collaborate or commit resources as described in the proposal. Letters must not include endorsement, evaluation, or advocacy. They should not circumvent page limitations of the proposal.

While not required, the following format is recommended:

"If the proposal submitted by Dr. [insert the full name of the Principal Investigator] entitled [insert the proposal title] is selected for funding by NSF, it is my intent to collaborate and/or commit resources as detailed in the Project Description or the Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources section of the proposal."

2. Letters of Support

Letters of support must not be submitted unless specifically required in a funding opportunity. Inclusion of unauthorized letters of support may result in return without review. When a letter of support is specifically required, it must be unique to the proposal and may not be altered without the author's explicit prior approval.

Procedures

1. How to Upload Letters of Support or Letters of Collaboration

a) For applicable proposal types, upload letters in proposal sections labeled "Letter(s) of Support" or "Letter(s) of Collaboration."

- b) For proposal types without proposal sections labeled "Letter(s) of Support" or "Letter(s) of Collaboration", follow the instructions in the funding opportunity.

J. Other Special Documentation

This section explains when special documentation is required for proposals involving sensitive or regulated activities.

Policies

1. General

Proposals must include required documentation when research involves regulated or sensitive activities. Research involving the following may require special documentation:

- Environmental compliance.
- Human subjects.
- Live vertebrate animals.
- Hazardous materials.
- Endangered species.
- Historic places.
- Antarctic research.

See [Guide 6](#) for more information.

2. Program-Specific Components

Some NSF units may require additional proposal requirements identified in the funding opportunity.

3. Unusual Circumstances

Supplementary documentation should identify any unusual circumstances requiring special handling. See [Guide 6](#) for more information.

Authorities

The following authorities govern this guide:

- National Science Foundation Act of 1950
- CHIPS and Science Act of 2022
- America COMPETES Act of 2010
- National Environmental Policy Act of 1970
- National Historic Preservation Act of 1966
- Endangered Species Act of 1973
- 2 CFR 200

Guide 6: Preparing Your Proposal – Special Processing and Compliance Topics

Version 27-1 Effective [Month Day, Year]

This guide explains U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) proposal requirements for special processing and compliance topics that may apply depending on the content of a proposal. It covers:

- Proprietary or privileged information.
- Collaborative proposals.
- Proposals involving live vertebrate animals or human subjects.
- Potential life sciences dual use research of concern.
- Requests for advanced computing and cyberinfrastructure resources.
- International activities.
- Safe and harassment-free working environments for off-campus or off-site research.
- Indian Tribe review and approval requirements.
- Environmental Statutes.

Prospective Principal Investigators (PIs) should use this guide to prepare complete and accurate proposals that fall under the compliance topics listed above.

Authorized Organization Representatives (AORs) and Sponsored Project Offices (SPOs) should use this guide to ensure that a proposal falling under any of the compliance topics listed above is complete and accurate before submission.

A. Proprietary or Privileged Information

This section describes NSF policies for including, marking, and protecting proprietary or privileged information in proposals.

Policies

1. General

Proprietary or privileged information, including patentable ideas, trade secrets, privileged or confidential commercial or financial information, should be included in a proposal only when it is necessary to explain the proposed project. NSF will try to prevent unauthorized access but is not responsible or liable for release of such material.

Procedures

1. How to Handle Proprietary or Privileged Information in Proposal Submissions

For proprietary or privileged information that the reviewers can view:

- a) Clearly mark the information in the proposal and apply an appropriate confidentiality legend. The following text may be used:

"The following is (proprietary or confidential) information that (name of proposing organization) requests not be released to persons outside the government, except for purposes of review and evaluation."

- b) Select the box "Proprietary or Privileged Information" on the Cover Sheet in Research.gov.
- c) Upload the detailed "Proprietary or Privileged Information" and provide a description as to why the information is considered proprietary or privileged. This documentation is a Single-Copy Document.

For proprietary or privileged information that the reviewers are unable to view:

- a) Select the box "Proprietary or Privileged Information" on the Cover Sheet in Research.gov.
- b) Upload the detailed "Proprietary or Privileged Information" and provide a description as to why the information is considered proprietary or privileged. This documentation is a Single-Copy Document.
- c) If exercising the option to not release data on senior/key personnel outside the government, under section A in the budget, enter a single amount for senior/key personnel funds for year 1. Additionally, omit person-months represented by that amount.
- d) If exercising this option outside the budget, upload any additional "Proprietary or Privileged Information" and provide a description as to why the information is considered proprietary or privileged. This documentation may be uploaded as "Additional Single-Copy Documents."

B. Collaborative Proposals

This section establishes NSF requirements for preparing and submitting collaborative proposals across multiple organizations.

Terms and Definitions

1. Collaborative Proposal

A unified research project involving investigators from two or more organizations, submitted either as one proposal with subawards or as simultaneous linked proposals from multiple organizations.

2. Lead Organization

The organization responsible for the main proposal package in a collaborative proposal and for linking and coordinating non-lead submissions.

Policies

1. Unified Project

Collaborative proposals must describe a single unified research project involving two or more organizations. The lead organization's proposal must include all required sections as a complete package for reviewer consideration. Collaborative proposals may be submitted as one proposal from a single organization with subawards or as simultaneous linked proposals from multiple organizations.

2. Single Proposal from One Organization

Under the single proposal method, NSF issues one award to the submitting organization, and collaborators are supported through subawards. One investigator has primary responsibility for award administration and communications with NSF. Investigators from collaborators may be named as co-PIs, at the discretion of the organizations.

3. Simultaneous Submission from Multiple Organizations

If funded, each collaborator receives a separate award and is responsible for its own award. Each organization must provide all required proposal sections based on its role (lead or non-lead). The lead organization provides the unified project narrative materials for reviewer consideration.

4. Deadline

All proposals for the collaborative organizations must meet the proposal deadline. Proposals must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. based on each submitting organization's time zone, if there is a deadline or submission window. Failure to meet the deadline by any one collaborator will prevent the entire collaborative set from being submitted to NSF. A non-lead can submit either before or after the lead proposer submits their proposal.

Procedures

1. How to Prepare and Submit a Collaborative Proposal from One Organization

- a) For a single proposal with subawards, prepare one full proposal package under the lead organization and include subaward materials as required. For additional information, refer to the [How to Add or Remove a Subaward Organization from a Proposal](#) guide in Research.gov.
- b) Ensure the Project Description clearly explains:
 - The roles of participating organizations.
 - The managerial arrangements.
 - The value of the multi-organizational approach.
- c) Ensure the lead organization's proposal includes all required sections as a complete package for reviewer consideration.

2. How to Prepare and Submit a Collaborative Proposal from Multiple Organizations

- a) For separately submitted collaborative proposals, have each non-lead organization create its proposal in Research.gov. For additional information, refer to "Collaborative Proposals" on the [About Proposal Preparation and Submission](#) page on Research.gov.
- b) Each non-lead organization must provide its temporary proposal ID to the lead organization before the lead organization submits its proposal to NSF. This temporary proposal ID is created by Research.gov when the non-lead proposal is created.
- c) To link a non-lead organization's proposal to the lead organization's proposal, the lead organization must click the "Link/View Collaborative Proposals" button and enter the non-lead organization's temporary proposal ID number. This will send a notification in Research.gov and an email to the non-lead organization's PI, co-PI, and other authorized users. The non-lead organization must accept this request to link the proposals.

- d) The lead organization must include the following in their proposal:
 - i. Cover Sheet.
 - ii. Project Summary.
 - iii. Table of Contents (automatically generated).
 - iv. Project Description.
 - v. References Cited.
 - vi. Budget and Budget Justification.
 - vii. Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources.
 - viii. Senior/Key Personnel Documents - Biographical Sketch(es).
 - ix. Senior/Key Personnel Documents - Current and Pending (Other) Support.
 - x. Senior/Key Personnel Documents - Collaborators and Other Affiliations.
 - xi. Senior/Key Personnel Documents - Synergistic Activities.
 - xii. Data Management and Sharing Plan.
 - xiii. Mentoring Plan (if applicable).

- e) The non-lead organization must include the following in their proposal:
 - i. Cover Sheet.
 - ii. Table of Contents (automatically generated).
 - iii. Budget and Budget Justification.
 - iv. Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources.
 - v. Senior/Key Personnel Documents - Biographical Sketch(es).
 - vi. Senior/Key Personnel Documents - Current and Pending (Other) Support.
 - vii. Senior/Key Personnel Documents - Collaborators and Other Affiliations.
 - viii. Senior/Key Personnel Documents - Synergistic Activities.

- f) The lead organization must confirm that all linked proposals are properly connected before final submission and that all collaborative components are submitted by the deadline.

- g) If the collaboration includes off-campus or off-site research, Indian Tribe impacts, Potential Life Sciences Dual Use Research of Concern, or international components, ensure the proper Cover Sheet boxes are checked and required explanations are provided.

- h) In collaborative proposals involving an international branch campus, foreign organization, or foreign individual, only the proposing organization that includes the international component must check the applicable Cover Sheet box, and the lead organization must provide the required explanation in the Project Description.

Reminder: If awarded, each organization must prepare and submit separate required project reports.

C. Live Vertebrate Animals

This section establishes NSF policies for proposals involving live vertebrate animals, including review, approval, and compliance obligations. For more information, see [Guide 20](#).

Terms and Definitions

DRAFT

1. Animal Welfare Assurance

Public Health Service-approved assurance that an organization has an animal care and use program meeting federal requirements.

2. Federalwide Assurance (FWA)

A formal written commitment by an institution on file with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) for organizations conducting human subjects research to comply with federal regulations in [45 CFR 46](#) for the protection of human subjects in research.

3. Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)

A body that reviews and approves research involving live vertebrate animals.

Policies

1. Legal Compliance

Projects involving live vertebrate animals for research or education must comply with the Animal Welfare Act and applicable regulations.

2. IACUC Approval

A project involving live vertebrate animals must have IACUC approval before NSF can make an award. If NSF decides to fund the proposal, the official IACUC approval letter and any required assurance documentation must be provided before the award is issued. The IACUC approval letter must include:

- a) The organization's Animal Welfare Assurance Number.
- b) PI name.
- c) Proposal title and number.
- d) Date of approval.
- e) An authorized organizational signature.

3. Animal Welfare Assurance

The submitting organization must have a current PHS-approved Animal Welfare Assurance before an award can be issued.

4. Guide Compliance

The proposing organization must establish and maintain an animal care and use program consistent with the [Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals](#), with any approved departures justified by scientific, veterinary, medical, or animal welfare reasons.

5. International Sites

Projects involving live vertebrate animals at an international organization or field site still require approval by the U.S. recipient's IACUC. In some international award situations, NSF also requires a statement from the international organization confirming legal compliance and use of the [International Guiding Principles for Biomedical Research Involving Animals](#).

Procedures

1. How to Prepare a Proposal Involving Live Vertebrate Animals

- a) Check the "Live Vertebrate Animals" box on the Cover Sheet if care and use of live vertebrate animals is planned.

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- b) Enter the IACUC approval date of the animal-use protocol covering the proposed work if approval has been obtained; otherwise enter "Pending" in the space for the approval date.
- c) Enter the PHS Animal Welfare Assurance Number if available; otherwise enter "Pending."
- d) Include within the Project Description enough information for reviewers to assess the following:
 - Why animals are needed.
 - Why the species and number are appropriate.
 - How the animals will be used.
 - Any pain, discomfort, or injury.
 - Euthanasia methods, if applicable.
- e) Confirm that the organization has, or can obtain before award, a current PHS-approved Animal Welfare Assurance.
- f) Register the research facility with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) if required for federally funded animal research.
- g) If the project will be conducted internationally, secure U.S. IACUC approval and obtain any additional international compliance statement required by NSF.
- h) If NSF selects the proposal for funding, provide the signed IACUC approval letter and any required assurance documentation to the cognizant Program Director before award. Ensure that the IACUC approval letter includes all required elements (assurance number, proposer name, proposal title/number, approval date, and authorized signature) before submission.
- i) For fellowship proposals, include the IACUC approval letter as an 'Other Supplementary Document' or indicate approval is pending. The approval letter must affirm that an animal-use protocol covering the proposed activities has been approved.

D. Human Subjects

This section establishes NSF policies for proposals involving human subjects, including IRB review, documentation, and restrictions. For more information, see [Guide 20](#).

Terms and Definitions

1. Institutional Review Board (IRB)

A body that reviews research involving human subjects or determines whether the research is exempt from requirements of the federal human-subjects regulations in [45 CFR 46](#).

Policies

1. Common Rule

Projects involving human subjects must comply with [45 CFR 46 Subpart A](#) (also known as the "Common Rule") and applicable NSF requirements.

2. IRB Approval

Human subjects projects must have either IRB approval or an IRB determination that the project is exempt from human subjects research. If the research is exempt, the applicable exemption number(s) must be identified.

3. Pre-Award Documentation

If NSF decides to fund the proposal, the signed IRB approval letter or determination notice must be provided to the cognizant Program Director before award, as applicable.

4. No NSF Monitoring

NSF cannot accept IRB documents that require NSF to conduct continued monitoring of the human subjects activities.

5. International Human Subjects

If human subjects research will be conducted outside the United States, IRB approval is required. If no FWA is on file with OHRP, NSF may decline to support the project.

6. Pre-Award Restriction

NSF will be flexible with the determination on the use of human subjects, as long as the written determination makes clear that no work with human subjects, including recruitment, will be conducted until full IRB approval is obtained. Where full IRB approval is pending, NSF may place a term and condition on the award prohibiting human subjects research or limiting drawdown of funds until approval is obtained.

Procedures

1. How to Prepare a Proposal Involving Human Subjects

- a) Check the "Human Subjects" box on the Cover Sheet when required.
- b) If the project is exempt, enter the applicable exemption number or numbers.
- c) If exemption determination occurs after proposal submission, provide the exemption documentation (including exemption number) before award by emailing the cognizant NSF Program Director identified in the funding opportunity.
- d) If the project has current IRB approval, enter the approval date on the Cover Sheet. If approval is not yet obtained, enter "Pending."
- e) If the project lacks definite plans for human subjects activities, obtain a determination notice if available and upload it as an Other Supplementary Document. See the [Research Involving Human Subjects](#) page on NSF.gov for more information on this notice.
- f) If the research will be performed outside the U.S., confirm whether IRB approval and an FWA are required and available. Enter the FWA Number if available.
- g) If NSF selects the proposal for funding, provide the signed IRB approval letter or determination notice before award. Do not begin human subjects research until all required approvals are in place and any NSF restrictions are lifted. Limit activities to

preliminary or conceptual work only until full IRB approval is obtained and provided to NSF by emailing the cognizant Program Director identified in the funding opportunity.

E. Dangerous Gain of Function (formerly Dual Use Research of Concern)

NSF is committed to preserving the benefits of life sciences research while minimizing the risk of misuse of the knowledge, information, products, or technologies provided by such research. This section establishes requirements for identifying, overseeing, and mitigating risks associated with dangerous gain of function research.

Terms and Definitions

1. Dangerous Gain of Function Research

Scientific research on an infectious agent or toxin with the potential to cause disease by enhancing its pathogenicity or increasing its transmissibility. Covered research activities are those that could result in significant societal consequences and that seek or achieve one or more of the following outcomes:

- a) Enhancing the harmful consequences of the agent or toxin.
- b) Disrupting beneficial immunological response or the effectiveness of an immunization against the agent or toxin.
- c) Conferring to the agent or toxin resistance to clinically or agriculturally useful prophylactic or therapeutic interventions against that agent or toxin or facilitating their ability to evade detection methodologies.
- d) Increasing the stability, transmissibility, or the ability to disseminate the agent or toxin.
- e) Altering the host range or tropism of the agent or toxin.
- f) Enhancing the susceptibility of a human host population to the agent or toxin.
- g) Generating or reconstituting an eradicated or extinct agent or toxin.

2. Institutional Review Entity (IRE)

A specialized committee established by research institutions that oversees dangerous gain of function research.

Policies

1. Applicability

NSF will follow implementing guidance and requirements set forth by [Executive Order 14292 - Improving the Safety and Security of Biological Research](#).

2. NSF Funding Considerations

NSF will not fund research that would lead to dangerous gain of function. Proposals with potential dangerous gain of function research will be considered for funding only after NSF has conducted a review and assessed the associated risk.

Purely computational (in silico) research that may include the development of computational models and software or may use such means to design novel forms of biological agents is not prohibited.

Procedures

1. How to Prepare a Proposal with Potential Dangerous Gain of Function Research

- a) Screen projects for dangerous gain of function by first reviewing [EO 14292](#).

- b) If you are unsure if a new or ongoing project meets criteria within EO 14292 for dangerous gain of function, notify your IRE and contact your cognizant NSF Program Director to discuss whether the research can proceed and, if it can proceed, which risk mitigation strategies should be employed.

F. Advanced Computing, Data, and Analysis Capabilities

Many research projects require access to computational, data, analysis, and/or visualization resources to complete the work proposed. Typically, such resources will be noted in the proposal under Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources. See [Guide 5](#) for more information. For projects that require such resources at scales beyond what may be available locally, NSF supports an array of national resources.

This section establishes NSF proposal requirements for identifying and requesting advanced computing, data, and cyberinfrastructure resources.

Policies

1. Resource Identification

Recipients that require computational, data, analysis, or visualization resources should identify those needs in the Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources section of their proposal.

2. National Resource Use

Where local resources are insufficient, NSF supports access to national-scale advanced cyberinfrastructure resources.

a. Frontera Access

Researchers needing the highest-end computational and data capabilities may request access to the Frontera system through the allocation process overseen by the Office of Advanced Cyberinfrastructure.

b. ACCESS Allocations

Researchers and instructors may request advanced computing and data allocations through the ACCESS program.

c. NCAR Resources

Researchers focusing on atmospheric, Earth, and Geospace researchers may seek allocations through NCAR's computing and data systems.

d. PATh Credits

Researchers requiring distributed high-throughput computing may request credits through the PATh program.

Procedures

1. How to Address Advanced Computing, Data, and Analysis Needs

- a) Determine whether local resources are sufficient or whether national NSF-supported resources are needed:
 - View information on the [Frontera system](#).
 - View information on the [ACCESS program](#). Allocation requests can be made through the [ACCESS allocation portal](#).
 - View information on the [NACAR high-performance computing resources](#).
 - View information on the [distributed high-throughput computing \(dHTC\) and the Partnership to Advance Throughput Computing \(PATH\) resources](#).
- b) Describe the resources needed in the Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources section of the proposal.
- c) Do not obtain or submit a letter of support solely to note the intent to request those NSF-supported resources.

G. International Activities

This section establishes NSF requirements for documenting approvals for international activities in proposals. See [Guide 22](#) for more information.

Procedures

1. How to Address International Activities

- a) For each proposal that describes an international activity, PIs should list the primary countries involved on the Cover Sheet. If unknown, enter "Worldwide."
- b) In the Project Description, justify why activities need to occur in these countries.
- c) If the proposal includes funding to an International Branch Campus or foreign organization or foreign individual, check the applicable Cover Sheet box and list the relevant country names.
- d) If the proposal involves an international collaboration, following NSF's [instructions for international collaborators](#).

H. Indian Tribes

This section establishes NSF requirements for obtaining approval when proposals may affect Tribal resources or interests.

Terms and Definitions

1. Indian Tribe

[See 2 CFR 200.1](#). This definition also includes Alaska Native village or regional or village-corporation as defined or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

Policies

1. Indian Tribe Approval

Tribal approval is required from the federally recognized American Indian or Alaska Native Tribe whose resources or interests would be impacted by the award. NSF will not make an award for a proposal that may affect the resources or interests of a federally recognized Indian Tribe without prior written approval from the official(s) designated by that Indian Tribe. This requirement applies to proposed projects that impact the resources or interests connected to Indian Tribe lands or Tribal life that fall within the domain of an Indian Tribe. This requirement does not apply to individual tribal members acting solely in an individual capacity.

Activities that may trigger the Indian Tribe Approval requirement include:

- Research involving Indian Tribal members in a way that invokes the Indian Tribe.
- Research on Indian Tribe reservations, territories, or other locations where Indian Tribes have legally protected rights to resources or to engage in activities.
- Use of Indian Tribe-controlled data or information.

Procedures

1. How to Seek and Document Tribal Approval

- a) Seek and adhere to guidance from the potentially impacted Indian Tribe(s) regarding whether review and prior approval are required.
- b) Based on that guidance, submit a written request for approval to the relevant Indian Tribe or Indian Tribes.
- c) Check the "Potential Impacts on Indian Tribes" box on the Cover Sheet when applicable.
- d) Upload required documentation, up to two files, under "Potential Impacts on Indian Tribes" on the Cover Sheet to include at least one of the following:
 - i. A copy of the written request to the relevant Tribe(s) to carry out any proposed activities/activity that require(s) prior approval from the Indian Tribal government(s).
 - ii. Written confirmation from the Indian Tribe(s) that review and approval is not required.
 - iii. A copy of a document from the relevant Indian Tribe(s) government that provides the requisite approval.
- e) Follow up with the Indian Tribe to obtain final approval or confirmation before NSF makes an award decision.
- f) If only the written request is available at proposal submission, NSF will allow submission of the proposal. The PI must then follow up to obtain and submit either confirmation that approval is not required or the actual approval before NSF makes an award decision.
- g) If the project is recommended for award, provide the documentation to the cognizant NSF Program Director via email.
- h) For collaborative proposals or proposals with subawards, ensure the lead organization handles the Cover Sheet requirement.

I. Environmental and Historic Preservation Impacts

This section establishes NSF requirements for proposals and awards that may implicate environmental statutes (including the National Environmental Policy Act), the National Historic Preservation Act, and the Endangered Species Act.

Policies

1. Environmental and Historic Place Impacts

Prior to making an award, NSF must consider the anticipated environmental and historic place impacts associated with the activities described in the proposal. Proposers may be required to support NSF's environmental review and related outcomes, including both pre- and post-award compliance with applicable requirements.

Procedures

1. How to Submit a Proposal with Environmental or Historic Place Impacts

a. For projects with a potential environmental impact, review, the following checklist:

[Organization Environmental Impacts Checklist](#).

b. For projects with historic places impact, select the "Historic Places" checkbox on the proposal Cover Sheet in Research.gov.

Authorities

The following authorities govern this guide:

- National Science Foundation Act of 1950
- Animal Welfare Act of 1966
- Animal Welfare Act Regulation (9 CFR 1.1–4.11)
- Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects (45 CFR 690) ("Common Rule")
- National Environmental Policy Act of 1970
- National Historic Preservation Act of 1966
- Endangered Species Act of 1973

Guide 7: Preparing Your Proposal – Other Proposal and Supplemental Funding Types

Version 27-1 Effective [Month Day, Year]

In addition to standard research proposals that follow the proposal preparation instructions contained in sections Guides 3 through 6, there are other types of proposals that may be submitted to the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF).

This guide describes these other proposal and supplemental funding types, along with instructions that may supplement or deviate from NSF's standard proposal preparation instructions.

Sections A through J outline NSF's specialized proposal mechanisms supporting research goals such as urgency, innovation, interdisciplinarity, collaboration, and large-scale coordination. It details the purposes, requirements, funding limits, and submission processes for the following proposal types:

- Planning.
- Rapid Response Research (RAPID).
- EARly-concept Grants for Exploratory Research (EAGER).
- Research Advanced by Interdisciplinary Science and Engineering (RAISE).
- Ideas Lab.
- Conference.
- Equipment.
- Travel.
- Research Infrastructure.

Sections K through M outline NSF funding mechanisms that supplement or extend existing awards, supporting continuity of research, collaboration, and accessibility by providing targeted, justified funding aligned with existing NSF-supported activities. It details the purposes, requirements, funding limits, and submission processes for the following funding mechanisms:

- Career Life Balance (CLB) supplemental funding.
- Research Opportunity Supplemental Funding Requests for Predominantly Undergraduate Institutions (ROA-PUI).
- FASED supplements.

Section N outlines Grant Opportunities for Academic Liaison with Industry (GOALI) supplements, an NSF funding mechanism that can be used either in conjunction with a regular proposal submitted to a standing NSF program, unsolicited proposal, or as a supplemental funding request to an existing NSF-funded award.

Prospective Principal Investigators (PIs) should use this guide to understand other types of proposals (other than a full research proposal) that can be submitted to NSF, what the required elements are these different proposal types, and how to prepare a proposal that can be accepted by NSF for review.

Authorized Organization Representatives (AORs) and Sponsored Project Offices (SPOs) should use this guide to ensure that proposals submitted using these specialized proposal mechanisms meet formatting, content, disclosure and certification requirements before submission.

A. Core Requirements for Certain Proposals

Several proposal types identified in this guide require elements contained in Section A. Requirements that pertain to the specific proposal type will be listed in its respective section or the specific funding opportunity.

Terms and Definitions

1. Concept Outline

A short project synopsis, generally limited to two pages, to check fit with a funding opportunity and avoid unnecessary full proposals.

Policies

1. Concept Outline

Principal Investigators (PIs) must submit a Concept Outline by email to the cognizant Program Director for approval before submitting a full proposal.

2. Project Description

The Project Description must include clear statements as to why this project is appropriate for this proposal. Note this proposal preparation instruction deviates from the standard research proposal preparation instructions contained in [Guide 3](#).

3. Review Process

Only internal merit review is required for the respective proposal. In some instances, Program Directors may elect to obtain external reviews to inform their decision. If external review is to be obtained, then the PI will be informed.

4. Funding Size and Scope

Award sizes reflect the project scope, while no-cost extensions and supplemental funding follow standard NSF policies and procedures.

5. Reconsideration

Proposals are not eligible for reconsideration if declined.

6. Renewal

Renewed funding of awards may be requested only through submission of a renewal proposal.

Reminder: See the [Proposal Compliance Checklist](#) for further information.

B. Planning Proposals

A planning proposal is a type of proposal used to support initial conceptualization, planning and collaboration activities that aim to formulate new and sound plans for large-scale projects in emerging research areas for future submission to an NSF program. Planning proposals are appropriate for the development of larger-scale proposals in specific areas in which NSF wishes to ensure a sufficiently robust competition in the future. These include areas in which NSF is initiating new funding opportunities; assessment of infrastructure (including cyberinfrastructure)

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needs; and/or large-scale research, infrastructure (including cyberinfrastructure), or training efforts that require coordination of multi-disciplinary approaches, expertise, and/or organizations at regional scales. Planning proposals must not be used for seed funding for a proposal that has been declined or preliminary research aligned with existing programs.

Policies

1. Award Size

Requests may be made for up to \$200,000 per year (including indirect costs) and for up to two years in duration. The award size, however, will be consistent with the scope of the proposed planning activities.

2. Concept Outline

The requirements in section A apply to this proposal type.

3. Project Description

The requirements in section A apply to this proposal type. The Project Description must not exceed eight pages.

4. Non-Binding/Non-Committal

Planning proposals do not constitute any commitment on behalf of the PI/co-PI(s) or their organizations to submit a future proposal or carry out a research, education, or infrastructure project, nor do they imply an intent on the part of NSF to support a future proposed project beyond the planning grant.

5. Merit Review

The requirements in section A apply to this proposal type.

6. Funding Size and Scope

The requirements in section A apply to this proposal type.

7. Reconsideration

The requirements in section A apply to this proposal type.

8. Renewal

The requirements in section A apply to this proposal type.

Procedures

1. How to Submit a Planning Proposal

- a) Prepare a Concept Outline describing the proposed work. Submit it to the cognizant Program Director via email.
- b) Obtain written approval in an email titled "Planning – Program Director Concurrence Email" from the cognizant Program Director that specifies whether a full planning proposal may be submitted.
- c) Select the "Planning" proposal type in the proposal preparation module in Research.gov.
- d) When preparing the proposal, upload the concurrence email in Research.gov under section "Program Director Concurrence Email(s)."

- e) For more information, see the [About Proposal Preparation and Submission](#) page on Research.gov. For detailed requirements on which sections and compliance checks are in place, refer to [Automated Compliance Checking of NSF Proposals](#).

C. Rapid Response Research (RAPID) Proposals

RAPID proposals support a severe urgency with regard to availability of or access to data, facilities or specialized equipment, including quick-response research on natural or anthropogenic events and similar unanticipated occurrences. RAPID proposals must not be used for "regular" NSF proposals; events that are unanticipated due to lack of awareness of timelines; or non-perishable data collection.

Policies

1. Concept Outline

The requirements in section A apply to this proposal type.

2. Project Description

The requirements in section A apply to this proposal type. The Project Description must not exceed five pages.

3. Review Process

The requirements in section A apply to this proposal type.

4. Funding Limits

Requests may be up to \$300,000 for up to one year (including indirect costs).

5. Reconsideration

The requirements in section A apply to this proposal type.

6. Renewal

The requirements in section A apply to this proposal type.

Procedures

1. How to Submit a RAPID Proposal

- a) Prepare a Concept Outline describing the proposed work. Submit it to the cognizant Program Director via email.
- b) Obtain written approval in an email titled "RAPID – Program Director Concurrence Email" from the cognizant Program Director that specifies whether a full RAPID proposal may be submitted.
- c) Select the "RAPID" proposal type in the proposal preparation module in Research.gov.
- d) When preparing the proposal, upload the concurrence email in Research.gov under section "Program Director Concurrence Email(s)."

- e) For more information, see the [About Proposal Preparation and Submission](#) page on Research.gov. For detailed requirements on which sections and compliance checks are in place, refer to [Automated Compliance Checking of NSF Proposals](#).

D. EARly-concept Grants for Exploratory Research (EAGER) Proposals

EAGER is a type of proposal used to support exploratory work in its early stages on untested, but potentially transformative, research ideas or approaches. This work may be considered especially "high risk-high payoff" in the sense that it, for example, involves radically different approaches, applies new expertise, or engages novel disciplinary or interdisciplinary perspectives. These exploratory proposals may be submitted directly to an NSF program. EAGER proposals are not for projects that are appropriate for submission as "regular" NSF proposals; for planning grants; to support the collection of preliminary data; or to provide services to NSF.

Policies

1. Concept Outline

The requirements in section A apply to this proposal type.

2. Project Description

The requirements in section A apply to this proposal type. The Project Description must not exceed eight pages.

3. Funding Limits

Requests may be up to \$400,000 (including indirect costs) for up to two years.

4. Review Process

The requirements in section A apply to this proposal type.

5. Reconsideration

The requirements in section A apply to this proposal type.

6. Renewal

The requirements in section A apply to this proposal type.

Procedures

1. How to Submit an EAGER Proposal

- a) Prepare a Concept Outline describing the proposed work. Submit it to the cognizant Program Director via email.
- b) Obtain written approval in an email titled "EAGER – Program Director Concurrence Email" from the cognizant Program Director that specifies whether a full EAGER proposal may be submitted.
- c) Select the "EAGER" proposal type in the proposal preparation module in Research.gov.
- d) When preparing the proposal, upload the concurrence email in Research.gov under section "Program Director Concurrence Email(s)".

- e) For more information, see the [About Proposal Preparation and Submission](#) page on Research.gov. For detailed requirements on which sections and compliance checks are in place, refer to [Automated Compliance Checking of NSF Proposals](#).

E. Research Advanced by Interdisciplinary Science and Engineering (RAISE) Proposals

RAISE proposals support interdisciplinary projects requiring cross-program funding, lines of research promise transformational advances. RAISE proposals are not suitable for standard review or co-review. RAISE is not intended to be used for projects that can be accommodated within other types of proposals or that continue well-established practices.

Policies

1. Required Criteria

All three of the criteria below must be met to receive RAISE funding. The interdisciplinary and transformative potential of the project will be evaluated within the intellectual merit of the proposal:

- Work spans multiple programs or disciplines such that substantial funding support from more than one program or discipline is necessary.
- Lines of research promise transformative advances.
- Work occurs at disciplinary interfaces not well served by traditional review.

2. Concept Outline

The requirements in section A apply to this proposal type.

3. Submission Requirement

RAISE proposals must be submitted as a single proposal and not separately submitted collaborative proposals.

4. Funding Limits

Requests may be up to \$1,000,000 (including indirect costs) for up to five years.

5. Reconsideration

The requirements in section A apply to this proposal type.

6. Review Process

The requirements in section A apply to this proposal type.

7. Renewal

The requirements in section A apply to this proposal type.

Procedures

1. How to Submit a RAISE Proposal

- a) Prepare a Concept Outline describing the proposed work. Submit it to the cognizant Program Director via email.
- b) Obtain written approval in an email titled "RAISE – Program Director Concurrence Email" from the cognizant Program Director that specifies whether a full RAISE proposal may be submitted.

- c) Select the "RAISE" proposal type in the proposal preparation module in Research.gov.
- d) When preparing the proposal, upload the concurrence email in Research.gov under section "Program Director Concurrence Email(s)".
- e) For more information, see the [About Proposal Preparation and Submission](#) page on Research.gov. For detailed requirements on which sections and compliance checks are in place, refer to [Automated Compliance Checking of NSF Proposals](#).

F. Ideas Lab Proposals

Ideas Lab proposals support innovative ideas that have the potential to transform research paradigms and/or solve intractable problems, developed through structured workshops. These project ideas typically will be high risk/high impact, as they represent new and unproven ideas, approaches and/or technologies.

Policies

1. Submission Requirement

An Ideas Lab may be run independently, or in parallel, with the issuance of an NSF funding opportunity on the same topic.

2. Panelist Restriction

Ideas Lab panelists are barred from receiving any research funding through, or in any other way collaborating on, the particular Ideas Lab in which they are involved.

3. Project Description

The Project Description is limited to two pages and all other elements of a full proposal are waived.

4. Full Proposal Development

Invited Ideas Lab proposals undergo internal and external reviews as appropriate, and resulting awards follow standard NSF policies.

Procedures

1. How to Submit an Ideas Lab Proposal

- a) NSF issues a funding opportunity describing the topic of the Ideas Lab and inviting applications to participate. Review the funding opportunity and confirm alignment.
- b) For Phase 1 (Preliminary proposal), submit a preliminary proposal through Research.gov. Applications are reviewed by NSF with input from a selection panel of subject-matter experts assembled by the agency. Proposers are notified of NSF's decision but will not receive review ratings or panel comments.
- c) For Phase 2 (Ideas Lab), attend a one-to-five-day workshop and engage in collaborative, real-time idea development with other participants. The Ideas Lab will support the development and presentation of project ideas. Project ideas are evaluated by the Ideas Lab Panel, which produces a consensus assessment. Selected teams may be invited to submit a full proposal.

- d) For Phase 3 (Full proposal), NSF will invite those back to prepare and submit a full proposal. Final funding decisions are made after formal review.

G. Conference (Symposia, Workshop, and Study Group) Proposals

Conference proposals bring experts together to discuss advances in research and education, with an emphasis on hosting major international meetings in the U.S.

Terms and Definitions

1. Study Group

A collaborative team of experts working together over a limited period of time to summarize the state of work related to a specific question or topic, share insights, and interpret and report on their findings. The goal is to quickly integrate previously acquired knowledge, identify problems and opportunities, and/or advance understanding of the state of a particular topic through their collective expertise and efforts.

Policies

1. Eligibility

Proposals will be supported only if equivalent results cannot be obtained by attendance at regular meetings of professional societies. Conferences must be accessible to individuals with disabilities. Shared support by several federal agencies, states, or private organizations is encouraged.

2. Required Proposal Elements

The proposal must include:

- Cover Sheet.
- Project Summary.
- Project description.
- Proposal Budget and Budget Justification.
- Current and Pending (Other) Support for each senior/key person.
- Collaborators and other affiliations information for each senior/key personnel if the budget exceeds \$200,000.
- Data Management and Sharing Plan.
- Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources.
- Mentoring plan, when applicable.

3. Harassment Policy

Organizers must have and disseminate a code of conduct addressing sexual harassment, other forms of harassment, and sexual assault and that includes clear and accessible means of reporting violations. See [Guide 19](#) for more information. Proposers should not submit the policy or code-of-conduct to NSF for review.

4. Advance Submission

Proposals should generally be submitted at least one year in advance of the scheduled event date.

Reminder: Registration fees under NSF-supported conferences are considered program income. See [Guide 4](#) for more information about Budget Development and [Guide 12](#) for more information on allowable and unallowable costs.

Procedures

1. How to Prepare and Submit a Conference Proposal

- a) Select the "Conference" proposal type in the preparation module in Research.gov.
- b) The Collaborator and Other Affiliations document is required for each individual identified as senior/key personnel in a conference proposal when the budget exceeds \$200,000.
- c) Include the following in the Project Description:
 - A statement of need and list of topics.
 - A list of recent meetings on the same subject, including dates and locations.
 - The names and affiliations of the chairperson and organizing committee.
 - The location, tentative dates, and method of invitation.
 - An outline the organization of the meeting, plans for dissemination of results, and expected contributions to advancing scientific, engineering, or educational activities.
 - A plan for recruitment and support of speakers and participants.
 - A description of available childcare and family care resources to support participation.
 - Results from prior NSF support (up to five pages).
- d) For more information, see the [About Proposal Preparation and Submission](#) page on Research.gov. For detailed requirements on which sections and compliance checks are in place, refer to [Automated Compliance Checking of NSF Proposals](#).

H. Travel Proposals

NSF considers proposals for travel that support, either domestic and/or international, for participation in scientific and engineering meetings. Proposals are handled by the NSF organizational unit with program responsibility for the area of interest.

Policies

1. Applicability

Universities, professional societies, and other nonprofit organizations may apply for travel funding to coordinate and support participation in domestic or international scientific and engineering meetings.

2. Group Travel

Group travel proposals are encouraged over individual travel requests. A university, professional society, or other non-profit organization may apply for funds to enable it to coordinate and support participation in one or more scientific meeting(s). Information on planned speakers should be provided, where available, from the conference organizer. Group travel proposals may request only travel-related costs, and recipients must maintain documentation to verify proper use of funds for reporting and audit purposes.

3. Reconsideration

The requirements in section A apply to this proposal type.

Procedures

1. How to Prepare and Submit a Travel Proposal

- a) Select the "Travel" proposal type in the preparation module in Research.gov.
- b) Once the Travel proposal type is selected, indicate if there will be support from other sources. Once the proposal is created, you may modify this on the Cover Sheet.
- c) If there is support from other sources, a Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources document is required.
- d) The Project Description must include:
 - A statement of need and list of topics.
 - List of recent meetings on the same subject (including dates and locations).
 - Location and probable date(s) of the meeting.
 - A description of the meeting's organization, dissemination of results, and its expected contributions to advancing scientific, engineering, or educational activities.
 - Results from prior NSF support (up to five pages).
- e) The Cover Sheet must be certified by the AOR ensuring that the meeting will have a code of conduct or policy addressing harassment and assault, including clear reporting and resolution procedures.
- e) For more information, see the [About Proposal Preparation and Submission](#) page on Research.gov. For detailed requirements on which sections and compliance checks are in place, refer to [Automated Compliance Checking of NSF Proposals](#).

I. Equipment Proposals

Equipment proposals support acquisition, maintenance, and operation of specialized research equipment.

Policies

1. Purpose

Equipment may be purchased, modified or constructed. Proposals may support individual investigators, groups, or regional collaborations. Investigators may be working in closely related areas, or their research may be multidisciplinary. One individual must be designated as the PI.

Procedures

1. How to Prepare and Submit an Equipment Proposal

- a) Select the "Equipment" proposal type in the preparation module in Research.gov.

- b) The Project Description must include:
- An overall acquisition plan which discusses arrangements for acquisition, maintenance, and operation. Equipment to be purchased, modified or constructed must be described in sufficient detail to allow comparison of its capabilities with the needs of the proposed activities.
 - A description, from each potential major user, of the project(s) for which the equipment will be used. This description must be succinct, not necessarily as detailed as in a full research proposal and must emphasize the intrinsic merit of the activity and the importance of the equipment to it. A brief summary will suffice for auxiliary users.
 - A description of comparable equipment already at the proposing organization(s), if applicable, and an explanation of why it cannot be used. This includes comparable government-owned equipment that is on-site.
 - Results from Prior NSF Support (up to five pages). If any PI or co-PI identified on the proposal has received prior NSF support including: (i) an award with an end date in the past five years; or (ii) any current funding, including any no cost extensions, information on the award is required for each PI and co-PI, regardless of whether the support was directly related to the proposal or not.
- c) For more information, see the [About Proposal Preparation and Submission](#) page on Research.gov. For detailed requirements on which sections and compliance checks are in place, refer to [Automated Compliance Checking of NSF Proposals](#).

J. Research Infrastructure Proposals

Research Infrastructure proposals support the design, construction, and operation of research infrastructure. Proposers are encouraged to contact the appropriate NSF program to discuss the availability of funding and the appropriate funding mechanisms in advance of proposal submission.

Proposers should consult the [Research Infrastructure Guide \(RIG\)](#) for information on the appropriate funding mechanisms, oversight policies, processes, and procedures, and effective management of activities under research infrastructure awards.

Terms and Definitions

1. Research Infrastructure

Any combination of facilities, equipment, services, instrumentation, computational hardware and software, and the necessary supporting human capital which includes major research instrumentation, mid-scale projects and major multi-user facilities.

Policies

1. Purpose

Ideas for research infrastructure normally develop through National Academies studies, workshop reports, professional society activities, and other community-based mechanisms, including engineering studies and research projects related to the development of new

technologies. Many of these mechanisms are funded through NSF programs on the basis of merit-reviewed proposals.

2. Proposal Deviation

While proposals must confirm to the 15-page limit or have other deviation needs to accommodate program goals, certain proposal types, including research infrastructure, may exceed this limit with an approval letter from the cognizant Directorate/Office Head. It must be uploaded as a single-copy document and include the name, date, and title of the NSF official, and a brief stating indicating the deviations. NSF will not accept or will return without review proposals that are not consistent with these instructions.

Procedures

1. How to Prepare and Submit a Research Infrastructure Proposal

- a) Select the "Research Infrastructure" proposal type in the preparation module in Research.gov.
- b) For more information, see the [About Proposal Preparation and Submission](#) page on Research.gov. For detailed requirements on which sections and compliance checks are in place, refer to [Automated Compliance Checking of NSF Proposals](#).

K. Career Life Balance (CLB) Supplemental Funding

CLB supplements provide funds for additional personnel so research can continue while an investigator, postdoctoral scholar, or graduate student is on family leave for primary dependent care responsibilities or other direct family considerations.

Policies

1. Eligibility

CLB supplements are available for members of senior/key personnel, PIs, co-PIs, postdoctoral fellowship recipients, graduate research fellowship program (GRFP) recipients, or certain fellows. NSF postdoctoral fellows who receive funding directly from NSF rather than through an organization are ineligible to receive CLB supplements.

2. Funding Limits

Support provides up to six months of salary or stipend for a maximum of \$30,000 (aligned with the duration of family leave), with allowable fringe and indirect costs potentially increasing the total request beyond that amount.

3. Confidential Information

Requests must not include personal or medical details.

Procedures

1. How to Prepare and Submit a Request for CLB Supplemental Funding

- a) Contact the cognizant Program Director to discuss the planned CLB supplemental funding request before submission.

- b) Prepare a new Supplemental Funding Request in the Supplemental Funding Request module in Research.gov by selecting the award ID. Select the "Career-Life Balance Supplement Funding" request type.
- c) Enter the Requested Award End date. Change information on the Cover Sheet by specifying the Requested Additional Duration in months.
- d) Develop a clear description of how the CLB supplemental funding request will support eligible personnel on family leave or medical deferral due to a family leave situation. Upload this under Description of Proposed Support.
- e) Specify the proposed period of performance for the position under Duration of Proposed Support. Proposed duration for family leave cannot exceed 6 months. Proposed duration for support personnel cannot exceed 6 months.
- f) Prepare a justification for supplemental funding, budget and budget justification for the requested costs.
- g) Create a certification document that includes the following statement:

"The Authorized Organizational Representative hereby certifies that the request for a technician (or equivalent) is because the (PI/co-PI/other senior/key person/NSF Graduate Research Fellow/postdoctoral researcher/graduate student) is, or will be, on family leave status (or equivalent) from the organization in accordance with the organization's policies. The Authorized Organizational Representative also affirms that the organization is able to fill the position for which funding is being requested, in an appropriate timeframe."

Upload this certification in the "Other Supplementary Documents" section in Research.gov.

- h) For GRFP recipients, include a letter from the fellow's faculty advisor supporting the request. Upload this letter to the "Other Supplementary Documents" section in Research.gov.
- i) Submit the request using the "Supplemental Funding Request" function in Research.gov.
- j) For more information, refer to [the About Supplemental Funding Request Preparation and Submission](#) page in Research.gov. NSF review and processing may take two months or more.

L. Research Opportunity Supplemental Funding Requests for Predominantly Undergraduate Institutions (ROA-PUI)

ROA-PUI supplements enable faculty members (or equivalent) at predominantly undergraduate institutions (PUIs) to pursue research as part of a collaborative team as a visiting scientist at another NSF-supported organization.

Policies

1. Eligibility

The PUI must be a U.S.-based, accredited institution of higher education (IHE) acting on behalf of its faculty. Note: Distinct campuses within multi-campus systems may qualify as separate eligible institutions, but those submitting through another entity's SPO should confirm eligibility with NSF at least six weeks before proposal submission.

The PUI must be an IHE granting associate's, bachelor's, and/or master's degrees in NSF-supported fields and have awarded no more than 20 doctoral degrees in the past two academic years, with eligibility certified by an AOR of the PUI.

2. Identification and Initiation

Collaborators may be identified through NSF award abstract searches on NSF.gov or initiated directly by a PI of an existing NSF-funded award.

Procedures

1. How to Prepare and Submit a Request for ROA-PUI Supplemental Funding

- a) Requests for an ROA must be submitted by the host institution of the NSF-supported PI who wishes to host a faculty member from a PUI institution. Potential collaborating researchers may be identified through the [search of award abstracts](#) on NSF.gov. Alternatively, the PI of an ongoing NSF research award may initiate a ROA-PUI collaboration. For additional information, refer to the [About Supplemental Funding Request Preparation and Submission](#) page in Research.gov.
- b) Prepare a new Supplemental Funding Request in the Supplemental Funding Request module in Research.gov by selecting the award ID. Select the Research Opportunity Award for Predominately Undergraduate Institutions (ROA-PUI).
- c) Enter the Requested Award End Date. Change information on the Cover Sheet by specifying the Requested Additional Duration of the collaboration in months (typically 2–12 months).
- d) Develop a summary describing the PUI faculty member's role; activities; and how the supplement will strengthen research capacity, benefit the home institution, and enhance the NSF-funded research of the collaborating PI. Upload this under Summary of Proposed Work.
- e) Biographical Sketch and Current and Pending (Other) Support are required for all PUI Faculty. For other senior/key personnel, they are only required when they are not previously included in the awarded proposal.
- f) Prepare a budget and budget justification limited to the costs of participation for the ROA-PUI supplement.
- g) Upload the "Certification of ROA-PUI Eligibility" document(s), signed and on PUI institutional letterhead under section "PUI Eligibility Certificate(s)". There must be one certificate for each organization that is PUI eligible.
- h) Submit the request through Research.gov.

M. Facilitation Awards for Scientists and Engineers with Disabilities (FASSED) Requests

FASSED supports participation of individuals with disabilities, including PIs, other senior/key personnel, and graduate and undergraduate students. It supports the following goals:

- To reduce or remove barriers to participation in research and training by persons with physical disabilities by providing special equipment and assistance under awards made by NSF.
- To encourage persons with disabilities to pursue careers in science and engineering by stimulating the development and demonstration of special equipment that facilitates their work performance.

Policies

1. Funding Mechanism

Requests for funding special equipment or assistance are made as supplemental funding.

2. Program Director Determination

NSF Program Directors determine appropriate support individually, based on detailed justification that allows for informed review. The specific nature, purpose, and need for equipment or assistance should be described in sufficient detail in the proposal to permit evaluation by knowledgeable reviewers.

3. Project Limitations

Funds may be requested to purchase special equipment, modify equipment, or provide services required specifically for the work to be undertaken. Requests for funds for equipment or assistance that compensate in a general way for the disabling condition are not permitted. For example, funds may be requested to provide:

- Prosthetic devices to manipulate a particular apparatus.
- Equipment to convert sound to visual signals, or vice versa, for a particular experiment.
- Access to a special site or to a mode of transportation (except as defined below).
- A reader or interpreter with special technical competence related to the project.
- Or other special-purpose equipment or assistance needed to conduct a particular project.

FASSED proposals are not appropriate for items that are not specific to the proposed project, such as standard wheelchairs, prosthetics, hearing aids, TDD/text-phones, or general readers for the blind. Similarly, ramps, elevators, or other structural modifications of research facilities are not eligible for direct support under this program.

4. Supplemental Funding

Additional funding for disability-related equipment or assistance may be requested under existing awards, subject to justification, timing requirements, and available funds, with use and ownership governed by award conditions. No maximum funding amount has been established for such requests. It is expected, however, that the cost (including equipment adaptation and installation) will not be a major component of the total proposed budget for the project.

5. Title Transfer

Normally, title is vested in the recipient organization for equipment purchased in conjunction with NSF-supported activities. In accordance with the applicable award terms and conditions, the recipient organization guarantees use of the equipment for the specific project during the

period of work and ensures its use in an appropriate manner after project completion. In instances involving special equipment for persons with disabilities, the need for such may be unique to the individual. In such cases, the recipient organization may elect to transfer title to the individual to assure appropriate use after project completion.

Procedures

1. How to Prepare and Submit a FASED Request

- a) If the request is through a regular competitive proposal, indicate in the proposal the specific nature, purpose, and need for equipment or assistance.
- b) If the request is through a post-award supplement, complete the required Research.gov fields for a supplement request and indicate the specific nature, purpose, and need for equipment or assistance in the "Justification for Supplemental Funding" field.
- c) Submit the request through Research.gov.

N. Grant Opportunities for Academic Liaison with Industry (GOALI) Proposals

GOALI proposals promote collaboration between IHEs and industry. Under this proposal type, academic scientists, and engineers request funding either in conjunction with a regular proposal submitted to a standing NSF program, unsolicited proposal, or as a supplemental funding request to an existing NSF-funded award.

Policies

1. Submissions

GOALI proposals must be submitted to an active NSF funding opportunity. Collaborative proposals submitted through multiple organizations will not be accepted. A proposer must contact the cognizant NSF Program Director listed in the relevant funding opportunity prior to submission. Special interest is focused on affording opportunities for:

- Interdisciplinary IHE-industry teams to conduct collaborative research projects, in which the industry research participant provides critical research expertise, without which the likelihood for success of the project would be diminished;
- Faculty, postdoctoral scholars, and students to conduct research and gain experience in an industrial setting; and
- Industrial scientists and engineers to bring industry's perspective and integrative skills to academe.

2. Industrial Participation

At least one industrial co-PI must be identified. Proposals may include the participation of a "third partner" such as a National Laboratory or a non-profit organization. NSF funding can be used for IHE research/education activities and may support activities of faculty and their students and research associates in the industrial setting.

3. Funding Restriction

NSF funds generally cannot be used to support industry partners, except eligible small businesses that are not currently funded NSF SBIR/STTR recipients.

4. Small Business Eligibility

Small businesses may receive NSF funds on a GOALI award if they have fewer than 500 employees; are majority U.S.-owned; and perform work in the U.S.

5. Subaward Limit

Small business subawards must not exceed one-third of the total budget. The proposal must disclose any financial interest that the PI, co-PI, other senior/key personnel and/or IHE have in the small business partner and identify appropriate mitigation of any financial conflict of interest.

6. Confirmation Letter

A GOALI-Industrial PI Confirmation Letter must be submitted with the proposal. If applicable, the letter must state the degree of industrial participation and any support industry is providing to the IHE. If applicable, the letter must certify that the small business industry partner meets the eligibility requirements.

7. Intellectual Property (IP) Agreements

Intellectual property agreements (including publication and patent rights) between partners must be submitted before award. NSF is not responsible for the agreement reached nor the IP information exchanged between the institution of higher education and the industrial partner.

Procedures

1. How to Submit a GOALI Proposal

- a) Select the GOALI proposal type in the proposal preparation module in Research.gov.
- b) Review the applicable NSF funding opportunity and ensure compliance with all deadlines and requirements.
- c) Confirm that all small business eligibility requirements are met prior to submission.
- d) Identify and include at least one industrial co-PI on the Cover Sheet at the time of submission.
- e) Clearly describe the IHE-industry interaction in the Project Description.
- f) Include a PI Confirmation Letter from the industrial partner confirming participation of the co-PI.
- g) Ensure a signed IHE-industry agreement on intellectual property (IP) — including publication and patent rights — is completed and submitted prior to award issuance.
- h) Submit the request through Research.gov.

Authorities

The following authorities govern this guide:

- National Science Foundation Act of 1950
- Fly America Act of 1975 (for travel proposals)
- 2 CFR 200

Guide 8: Proposal Processing and Merit Review

Version 27-1 Effective [Month Day, Year]

This guide explains:

- How the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) receives, assigns, reviews, and decides on proposals.
- Merit review principles and criteria.
- Reviewer selection.
- Rules for updating or revising proposals.
- Funding recommendation and award decisions.
- What information NSF provides to PIs.
- Public release of proposal material.
- Processing timelines and related procedures.

A comprehensive description of NSF's [merit review process](#) is available on NSF.gov.

Prospective Principal Investigators (PIs), Authorized Organization Representatives (AORs) and Sponsored Project Offices (SPOs) should use this guide to understand how proposals are reviewed and processed upon submission to NSF.

A. Overview of Proposal Handling

Proposal review is one step in the NSF program planning and implementation process. Embedded in this process are core strategies that are fundamental to the fulfillment of NSF's mission. This section explains how NSF handles proposals—from submission through review and decision-making. It describes how proposals are assigned, screened for compliance, evaluated by NSF Program Directors and external experts, and the typical timelines for review and award decisions.

Policies

1. Programmatic Review

Compliant proposals are reviewed by the cognizant NSF Program Director and by external experts (reviewers, panelists, or both) with relevant subject-matter expertise. NSF Program Directors may also use site visits or other input when appropriate.

2. Reviewer Suggestions and Conflicts

Proposers may suggest preferred or non-preferred reviewers. NSF Program Directors consider these suggestions but select reviewers at their discretion. Reviewers with conflicts of interest are excluded.

Procedures

1. What are the Timeframes and Processing Expectations

- a) NSF Program Directors may take up to six months for programmatic review and processing; complex or large proposals may take longer.
- b) If the cognizant NSF Program Director recommends the proposal to move forward in processing and is approved by the NSF leadership official, it proceeds to the cognizant

Grants Officer who generally make award/decline decisions within 30 days, subject to additional reviews for special cases.

- c) Proposals that require funding before an event (e.g., travel, conferences) should be submitted early enough to permit review and award processing.

B. Merit Review Principles and Criteria

NSF strives to invest in a robust and diverse portfolio of projects that creates new knowledge and enables breakthroughs in understanding across all areas of science and engineering research and education. This section explains how NSF evaluates proposals using its merit review process, which focuses on both the quality of the research and its broader societal impact. It outlines the key principles and criteria, and the core questions reviewers use to assess a project's creativity, feasibility, qualifications, and potential benefits.

Terms and Definitions

1. Broader Impacts

The potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes.

2. Intellectual Merit

The potential to advance knowledge.

Policies

1. Merit Review Principles

PIs and organizations should adhere to the following principles when developing their proposal, by reviewers when reviewing proposals, and by NSF program staff when determining whether to recommend for funding:

- a) Projects should be of the highest quality and have the potential to advance or transform the frontiers of knowledge.
- b) Projects should contribute to broader societal goals through research and education activities.
- c) Appropriate metrics should be used to assess projects, keeping in mind the appropriate scale and resources for the activity.

2. Merit Review Criteria

NSF proposals are evaluated using two merit review criteria: Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts. Both criteria receive full consideration. Reviewers evaluate what proposers want to do, why, how, how success will be measured, and what benefits might result.

When evaluating NSF proposals, reviewers will be asked to consider what the proposers 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. These issues apply both to the technical aspects of the proposal and the way in which the project may make broader contributions. The following questions should be considered in proposal review:

- a) To what extent do the proposed activities suggest and explore creative, original or potentially transformative concepts?

- b) Is the plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well-organized and based on a sound rationale? Does the plan incorporate a mechanism to assess success?
- c) How well qualified is the individual, team or organization to conduct the proposed activities?
- d) Are there adequate resources available (either at the proposer's home organization or through collaborations) to carry out the proposed activities?

C. Selection of Reviewers

NSF guidelines for the selection of reviewers are designed to ensure selection of experts who can give NSF staff the proper information needed to make a recommendation. This section explains how NSF selects qualified, unbiased reviewers to evaluate proposals. It emphasizes choosing experts with the right subject-matter knowledge, free of conflicts of interest, and outlines how Program Directors use these reviewers to assess proposals and inform funding recommendations.

Terms and Definitions

1. Ad Hoc Reviewer

An external expert asked to review one or more proposals outside a formal panel or meeting.

2. Panelist

An external expert participating in a panel or meeting to review one or more proposals.

Policies

1. Special Knowledge

Reviewers should have subject-matter knowledge matching the proposal's content and, where appropriate, broad knowledge for multidisciplinary or large projects.

2. Broad Knowledge

Broader or more generalized knowledge of the science and engineering subfields involved in the proposals to be reviewed to evaluate the broader impacts of the proposed activity. Reviewers with broad knowledge are required for proposals involving substantial size or complexity, broad disciplinary or multidisciplinary content, or significant national or international implications.

3. Broad Expertise

Review groups should aim for different types of organizations, geographic distribution, career stage, and other relevant characteristics, consistent with review needs.

4. Independence

Reviewers must be free of conflicts that could bias their evaluations.

D. Proposal File Updates

It is the responsibility of the proposing organization to thoroughly review each proposal prior to submission. On occasion, however, a problem is identified with a portion of the proposal after the proposal has been submitted electronically to NSF. This section explains how proposers can request updates to a submitted proposal if issues are identified after submission.

Policies

1. File Updates

Proposing organizations may request file replacements or attribute revisions in Research.gov. The request must be signed by the AOR and include a Proposal Update Justification explaining why the change is requested and any differences from the original.

2. Automatic Acceptance

A file update will be automatically accepted if submitted before the deadline and before external peer review has begun (for target-date or unsolicited proposals).

3. Late Updates

Requests after those points require the cognizant Program Director's approval and are allowed only to correct technical problems; substantive content changes are not permitted.

4. One at a Time

NSF accepts only one proposal file update (PFU) request at a time for a given proposal.

Procedures

1. How to Request a Proposal File Update

- a) To request file replacements or attribute changes, PIs must initiate these updates through the Prepare and Submit Proposals module in Research.gov. The proposal file update must be submitted by the AOR.
- b) The request must include a Proposal Update Justification, which must address why the changes or file replacements are being requested, and any differences between the original and proposed replacement files.
- c) Requests for a proposal file update automatically will be accepted if submitted:
 - Before the deadline for programs with deadlines.
 - Before external peer review begins for programs with target dates.
 - Before initiation of external peer review in the case of an unsolicited proposal.
- d) A request for a proposal file update after the timeframes specified above will require acceptance by the cognizant NSF Program Director. Such requests should be submitted only to correct a technical problem with the proposal (i.e., formatting or print problems). Changes in the content of the proposal should not be requested after the timeframes specified above. When a request is accepted, the proposed files or revisions to proposal attributes will immediately replace the existing files and become part of the official proposal.
- e) PIs can access the Proposal File Update Module via the Submitted Proposals Module in [Research.gov](https://www.research.gov). Authorized individuals in the organization's SPO can initiate or review requests for proposal file updates using the Submitted Proposals Module in [Research.gov](https://www.research.gov).
- f) For additional information, refer to the [How to Initiate and Prepare a Proposal File Update](#) guide on Research.gov.

E. Revisions During Review and Budget Discussions

Policies

1. Significant Developments

If events occur that materially affect a pending proposal (e.g., new results, key personnel unavailability), the proposer must contact the cognizant Program Director before submitting additional material. Submitting additional information must not be used as a means of circumventing page limitations or stated deadlines.

2. NSF Program Director Discussions

NSF Program Directors may discuss scope and budget with PIs before recommending support. Proposers may submit a revised budget and budget justification via Research.gov.

3. Scope Changes

If budget reductions of 10% or more occur, proposers must submit a revised budget, budget justification, and a Budget Impact Statement describing how scope is affected. Revisions must be signed by the AOR and submitted via Research.gov.

Procedures

1. How to Handle Significant Developments or Revisions During Review

- a) If significant developments occur, contact the cognizant Program Director immediately to discuss whether supplemental information is appropriate.
- b) If there is a budget revision, submit a revised budget and budget justification via Research.gov, signed by the AOR. If budget reductions of 10% or more are proposed after negotiations, submit a revised budget, budget justification, and Budget Impact Statement via Research.gov, signed by the AOR. For additional information, please refer to the [How to Initiate and Prepare a Budget Revision](#) guide on Research.gov.

F. Funding Recommendation, Award Decision, and Pre-Award Review

This section explains how proposals move from merit review to final funding decisions and award processing. It describes how NSF program directors make funding recommendations that are reviewed by NSF leadership and then evaluated by NSF Grants Officers for financial, policy, and risk considerations before an award is issued.

Terms and Definitions

1. Award Abstract

An NSF document that describes the project and justifies the expenditure of federal funds by articulating how the project serves the national interest.

Procedures

1. How Funding Recommendations are Processed

- a) After technical and programmatic review, the NSF Program Director recommends award or decline to the supervisory senior scientist. Senior program staff review recommendations before they move to grants management for pre-award review and processing.

- b) Should a proposal be recommended for award, the proposer may be contacted by the NSF Program Director for assistance in preparation of the public award abstract and its title.
- c) Recommended proposals go to the cognizant NSF Grants Officer for business, financial, and policy review, including risk-based assessments before an award is issued.
- d) Only an NSF Grants Officer may obligate funds and issue awards. Some proposals (e.g., new organizations, special arrangements, large projects) may require more time. The NSF Grants Officer may contact the proposing organization to discuss the proposal and collect additional information to make a decision on whether to fund an award.

G. Proposer Access to Review Materials

NSF makes reviews available directly to the proposer to provide feedback for the purpose of improving proposed research and research methods, and to assist in preparation of future proposals. They are not intended for any other purpose. This section explains what information proposers can access after NSF makes a decision on their proposal.

Policies

1. File Access

A PI or co-PI may request and obtain any other releasable material in NSF's file on the individual's proposal. Everything in the file, except information that identifies either reviewers or other pending or declined proposals is usually releasable to the PI. Reviews are made available directly to the PI or co-PI, to provide feedback for the purpose of improving proposed research and research methods, and to assist in preparation of future proposals. They are not intended for any other purpose.

Procedures

1. What Proposers Receive After a Decision

- a) PIs and co-PIs receive notification that they can access the following in Research.gov:
 - A description of the review process used.
 - Copies of reviews used in the decision (reviewer-identifying information redacted).
 - Panel summary and recommendation, if a panel review occurred.
 - Site-visit reports, if applicable.
- b) In addition, if not otherwise provided in the panel summary, the proposer is provided a written explanation of the basis for the declination.
- c) For additional information, refer to the [About NSF Proposal Status](#) page on Research.gov.

H. Release of Recipient Proposal Information

Award information is available to the public under the Freedom of Information Act. NSF protects information that is exempt from disclosure under law. This section explains how NSF shares information from funded proposals with the public while protecting sensitive content.

Policies

1. Public Availability

Awarded proposals are available to the public on request consistent with the Freedom of Information Act, except for privileged information or material that is personal, confidential business or financial, or otherwise exempt from disclosure under law. Without assuming any liability for inadvertent disclosure, NSF will seek to limit disclosure of such information to its employees and to outside reviewers when necessary for merit review of the proposal, or as otherwise authorized by law.

2. Invention-Related Release

Portions of proposals resulting in awards that contain descriptions of inventions in which either the government or the recipient owns a right, title, or interest (including a non-exclusive license) will not normally be made available to the public until a reasonable time has been allowed for filing patent applications. NSF will notify the recipient of receipt of requests for copies of funded proposals so the recipient may advise NSF of such inventions described, or other confidential, commercial, or proprietary information contained in the proposal.

Authorities

The following authorities govern this guide:

- National Science Foundation Act of 1950
- 2 CFR 200
- National Science Board (NSB) merit review criteria

Guide 9: Proposal Withdrawals and Declinations

Version 27-1 Effective [Month Day, Year]

This guide explains:

- U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) processes and options when proposals are withdrawn, returned without review, declined, reconsidered, or resubmitted.
- Research.gov withdrawal tools.
- Reasons a proposal may be returned without review.
- Information provided to PIs after declination.
- The reconsideration process (and its limits).
- Rules for resubmitting declined proposals.

Prospective Principal Investigators (PIs), Authorized Organization Representatives (AORs) and Sponsored Project Offices (SPOs) should use this guide to understand NSF processes and options for when proposals are declined or returned without review, how to withdraw a proposal, how to request reconsideration of a declined or returned proposal, and rules for resubmitting a previously declined proposal.

A. Proposal Withdrawal

This section explains how and when proposers can withdraw a proposal from NSF consideration. It outlines the process for initiating a withdrawal, key timing rules, and special situations.

Policies

1. Timing

A proposal may be withdrawn by the proposer at any time before a funding recommendation is made by the cognizant NSF Program Director.

2. Other Funding

Proposers must notify the cognizant NSF Program Director when a proposed project receives funding from another source and withdraw the proposal.

Procedures

1. How to Withdraw a Proposal

- a) For a Principal Investigator's (PI) proposal withdrawal, the PI initiates and forwards to the organization's Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) for submission to NSF.
- b) For a Sponsored Projects Office (SPO) proposal withdrawal, the SPO staff initiate and forward to the AOR for submission to NSF.
- c) If the withdrawal option is blocked in Research.gov, contact the cognizant NSF Program Director for assistance.
- d) Withdrawing a proposal in a collaborative set will result in the withdrawal of all linked proposals. If collaborators wish to proceed, they will need to submit a new proposal.
- e) Copies of reviews received before withdrawal will be provided to the PI.

B. Proposal Not Accepted or Returned Without Review

This section explains the circumstances under which NSF will not accept a proposal or will return it without review.

Policies

1. Reasons for Not Accepted or Returned Without Review

NSF will not accept or will return without review proposals that:

- a) Are inappropriate for NSF funding.
- b) Are submitted with insufficient lead time before activities begin.
- c) Are full proposals submitted after a "not invited" preliminary response when required.
- d) Duplicate or substantially duplicate another proposal already under consideration from the same submitter.
- e) Fail to meet proposal preparation requirements (page limits, format, electronic submission).
- f) Are not responsive to the specific funding opportunity or does not contain sufficient content to permit effective merit review.
- g) Miss announced deadlines.
- h) Have been previously reviewed and declined without substantial revision.
- i) Duplicate a previously awarded proposal.
- j) Omit required proposal sections.

C. Declinations

This section explains what happens when NSF declines a proposal and what information the proposer receives. It ensures proposers are given reviewer feedback and an explanation of the decision and outlines how they can access these materials or seek clarification.

Policies

1. Notification and Materials

When NSF declines a proposal, NSF will provide the proposer an explanation of the reasons and copies of the reviews used in the decision (verbatim but unattributed). Additional review information and panel summaries (if applicable) may be made available after concurrence by the cognizant NSF Program Director and release of the review record.

Procedures

1. How to Obtain Review Materials and Clarification After a Declination

- a) Access Research.gov for the review materials.
- b) If you cannot find the materials in Research.gov, contact the cognizant Program Director for an explanation and for copies of review materials.
- c) Proposers may access released review information via Research.gov once the review record is finalized. Reviews are released only to the original submitting PIs and co-PIs.

D. Reconsideration for Proposals Declined or Returned without Review

This section explains the process for requesting reconsideration of a declined or returned proposal to ensure the review was fair and followed proper procedures.

Policies

1. General

The purpose of reconsideration is to ensure that NSF's review has been fair and reasonable, both substantively and procedurally. The scientific and technical merits may be examined within the context of budget availability and program priorities. Reconsideration also may address any procedural errors in peer review or other aspects of proposal review, including unaccounted-for conflict of interests or inappropriate consideration of records, information, or rumor.

2. Explanation for Decline Decision

When a proposal is declined, the PI receives a copy of reviews and the panel summary (if applicable), a description of how the proposal was reviewed, and, if not otherwise provided in the panel summary, an explanation of the basis for the declination. A returned proposal also will be accompanied by an explanation. A PI who is considering asking for reconsideration should first contact the cognizant NSF Program Director or Section Head who will afford the PI an informal opportunity to seek further clarification.

3. Reconsideration of Decline Decision

If dissatisfied with the explanation by the cognizant NSF Program Director or Section Head, the PI may request in writing that NSF reconsider its action. Such a request will be considered only if the PI has first sought and obtained further clarification from the cognizant NSF Program Director or Section Head, and only if the request is received by NSF within 90 days after the declination or the return.

If not satisfied with the response, the cognizant Directorate or Office Head will review and make a determination that is final.

4. NSB Declination

If a proposal has been declined after review by the NSB, an explanation will be available.

5. Reconsideration Does Not Include Opportunity for Proposal Revision

Reconsideration will only apply to the original, declined proposal. Revisions are not permitted in the reconsideration process. Proposers may submit a substantially revised proposal for review as a new proposal under standard procedures. NSF reserves the right to return without review a proposal that is substantially the same as a proposal that was previously reviewed and declined whether a request for reconsideration was made.

6. Limits

Requests must meet the prescribed timelines and procedural prerequisites (e.g., prior contact with the NSF Program Director) to be considered. Award of NSF assistance is discretionary, and reconsideration is not an adversarial process. A formal hearing, therefore, is not provided. Because factors such as program budget and priorities factor into the decision on a proposal, NSF cannot ensure proposers that reconsideration will result in an award even if error is established in connection with the initial review.

7. Applicability

The reconsideration process is only available for proposals considered for award funding. It does not apply to:

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- "Discourage" (i.e., non-binding) decisions resulting from submission of a preliminary proposal.
- Proposals for: Fellowships; Travel; Planning; Rapid Response Research (RAPID); EARly-concept Grants for Exploratory Research (EAGER); Research Advanced by Interdisciplinary Science and Engineering (RAISE); Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program; or Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) program.

Procedures

1. How to Request Reconsideration

- a) A PI who is considering whether to ask for a reconsideration should first contact the cognizant NSF Program Director or Section Head who will afford the PI an informal opportunity to seek further clarification.
- b) If unsatisfied with the response, the PI may send the request to the cognizant Directorate/Office Head (D/OH). The request must explain why the declination was unwarranted and include relevant facts and be signed by the organization's president/CEO and the PI.
- c) The D/OH will reconsider the record to determine whether NSF's review of the declined proposal was fair and reasonable, substantively and procedurally, taking into account availability of funds and NSF policies and priorities. The D/OH may request additional information from the PI and may obtain additional reviews. The D/OH will respond within 45 days or advise of delay on their decision, which is final.

E. Substantially Revising a Proposal

This section explains how proposers can resubmit a previously declined proposal, emphasizing that it must be substantially revised to address reviewer feedback.

Policies

1. Substantial Revision Required

NSF may return without review a resubmission that does not clearly address major reviewer concerns or is substantially the same as the prior declined proposal.

2. Program Moratoria

Some programs that accept proposals anytime may impose moratoria that make a declined proposal (or a close facsimile) ineligible for resubmission for a specified period to allow time for substantive revision.

3. New Proposal Treatment

A resubmitted, substantially revised proposal is treated as a new proposal and is subject to standard review procedures.

Procedures

1. How to Revise and Resubmit a New Proposal That Was Declined

- a) Address major reviewer concerns and make substantive changes to the proposal.

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- b) Verify whether the program has a moratorium or other restrictions on resubmission.
- c) Submit the revised project as a new proposal following normal submission procedures; expect standard peer review.

Authorities

The following authority governs this guide:

- National Science Foundation Act of 1950

Guide 10: Award Acceptance and Period of Performance

Version 27-1 Effective [Month Day, Year]

This guide explains:

- How awards from the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) are issued, accepted, and managed, including the structure of an award notice and how a recipient can access award terms and conditions incorporated by reference.
- Terms related to award period of performance, such as start and end dates, budget periods, and the overall award period.
- Policies and procedures for managing funds, requesting no-cost extensions, and handling special programmatic extensions.

Principal Investigators (PIs), Authorized Organization Representatives (AORs) and Sponsored Project Offices (SPOs) should use this guide to understand how to accept or reject an NSF award, access award terms and conditions, understand the period of performance for an award, and to request a no-cost extension.

A. Award Actions and Components

This section explains what an NSF award is, what it includes, and how it becomes binding. It clarifies that the award notice — along with the budget, proposal, and referenced terms and conditions — forms the official agreement, and that accepting funds typically signifies acceptance of those terms.

Terms and Definitions

1. Award Notice

The official document from NSF notifying the recipient of an award and its terms, conditions, and the document(s) issuing amendments to an underlying award.

Policies

1. Award Acceptance

Recipients are free to accept or reject the award. A request to draw down funds constitutes acceptance. However, in limited circumstances, NSF may require written acceptance of an award with a date of acceptance specified in the award.

2. Award Declination

If a recipient declines an NSF award, they must submit a written request of award declination to the cognizant NSF Program Director.

3. Award Conditions and Instruments

An NSF award notice includes the following in descending order of precedence:

- a) The award notice and any special terms and conditions included therein (including award amendments);
- b) The NSF approved budget showing amounts by expense category;
- c) The proposal referenced in the award notice;
- d) The applicable NSF general conditions referenced in the award notice regulations at 2 CFR 200 as implemented by the *NSF Guidance on Financial Assistance*;

- e) the budget showing amounts by expense category; and
- f) Any funding opportunity or related documents incorporated by reference.

Procedures

1. How to Access an Award Notice

- a) The NSF Grants Officer transmits award notices to the recipients via email.
- b) Recipients can view, print, or download their award notices in Research.gov under Award Documents.

2. How to Find Award Terms and Conditions and Guidance

- a) Award conditions are incorporated by reference in the award notices, as applicable.
- b) Visit the [Award Terms and Conditions](#) page on NSF.gov for more information.

Reminder: Only an NSF Grants Officer can issue awards, obligate funds, or amend awards.

B. Award Periods of Performance and Extensions

This section explains how the timing of an NSF award works and how recipients can request more time to complete their project. It defines key dates (start, end, and award period), clarifies when costs can be charged, and outlines the rules for extending an award.

Terms and Definitions

1. Award Date

The date the cognizant NSF Grants Officer signs the award.

2. Award Period of Performance ("Award Period")

The period from the award start date to the end date as shown on the award.

3. Budget Period

One or more funded interval(s) during an award period of performance during which allowable costs may be incurred (including carryforward or approved revisions).

4. End Date

The last date of the award period after which expenditures generally may not be charged except for obligations properly incurred on or before that date. The end date is generally the last day of a month.

5. No-Cost Extension

An extension of the award end date that does not increase funding.

6. Start Date

The date on or after which allowable costs may be incurred (often the 1st or 15th of a month). If not specified in the award notice, the award date is the start date.

Policies

1. Award

Awards authorize recipients to incur allowable costs for expenditures up to the awarded amount during the award period in accordance with the award terms and conditions.

2. Expenditures

Expenditures are generally not allowable before the start date or after the end date except as expressly set forth in an award. However, pre-award costs may be authorized by the cognizant NSF Grants Officer.

3. Start Dates

Once an award is made, the start date cannot be changed.

4. End Dates

The award end date may be changed by a recipient-approved no-cost extension, NSF-approved no-cost extension, or by an NSF approved supplemental funding request.

5. First No-Cost-Extensions

Recipients may unilaterally execute a one-time extension of up to 12 months to complete the original scope of work without additional funds. This extension cannot be used to expend remaining funds on work beyond its original scope or for awards with a zero balance. The recipient shall notify NSF, providing supporting reasons for the extension and the revised period of performance, at least ten calendar days prior to the end date specified in the grant to ensure accuracy of NSF's grant data.

6. Second and Subsequent No-Cost Extensions

If time beyond the first no-cost extension is required for exceptional circumstances, the recipient must submit a formal request at least 45 days before the end date of the award end date. Recipients must not incur new commitments after the end date in anticipation of an extension. No-cost extensions do not extend the statutory period of availability of appropriations.

Reminder: Recipients must submit requests for second and subsequent no-cost extensions at least 45 days before the award end date. A no-cost extension approved after the scheduled end date will prompt an overdue annual report, which impacts amendment issuances for awards associated with the PI or any co-PI(s).

Procedures

1. How to Request an Award Period Change

- a) For the first no-cost extension (grantee-executed), the AOR submits an electronic notification via the Notifications and Requests module in Research.gov. The revised end date may be viewed via NSF's electronic systems.
- b) For the second no-cost extension, the AOR submits a formal request via the Notifications and Requests module in Research.gov. The request must include a justification for the extension, an unobligated funds estimate, and a plan for use of award funds consistent with original objectives. The recipient will be electronically notified of the disposition of this request by the cognizant NSF Program Director.

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- c) For the third and subsequent no-cost extensions, the AOR submits a formal request via the Notifications and Requests module in Research.gov. The request must include a justification for the extensions, an unobligated funds estimate, and a plan for use of award funds consistent with original objectives. The NSF Grants Officer will then determine whether to approve the request. If approved, the award will be amended specifying a new end date.
- d) For more information, refer to the [About Notifications and Requests](#) guide on Research.gov.

Authorities

The following authorities govern this guide:

- National Science Foundation Act of 1950
- 2 CFR 200

Guide 11: Monitoring Project Performance and Changes in Project Direction

Version 27-1 Effective [Month Day Year]

This guide explains U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) policies and procedures for monitoring project performance after receiving an award and managing post award changes. It covers:

- Recipient responsibilities.
- Required notifications to NSF.
- Changes in project direction or management.
- Subawards and transfers.
- Post-award requirements related to personnel, mentoring, safe and harassment-free working environments, and individual development plans.
- Post-award activities relating to environmental considerations.

Principal Investigators (PIs), Authorized Organization Representatives (AORs) and Sponsored Project Offices (SPOs) should use this guide to understand which changes to an NSF-funded project require notifications to or prior approval from NSF, how to submit notifications or approval requests from NSF, and project monitoring requirements for NSF awards.

A. Monitoring Project Performance

This section explains recipient responsibilities for managing and monitoring NSF-funded projects to ensure the work stays on schedule, meets project goals, and follows award requirements. Recipients must review expenditures and actions to confirm they are allowable, reasonable, and consistent with NSF and organizational policies. NSF may also conduct site visits to review project progress and award management, and recipients must provide appropriate support in preparation for and during those visits.

Policies

1. General

The recipient is responsible for their project and its results and must monitor performance to assure adherence to project goals, time schedules, and other requirements in the award terms and conditions.

2. Organizational Reviews

The recipient must conduct appropriate organizational reviews or approvals in advance of expenditures or actions affecting the award. Recipients are required to ensure all expenditures and actions are allowable, necessary, and reasonable and meet the following conditions:

- a) Consistent with award terms and conditions;
- b) Consistent with NSF and recipient policies;
- c) Represent effective use of resources; and
- d) Do not constitute changes in objectives or scope.

3. NSF Site Visits

NSF, through authorized representatives, may make announced or unannounced site visits at reasonable times to review project accomplishments, management control systems, and award

administration, and to provide technical assistance as needed. If NSF conducts a site visit, the recipient and any subrecipients must provide reasonable facilities and assistance for the safety and convenience of NSF representatives.

B. Changes to Projects that Require Notification to NSF

The section describes the policies and procedures for communicating changes to the management or direction of an award that do not require prior approval from NSF. Some recipient actions require notification only, while others require prior NSF approval under the award terms and conditions and applicable NSF guidance. Recipients are strongly encouraged to notify the cognizant NSF Program Director of any changes needed as early as possible.

Policies

1. Award Change Notifications to NSF that Require AOR Submission

The AOR must sign and submit notifications to NSF for the following:

- a. First-time (recipient-approved) no-cost extensions.
- b. Annual and final cost share notifications by recipient.
- c. Conflicts of interest that cannot be satisfactorily managed, reduced, or eliminated, and of research that proceeds without the imposition of conditions or restrictions when a conflict exists.
- d. Findings or determinations related to sexual harassment, other forms of harassments, or sexual assault.
- e. Placement of a PI, co-PI, or senior/key personnel of the project on administrative leave, or imposition of an administrative action relating to such a finding or investigation.

2. Award Change Notifications to NSF that Do Not Require AOR Submission

Recipients must provide notifications to NSF for the following without AOR submission:

- a. Significant changes in methods or procedures.
- b. Significant changes, delays, or events of unusual interest.

Procedures

1. How to Notify NSF About Significant Changes in Methods or Procedures

- a. Navigate to the Notifications & Requests module in Research.gov.
- b. The PI or AOR can select the button "Prepare New" to select type of change.
- c. Provide a Description of Change(s) in Methods/Procedures.

2. How to Notify NSF About Significant Changes/Delays or Events of Unusual Interest

- a. Navigate to the Notifications & Requests module in Research.gov.
- b. Provide a description of change/delays or events of unusual Interest.

3. How to Submit Annual and Final Cost Share Notification by Recipient

- a. Navigate to the Notifications & Requests module in Research.gov.
- b. The AOR can select the button "Prepare New" to select type of change.

4. How to Notify NSF About Conflicts of Interest

- a. Navigate to the Notifications & Requests module in Research.gov.
- b. The AOR can select the button "Prepare New" to select type of change.
- c. Provide an explanation of why conflict(s) of interest cannot be managed, reduced or eliminated, or explanation why research proceeded without the imposition of conditions or restrictions when a conflict of interest exists, up to 1,200 characters.

C. Changes to Projects that Require Prior Approval From NSF

This section explains the project and leadership changes that require prior NSF approval, such as changes in scope, PI effort, award transfers, subawards, and no-cost extensions. It outlines the documentation, approvals, and timelines recipients must follow when requesting these changes through NSF systems.

Terms and Definitions

1. Award Transfer

The movement of an NSF award from one organization to another, typically when a PI moves to a new organization and NSF approves continuation of the award.

2. Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) Assignees

Employees from external organizations, including governments, universities, and nonprofits, who provide service to NSF through an agreement with their home institution.

4. Person-Months

The amount of time devoted to a project, expressed in months of effort during a given year or budget period.

5. Subaward

See [2 CFR 200.1](#).

Policies

1. Changes in Objectives or Scope

Recipients must receive NSF approval before changing the objectives or scope of their project. Changes to the Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources section of the approved award constitute a change in scope.

2. Long-Term Disengagement of PI or co-PI

Recipients must receive NSF approval if a PI or co-PI will be disengaged from the project for more than three months but intends to return. If the proposed arrangements are not satisfactory to NSF, the award may be terminated under NSF termination procedures.

3. Changes in PI or Co-PI Person-Months Devoted to the Project

The recipient must receive NSF approval if the PI or co-PI will devote less time to the project (a reduction of 25% or more) than anticipated in the approved proposal. The request must be submitted at least 30 days before the proposed change, or as soon as practicable after the change becomes known. If the recipient or NSF determines that the reduction of effort will substantially impair successful execution of the project, the NSF Program Director will consult

the NSF Grants Officer. The NSF Grants Officer may a) request nomination of a replacement PI or co-PI acceptable to NSF; b) initiate termination procedures; or c) negotiate an appropriate modification to the award.

4. Addition of co-PI

The recipient must receive NSF approval to add a new co-PI.

5. Substitute PI or co-PI

The recipient must receive NSF approval to substitute a PI or co-PI. If a substitute is not approved, NSF may suspend or terminate the award.

6. Withdrawal of PI or co-PI

The recipient must receive NSF approval to remove a PI or co-PI severs connection with the recipient organization or otherwise relinquishes active direction of the project. This request must be submitted at least 30 days before the proposed change, or as soon as practicable after the prospective withdrawal is known. The recipient must: a) initiate transfer of the award; b) nominate a substitute PI or co-PI; or c) initiate award closeout procedures through submission of final reports, as appropriate.

7. Former NSF Employees or Intergovernmental Personnel Act Assignee (IPAs)

The recipient must receive NSF approval to appoint a former NSF employee or IPA to an award they were previously involved with. The recipient must submit a Change of PI request and designate a substitute negotiator.

8. Award Transfers/Novations

When a PI or co-PI plans to leave the recipient organization during the course of an award, the organization may nominate a substitute PI or co-PI or request termination and closeout of the award. If the PI or co-PI's original organization, new organization, and NSF agree, NSF may facilitate transfer of the award and the remaining funds to the PI or co-PI's new organization. Transfer normally occurs through a tripartite agreement among NSF, the original organization, and the new organization, or through a subaward arrangement subject to NSF approval.

9. Subawarding or Transferring Part of an NSF Award (Subaward)

Except for allowable procurements of commercially available materials and supplies, equipment, or general support services, no part of an NSF award may be subawarded or transferred to another organization without prior NSF authorization. The intent to enter into such arrangements should be disclosed in the proposal whenever known at the time of proposal submission. If a subaward or transfer becomes necessary, the recipient must submit, at a minimum:

- a) A clear description of the work to be performed by each subrecipient.
- b) A separate budget and budget justification for each subaward.
- c) If funding is requested to support a postdoctoral scholar and the original proposal did not include a mentoring plan, the required mentoring plan.

The NSF award terms and conditions identify which award provisions flow down to subrecipients.

10. Subsequent No-Cost Extensions (NCE)

After the first no-cost extension (which the recipient executes), NSF must approve subsequent no-cost extensions. The first NSF approved request requires PO approval while the second and subsequent NCE request needs approval from the cognizant NSF Grants Officer.

Procedures

1. How to Request Changes in Objectives, Scope, or Key Project Leadership

- a. Prepare a clear justification for the requested change.
- b. Navigate to the Notifications & Requests module in Research.gov. The PI or AOR can select the button "Prepare New" to select type of change.
- c. Enter Proposed Changes in Objectives or Scope and Justification for Changes in Objectives or Scope.

2. How to Request Addition of a Co-PI or Substitute (Change) PI or Co-PI

- a. Navigate to the Notifications & Requests module in Research.gov. The PI or AOR can select the button "Prepare New" to select type of change.
- b. For addition or substitution of a co-PI or PI, include the individual's name biographical sketch, current and pending (other) support (Guide 5), synergistic activities, substitute negotiator document if applicable, and justification for the request including impact on the project. Consult the [SciEnCV](#) guide for more information on preparation for the biographical sketch.
- c. Await NSF approval and any award amendment before implementing changes that require prior approval. If NSF approves, the NSF Grants Officer will amend the award.

3. How to Obtain Approval to Transfer an Award to a New Organization

- a) Before starting the PI Transfer Request Process, ensure that the PI Transfer is sent to the correct New Awardee Organization, contact the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR), Sponsored Project Officer (SPO) or Principal Investigator (PI) to confirm the correct New Awardee Organization contact information.
- b) Navigate to the Notifications & Requests module in Research.gov. The PI or AOR can select the button "Prepare New" to select type of change.
- c) If the PI transfers organizations, and the project will continue at the new organization, ensure that all parties (including the PI, existing organization, and new organization) reach agreement on the transfer. Prepare the following transfer documentation:
 - i. Requested Start Date.
 - ii. Select new awardee organization by looking up name or by Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). UEI is recommended.
 - iii. A brief summary of progress to date.
 - iv. A description of work yet to be accomplished.
 - v. Total disbursements and unpaid obligations (at start date of transfer). Note: This prefilled amount is the calculated minimum amount spent on this award to date. You may increase this amount, which will reduce the amount you are transferring. Please enter the amount as a whole number only.
 - vi. A budget for the agreed upon transfer amount (unliquidated balance of the original award minus any unreimbursed expenses) and separate budgets for any outstanding award increments. Note: Individual budget line items are disabled for the original organization and the budget total is consolidated under Line G "Other". When the request is submitted to the receiving organization, they will redistribute and complete the detailed line-item budget.

- vii. If funding is requested to support a postdoctoral scholar or graduate student, the required mentoring plan.
- d) The original organization concurs with the transfer by electronically forwarding the request to the new organization by the AOR. The new organization must provide a detailed budget for the transfer amount agreed to by both organizations, and the AOR of the new organization must sign and submit the request through Research.gov.
- e) NSF will assign a proposal number at the time of submission, which becomes the new award number if the transfer is approved. If approved, NSF will reduce the original award by the transfer amount and re-establish that amount under a new award at the new organization.
- f) Any monetary discrepancies after the transfer must be resolved between the original and new organizations; NSF will not intervene.
- g) Equipment purchased with NSF funds for the project should remain available for the project, and the PI should arrange with the original organization for transfer of the equipment where appropriate. Shipping costs may be charged to the original or transferred award as an allowable cost. Funds may not be requested to repurchase equipment previously obtained with federal funds.
- h) If the time and funds remaining are modest and both organizations agree, the original organization may issue a subaward to the new organization to complete the project, subject to discussion with the NSF Grants Officer.

D. Changes Initiated by NSF

This section explains that NSF may take action to ensure proper management of an award, including requiring replacement of a PI or co-PI, reducing funding, or suspending or terminating an award after consulting with the recipient organization.

Policies

1. NSF Programmatic Stewardship Authority

After NSF consults with the AOR or designee, NSF may, if necessary, initiate the substitution or removal of the PI or any co-PI, reduce the award funding amount, or suspend or terminate the award.

When NSF invokes this authority, the recipient must nominate a substitute PI or co-PI through NSF's electronic systems. The request must include the substitute PI's or co-PI's name, contact information, biographical sketch, current and pending support from all ongoing projects and proposals. If approved, the Grants Officer will amend the award. If a substitute is not approved, or no substitute is available, NSF may suspend or terminate the award.

E. Post-Award Additions of Postdoctoral Scholars or Graduate Students

This section explains the requirements for mentoring plans when postdoctoral scholars or graduate students are added to an NSF award after it has been made.

Terms and Definitions

1. Individual Development Plan

A plan that maps the educational goals, career exploration, and professional development of the individual for postdoctoral scholars or graduate students supported by the award.

2. Mentoring Plan

The required plan that describes mentoring activities for postdoctoral scholars or graduate students that are supported by the award.

Policies

1. Mentoring Plans

If a recipient rebudgets funds or requests supplemental funding to support a postdoctoral scholar or graduate student and the original proposal included a mentoring plan, no further documentation is required. If the original proposal did not include a mentoring plan, the recipient must send the cognizant NSF Program Director the required mentoring plan.

2. Individual Development Plans

For each NSF award that provides substantial support to postdoctoral scholars and graduate students, each individual must have an Individual Development Plan. NSF defines "substantial support" as funding received by an individual during the annual reporting period under the NSF award as either one person month or more of salary or at least one academic term (e.g., semester or quarter) of stipend support associated with an expected average time commitment of at least 10 hours per week. This plan is not required to be submitted to NSF but must be maintained in organizational records.

F. Post-Award Additions of Off-Site or Off-Campus Research

This section explains the requirements for safe and harassment-free working environment plans when off-site or off-campus research is added to an NSF award after it is made.

Policies

1. Safe and Harassment-Free Working Environments

If a recipient rebudgets funds to support off-campus or off-site research and a Plan for Safe and Harassment-free Working Environments was developed for the original proposal, no further documentation is required. If such a plan was not developed for the original proposal, the recipient must develop and maintain the plan in the organization's records.

2. Supplemental Funding

If supplemental funding is requested to support off-campus or off-site research and the original proposal did not require such a plan, the recipient must develop and maintain the plan in the organization's records.

G. Post-Award Activities Affecting Indian Tribe Resources or Interests

This section explains the requirements for activities added after an award that may affect Indian Tribe resources or interests.

Policies

1. Indian Tribe Approval

If a recipient rebudgets funds to support activities that may impact resources or interests of a federally recognized Indian Tribe and prior written approval from the Indian Tribe(s) was obtained at the time of proposal submission, no further documentation is required. If Indian Tribe approval for the proposed change was not applicable at the time of proposal submission, the recipient must obtain either: a) written confirmation that review and approval is not required; or b) documentation of approval from the appropriate Indian Tribe.

2. Supplemental Funding

If supplemental funding is requested for activities that may impact resources or interests of a federally recognized Indian Tribe and prior approval was not required in the original proposal, the recipient must obtain the required confirmation or approval prior to award of the supplemental funding.

H. Post-Award Activities Relating to Environmental Considerations

This section explains the requirements for activities added after an award that may affect environmental resources.

Policies

1. Unanticipated Environmental Impacts

Prior to making an award, NSF considers the anticipated environmental impacts associated with the activities described in the proposal. The assessment of environmental impacts is based, in part, on information provided by the organization. If, while performing the work required by the award, the recipient learns of any potential or actual unanticipated environmental impacts, the recipient must immediately notify NSF of such impacts.

The recipient shall also cease all work anticipated to cause or that is causing such unanticipated environmental impacts until NSF has had a reasonable opportunity to assess the situation, carry out any required environmental compliance activities, and provide further direction to the recipient.

Other post-award environmental obligations include meeting any requirements to implement mitigation measures and/or meet reporting requirements identified during the environmental review process.

Authorities

The following authorities govern this guide:

1. National Science Foundation Act of 1950
2. CHIPS and Science Act of 2022
3. 2 CFR 200

Guide 12: Cost Principles and Allowability

Version 27-1 Effective [Month Day Year]

This guide explains U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) policies and procedures for cost principles and allowability under NSF awards. It describes:

- The general rules that govern allowable costs.
- Basic limitations on charging costs to awards.
- Prior approval requirements.
- Treatment of direct and indirect costs.
- Fee limitations.
- Prohibitions.

Principal Investigators (PIs), Authorized Organization Representatives (AORs) and Sponsored Project Offices (SPOs) should use this guide to understand which costs can be charged to NSF awards, how to manage these costs, and how to request changes to an NSF award budget.

A. Basic Considerations

NSF award expenditures are governed by federal cost principles and must conform to NSF policies, award terms and conditions, award special provisions, and recipient internal policies. This section explains the basic rules for spending and managing NSF award funds, including what costs are allowed, when prior NSF approval is required, and the responsibilities recipients have for ensuring costs comply with federal regulations and award terms. It also describes how recipients should handle pre-award and post-award costs, budget changes, and situations where additional guidance or approval from NSF may be needed.

The [NSF Prior Approval Matrix](#) provides a listing of prior approvals that are required to be obtained by NSF for an award. Unless otherwise specified in the award notice or the applicable award general terms and conditions, no additional prior approvals beyond those specified in the NSF Prior Approval Matrix are required.

Terms and Definitions

1. Allowable Cost

Costs incurred under an award that are necessary, reasonable, allocable, and compliant with federal regulations and NSF policy. Applicable cost principles are based on recipient organizational type. For criteria of costs allowable under a federal award see Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 31.2 ([48 CFR 31.2](#)) *Contracts with Commercial Organizations* (for-profit recipients) and 2 CFR 200, subpart E, *Cost Principles* (all other recipients).

Policies

1. Recipient Responsibility

The recipient is responsible for ensuring that all costs charged to NSF awards are allowable, allocable, reasonable, and consistent with applicable federal requirements, award terms, and program requirements. Costs that do not meet these requirements may be disallowed by determination of an NSF Grants Officer at any time, including during audit resolution.

2. Advance Agreements

Where a funded project may incur special or unusual costs for which allowability may be difficult to determine, the recipient and the NSF Grants Officer may enter an advance agreement regarding allowability of such costs. Such agreement may be made before or during an award period and will be documented in writing. Advance agreement may not be used to categorize otherwise unallowable costs as allowable.

3. Federal Cost Principles

NSF intends this guide to be consistent with the federal cost principles. If there is any discrepancy between this guide and the cost principles applicable to an award, the cost principles in effect as of the start date of the NSF award govern. If there is a discrepancy between the special provisions of an NSF award and the cost principles, the special provisions of the award govern.

4. Maximum NSF Obligation

NSF's maximum obligation for support of the project will not exceed the amount specified in the award, as amended. NSF does not amend awards to provide additional funds for unrecovered indirect costs resulting from final negotiated rates or for increases in salaries, fringe benefits, or other costs.

5. Pre-Award Costs

Recipients may incur allowable pre-award costs within the 90-day period immediately preceding the award start date if approval of pre-award spending is documented under recipient policies and procedures, incurred in anticipation of the federal award, and such costs are necessary for efficient and timely performance of the scope of work. Pre-award expenditures are incurred at the recipient's risk. Recipient authority to approve such costs does not obligate NSF if appropriations are unavailable, an award is not made, or an award is made for less than the recipient anticipated. Pre-award costs generally must be charged to the initial budget period of the award unless NSF determines otherwise.

6. Continuing Grant Increments

Pre-award expenditures before NSF approval of an increment within a continuing grant are not subject to the 90-day limitation or prior approval requirement, but remain subject to recipient risk.

7. Post-End Date Costs

Allowable costs may not be incurred, and NSF funds may not be expended after the end date of the award except to liquidate valid commitments made on or before the end date. Equipment, materials, and supplies ordered after the award end date generally may not be charged to the project. Recipients should not purchase equipment, computing devices, or restock materials and supplies simply to expend remaining funds when there is little or no time left for those items to be used in the actual conduct of the project.

8. Approved Budget

Funding of items identified in the approved NSF budget constitutes NSF authorization for the recipient to incur those costs, unless the award language imposes a specific limitation and provided the costs are otherwise allowable, allocable, and reasonable. If required for the project, the recipient may transfer funds from one budget category to another for allowable expenditures, subject to the applicable award terms and conditions.

Procedures

1. How to Determine Whether a Cost is Allowable

- a) Confirm that the cost is consistent with 2 CFR 200, this guide, award terms and conditions, any special award provisions, the applicable funding opportunity, and recipient internal policy.
- b) Ensure the cost is properly documented and treated consistently under the recipient's accounting practices.
- c) If cost allowability is difficult to determine, consult the cognizant NSF Grants Officer in advance and document the circumstances.
- d) When appropriate, obtain and retain an advance agreement or other written NSF guidance on the treatment of the cost.

2. How to Manage Pre-Award and Post-End Date Costs

- a) For pre-award costs within 90 days before the award start date, ensure the spending is approved and documented under recipient policy and is necessary for effective and economical conduct of the project.
- b) If pre-award costs are needed for a period exceeding 90 days, submit a request via email to the cognizant Grants Officer before charging the cost.
- c) Do not charge costs incurred after the award end date except to liquidate valid commitments made on or before the end date or to charge allowable publication or research results sharing costs before closeout as permitted.

3. How to Request NSF Prior Approval for Budget-Related Changes

- a) Review the applicable NSF prior approval matrix to determine whether prior approval is required.
- b) If approval is needed, prepare a request through the Notifications and Requests Module in Research.gov. Use the "Other Request" option if no more specific request type is available.
- c) Clearly identify the affected budget items, the amount of the proposed changes, and the justification for the request.
- d) Wait for NSF approval when prior approval is required before implementing the change.

B. Direct Costs

This section explains the types of direct costs that may be charged to an NSF award, including salaries, fringe benefits, consulting, and certain infrastructure-related expenses. It outlines the rules recipients must follow to ensure these costs are allowable under federal regulations and institutional policies, including special restrictions, where applicable.

Terms and Definitions

1. Direct Cost
See [2 CFR 200.413](#).

Policies

1. Salaries and Wages

Compensation paid or accrued by the organization for employees working on the NSF-supported project during the award period is allowable in accordance with the applicable federal cost principles. See [Guide 4](#) for more information.

2. Fringe Benefits

If the recipient's usual accounting practices treat contributions to employee benefits as direct costs, NSF funds may be used to charge fringe benefits as a direct cost. Fringe benefits may be charged through a calculated fringe benefit rate for a class of employees or through actual costs for individual employees if that institutional policy has been approved by the cognizant federal agency for indirect costs. Fringe benefits charged as direct costs under pay-as-you-go plans may be subject to reasonableness review, especially for large lump-sum payments for leave, disability, pregnancy, or similar benefits.

3. Intra-University (IHE) Consulting

Intra-university consulting is ordinarily treated as part of a university employee's regular institutional obligations and does not warrant additional compensation above full-time salary. Extra compensation above institutional base salary may be allowable in unusual cases where the consulting is across departmental lines or involves a separate or remote operation, and the work is in addition to the consultant's regular appointment. Such extra compensation is allowable only if it is consistent with established university policy and the applicable federal cost principles.

4. Federal Employees

Employees of the federal government (other than NSF) may serve as lecturers or staff on an NSF project and may receive compensation or expenses if they have prior approval from their agencies and the services are performed outside regular working hours or while on leave status. NSF employees may not receive compensation from an NSF-supported project under any circumstances.

5. Build America, Buy America

Any construction, alteration, maintenance, or repair of infrastructure in the United States using federal funds must comply with [Build America, Buy America requirements](#). All iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in the federally funded project must be produced in the United States. The recipient must implement these domestic preference requirements in its procurements and flow them down to all subawards and contracts at any tier. If the requirements cannot be met, the recipient must submit a waiver request with supporting rationale to the cognizant NSF Program Director and Grants Officer.

6. Statutory Cost Rules

From time to time, statutes may be enacted that impose limitations on conditions on use of federal funds for specific purposes. Recipient awards are subject to such statutes. Certain such limitations are set forth in this Guide at [E \(Prohibitions\)](#).

Procedures

1. How to Submit a Waiver for Build America, Buy America (BABA) Requirements

- a) Instructions for the submission of waiver requests can be found on the [NSF Build America, Buy America](#) page on NSF.gov.
- b) All waiver requests will be subject to a 15-day public comment period and review and approval by the Office of Management and Budget Made in America Office.
- c) Recipients will be notified of an NSF decision once a final determination is made.

C. Indirect Costs

This section explains how NSF reimburses organizations for indirect costs, also known as facilities and administrative (F&A) costs, and how indirect cost rates are established, negotiated, and applied to awards. It describes the different types of indirect cost rates, the responsibilities recipients have for maintaining current negotiated rates, and the rules that apply to domestic and foreign organizations, including the use of de minimis rates when negotiated rates are unavailable.

Terms and Definitions

1. Final Rate

An indirect cost rate based on actual costs for a completed period that is not subject to adjustment.

2. Indirect Cost (F&A)

See [2 CFR 200.414](#).

3. Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC)

See [2 CFR 200.1](#).

4. Predetermined Rate

An indirect cost rate established for a specified current or future period that is not subject to adjustment.

5. Provisional Rate

A temporary indirect cost rate used for interim reimbursement and reporting until a final rate is established.

Policies

1. General

Except as otherwise stated in an NSF funding opportunity, recipients are entitled to reimbursement from award funds for allocable indirect costs on the NSF share of allowable direct costs.

2. Rate Negotiation

NSF program staff may not negotiate indirect costs as a separate budget item and may not suggest or request that PIs reduce or waive indirect costs. Negotiations concerning business and financial matters on specific awards, including indirect cost reimbursement, are conducted by the cognizant Grants Officer with an authorized official of the recipient organization. NSF negotiates indirect cost rates only for recipients for which NSF provides the preponderance of

direct federal funding. NSF does not negotiate rates for organizations without direct NSF funding or for entities serving only as subrecipients.

3. Indirect Cost Rate Submissions

Organizations for which NSF is the cognizant agency must submit indirect cost rate proposals within six months after the end of their fiscal year when operating under provisional-to-final arrangements.

4. Negotiated Rates

The awarded indirect cost rate is generally based on the recipient's current federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement.

5. Domestic Recipients without a Current Negotiated Rate

Domestic recipients that do not have a current negotiated rate agreement with a cognizant federal agency should generally apply the "de minimis" rate of up to 15% to a base of modified total direct costs (MTDC). No supporting documentation is required for rates of 15% or less of MTDC.

6. Foreign Organizations

NSF does not normally make direct awards to foreign organizations except as expressly authorized by statute. Foreign subrecipient organizations that do not have a current U.S. federally negotiated indirect cost rate(s) are limited to a "de minimis" indirect cost rate recovery of up to 15% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). Foreign subrecipients that have a U.S. federally negotiated indirect cost rate(s) may recover indirect costs at the current negotiated rate.

7. Predetermined Rates

NSF uses predetermined rates where appropriate. A predetermined rate applies to a specified current or future period and is not subject to adjustment.

8. Award-Specific Rates

In rare circumstances involving limited NSF funding, and at the discretion of the NSF Grants Officer, NSF may establish an award-specific rate rather than a formal annual negotiated indirect cost rate agreement. In those cases, the award notice will specify the rate type and application base.

9. Final Rate Negotiation

Recipients with provisional rates must submit indirect cost proposals to their cognizant federal agency within six months after the close of each fiscal year so final rates can be established.

10. Institution of Higher Education

For IHEs subject to the applicable federal requirements, the negotiated rate in effect at the time of the initial award must be used throughout the life of the federal award. Negotiated rates include final, fixed, and predetermined rates but exclude provisional rates, and the life of the award includes each competitive segment of an award, to include continuing grant increments and supplemental funding.

11. Indirect Cost Changes

NSF will not amend an award solely to provide additional funds resulting from changes in indirect or fringe benefit rates. Indirect cost rate recovery on NSF awards is always subject to

the availability of funds. An organization may not be able to recover full indirect costs if sufficient award funding is not available.

12. Most Recent Rate or De Minimis Rate

When a recipient lacks a current negotiated rate at the time of award but previously had one, the NSF Grants Officer may use the most recently negotiated rate for funding purposes or may require the proposal budget to apply the de minimis rate up to 15% against MTDC.

13. Consequence for Failure to Maintain a Current Rate

Recipients are responsible for ensuring that their negotiated indirect cost rate agreements do not lapse. Failure to keep a current negotiated indirect cost rate agreement could lead NSF to restrict budgeted indirect costs to the 15% de minimis rate applied to the MTDC base.

Procedures

1. How to Prepare and Submit an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

- a) See the [Indirect Cost Rate Proposal Submission Procedures](#) page (to be updated) on NSF.gov for indirect cost rate proposal submission requirements.
- b) The submission of indirect cost rate proposals and requests for submission extensions should be sent to capidc@nsf.gov.

D. Fee Payments

This section explains NSF's rules regarding fee payments under an award. The section clarifies that profit or fee payments are not automatically permitted under NSF awards.

Terms and Definitions

1. Fee

Profit or other payment above allowable costs.

Policies

1. General

Payment of fee or profit under an NSF award is allowable only by SBIR/STTR recipients and Major Facilities programs when authorized by the funding opportunity and approved by NSF. NSF will generally not fund fee or Facilities Capital Cost of Money (FCCM) on its awards.

E. Prohibitions

This section explains selected federal restrictions on using NSF award funds to purchase or use certain prohibited technologies and equipment that pose national security risks. It describes legal requirements that prevent recipients and subrecipients from using NSF funds for certain telecommunications equipment, video surveillance systems, and drones connected to covered foreign entities, particularly those linked to the People's Republic of China.

Policies

1. Certain Telecommunications and Video Surveillance Services or Equipment

For all awards issued on or after August 13, 2020, recipients and subrecipients are prohibited from obligating or expending loan or award funds to procure or obtain, extend or renew a contract to procure or obtain, or enter into a contract to procure or obtain certain covered telecommunications equipment, services, or systems. See [2 CFR 200.216](#) for more information on the list of restrictions and covered entities.

2. Unmanned Aircraft (Drones)

The American Security Drone Act of 2023 prohibits use of NSF funds on or after December 22, 2025, to: (1) procure unmanned aircraft systems (drones) that are manufactured or assembled by a covered foreign entity; or (2) in connection with the operation of such a drone or unmanned aircraft systems. Prohibited sources of drones include entities identified on the [Consolidated Screening List](#) and entities from the People's Republic of China or subject to influence or control by the government of the People's Republic of China or the Communist Party of the People's Republic of China, as determined by the [Secretary of Homeland Security](#).

Authorities

The following authorities govern this guide:

- National Science Foundation Act of 1950
- National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019
- Federal Acquisition Regulation Part 31 (for for-profit organizations)
- 2 CFR 200

Guide 13: Conflicts of Interest, Responsible Conduct of Research, and Scientific Integrity

Version 27-1 Effective [Month Day, Year]

This guide gives organizations a framework for:

- Setting up policies and procedures to identify and manage conflicts of interest.
- Establishing an institutional responsible conduct of research education and oversight plan.
- Protecting the integrity of research and staying compliant with U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) research integrity policies.

Principal Investigators (PIs) should use this guide to understand expectations NSF has regarding scientific integrity and the practice of Gold Standard Science for those who seek or receive award funding.

Authorized Organization Representatives (AORs) and Sponsored Project Offices (SPOs) should use this guide to understand how to establish policies and procedures for managing conflicts of interest, responsible conduct of research, and research integrity.

A. Conflicts of Interest

This section explains NSF's requirements for identifying, disclosing, and managing conflicts of interest (COI) in funded research. It defines key terms describes how conflicts must be monitored, documented, and, if necessary, reported to NSF, ensuring that financial interests do not compromise the integrity of research or decision-making.

Terms and Definitions

1. Investigator

The PI, co-PIs, and any other person identified on the proposed project who is responsible for the design, conduct, or reporting of research or educational activities funded or proposed for funding by NSF.

2. Significant Financial Interest (SFI)

Anything of monetary value, including salary/payments for services (e.g., consulting fees, honoraria), equity interests (e.g., stocks, options, private equity, ownership interests), venture or capital financing, and intellectual property rights (e.g., patents, copyrights, royalties). Exclusions to this term include:

- a) Salary, royalties, or other remuneration from the proposing organization.
- b) Ownership interests in proposers under SBIR or STTR programs.
- c) Income from seminars, lectures, or teaching engagements sponsored by public or nonprofit entities.
- d) Income from service on advisory committees or review panels for public or nonprofit entities.
- e) An equity interest that, aggregated for the investigator and the investigator's spouse and dependent children, meets both of the following tests:
 - i. Does not exceed \$10,000 in value as determined through reference to public prices or other reasonable measures of fair market value.

- ii. Does not represent more than a 5% ownership interest in any single entity; and salary, royalties, or other payments that, when aggregated for the investigator and the investigator's spouse and dependent children, are not expected to exceed \$10,000 in the prior 12-month period.

Policies

1. Applicability

Each recipient organization employing more than fifty persons must maintain a written, enforced COI policy and ensure that all COIs for each award are managed, reduced, or eliminated prior to expenditure of award funds and during the award if a conflict of interest arises. Where subrecipients or collaborators are used, the recipient must take reasonable steps to ensure those entities either (a) maintain equivalent policies or (b) Principal Investigators (PIs), co-PIs, and any other person (referred to as "investigators") identified on the proposed project who is responsible for the design, conduct, or reporting of research or educational activities funded or proposed for funding by NSF follow the prime recipient's policies.

2. Disclosure Requirements

Organization policies must require investigators to disclose all significant financial interests of the investigator and those of the investigator's spouse and dependent children that: (a) would reasonably appear to be affected by the funded or proposed NSF activities; or (b) are in entities whose financial interests would reasonably appear to be affected by such activities.

3. Timing and Updates

An organizational policy must ensure that investigators have provided all required financial disclosures at the time the proposal is submitted to NSF and must require that those financial disclosures are updated during the period of the award either annually or whenever a new reportable significant financial interest is obtained.

4. Conflict of Interest (COI) Reviews

An organizational policy must designate one or more persons to review financial disclosures, determine whether a COI exists, and determine what conditions or restrictions should be imposed to manage, reduce, or eliminate such COI. Possible conditions or restrictions include: public disclosure of significant financial interests, independent monitoring of research, modification of the research plan, disqualification from participation in the portion of the NSF-funded research that would be affected by the significant financial interest, divestiture of the significant financial interest, or severance of relationships that create conflicts. If reviewers determine that imposing conditions or restrictions would be ineffective or inequitable and that risks are outweighed by scientific progress, technology transfer, or public health and welfare, then the reviewer(s) may allow the research to proceed without such conditions or restrictions.

5. Enforcement and Records

An organizational policy must include enforcement mechanisms and provide for sanctions where appropriate.

6. Notification to NSF OGC

If an organization cannot satisfactorily manage a COI or determines research will proceed without imposed conditions when a COI exists, the AOR must notify NSF's Office of the General Counsel (OGC) by emailing coi@nsf.gov. Such notification should include the organization's conflict of interest policy. OGC will assess the organization's policy, contact the recipient

organization to determine actions taken or planned, and request confirmation via email when actions are completed.

7. Record Retention

Organizations must maintain records of all financial disclosures and actions taken to resolve COIs for at least three years beyond award termination or end of the period of performance to which they relate, or until resolution of any NSF action involving those records, whichever is longer.

B. Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)

The responsible conduct of research involves performing research activities in a way that is worthy of trust and adheres to good scientific principles and practices such as accountability, honesty, integrity, respect, and rigor. Education in RCR is essential for scientists, engineers, and other researchers. RCR topics include, but are not limited to, sharing credit appropriately; communicating research findings accurately; disclosing conflicts of interest; conducting peer review in accordance with professional standards; adhering to data and intellectual property protection standards; preventing research misconduct; and treating research subjects, students, and colleagues with respect.

This section explains RCR education and oversight responsibilities for institutions that receive NSF research awards.

Policies

1. Institutional Plan for RCR Education and Oversight

Each institution of higher education (IHE) must implement a plan to provide appropriate education and oversight in RCR for undergraduate students, graduate students, postdocs, faculty, and other senior/key personnel supported by an NSF research award. Each research proposal from an IHE must include a certification that an institutional RCR education and oversight plan will be in place by the proposed project start date.

2. Content

Each IHE should tailor the content of RCR education to what is best for its researchers. However, NSF requires that the RCR education approach includes, at a minimum, the following topics:

- a) Mentoring.
- b) Awareness of potential research security threats.
- c) Federal export control, disclosure, and reporting requirements.
- d) Preventing and reporting research misconduct.

When designing an RCR education and oversight plan, institutions may want to consider the following reports by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine:

- [*Fostering Integrity in Research*](#).
- [*On Being a Scientist: A Guide to Responsible Conduct in Research*](#).
- [*Sexual Harassment of Women: Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine*](#).
- [*Reproducibility and Replicability in Science*](#).

3. Instruction Format

Each IHE should determine which instruction formats or methods are appropriate and effective for its researchers. In addition, the IHE should determine the duration and frequency of the instruction. It is highly encouraged that the instruction begin during the first year of the project. NSF may review the institutional RCR plan upon request.

4. Oversight and Compliance

Each IHE that receives an NSF research award must designate one or more individuals to oversee that the institution is implementing its RCR education approach and is tracking completions of RCR education requirements. IHEs are responsible for verifying that undergraduate students, graduate students, postdocs, faculty, and senior/key personnel supported by NSF research awards complete the institutional RCR education requirements.

C. Scientific Integrity

Scientific integrity is the adherence to professional practices, ethical behavior, and the principles of honesty and objectivity when conducting, managing, using the results of and communicating about science and scientific activities. NSF is committed to principles, processes, and procedures that support scientific integrity. NSF expects proposers, award recipients, and other members of the scientific community to uphold scientific integrity.

Policies

1. General

Scientific integrity serves as a foundation for many NSF policies and procedures and for the expectations the agency has for its employees and for those who seek or receive award funding. Topics from the GFA that overlap with scientific integrity include:

- Conflicts of interest (See [Guide 13](#)).
- Disclosure requirements (See [Guide 3](#)).
 - Biographical Sketch (See [Guide 5](#)).
 - Current and Pending Support (See [Guide 5](#)).
 - Collaborators and Other Affiliations (See [Guide 5](#)).
- Human subjects (See [Guide 20](#)).
- Live vertebrate animals (See [Guide 20](#)).
- Discrimination (See [Guide 19](#)).
- NSF proposal processing and merit review (See [Guide 8](#)).
- Safe and harassment-free working environments for off-campus or off-site research (See [Guide 19](#)).
- Dangerous gain of function (formerly dual use research of concern) (See [Guide 20](#)).
- Publication and distribution of grant materials (See [Guide 23](#)).
- Responsible and ethical conduct of research (See [Guide 13](#)).
- Research misconduct (See [Guide 25](#)).

2. Reporting Allegations

Allegations of a failure to adhere to the Scientific Integrity Policy can be reported to the NSF Scientific Integrity Official at sio@nsf.gov. In addition, an allegation may be reported to agency units such as the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) and/or the Office of Inspector General (OIG) when it falls within their jurisdiction.

Reports of allegations regarding whistleblower reprisal by NSF staff and panelists may be made to the Office of the Inspector General. Reports of allegations regarding whistleblower reprisal by

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NSF awardees and contractors also may be made to the Office of the Inspector General. More information on whistleblower protections can be found at [whistleblowers.gov](https://www.whistleblowers.gov).

D. Gold Standard Science

Gold Standard Science refers to science conducted in a manner that is reproducible; transparent; communicative of error and uncertainty; collaborative and interdisciplinary.; skeptical of its findings and assumptions; structured for falsifiability of hypotheses; subject to unbiased peer review; accepting of negative results as positive outcomes; and without conflicts of interest. This section provides information on NSF's adherence to Gold Standard Science.

Policies

1. General

Per Executive Order 14303 [Restoring Gold Standard Science](#), NSF expects the highest standards of scientific rigor, integrity and adherence to tenets of [Gold Standard Science](#) in proposals, as appropriate for the field of science and research modality.

Authorities

The following authorities govern this guide:

- National Science Foundation Act of 1950
- Executive Order 14303 – Restoring Gold Standard Science
- 2 CFR 200

Guide 14: Research Security *Version 27-1 Effective [Month Day, Year]*

This guide explains:

- Requirements for disclosing all sources of support and in-kind contributions and updating that information throughout the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) award lifecycle.
- Requirements for maintaining documentation for verification.
- NSF's use of risk assessments, required training, and restrictions.

NSF is committed to safeguarding the integrity and security of science while also keeping fundamental research open and collaborative. Research security is important because it helps protect sensitive data, intellectual property, and scientific discoveries from theft, misuse, or inappropriate foreign interference. Safeguarding this information ensures that research results remain trustworthy, that credit goes to the right people, and that innovations aren't exploited in ways that could harm national or economic interests. It also supports the standards set by organizations like NSF, helping maintain public trust in science and ensuring research is conducted responsibly and transparently.

Principal Investigators (PIs), Authorized Organization Representatives (AORs) and Sponsored Project Offices (SPOs) should use this guide to understand NSF's requirements for disclosing all sources of support and in-kind contributions, and how to notify NSF of any changes regarding research security.

A. Research Security

This section explains NSF's approach to research security, focusing on protecting the integrity of federally funded research while maintaining openness and collaboration. It outlines requirements for disclosing all sources of support and in-kind contributions, updating that information throughout the award lifecycle, and maintaining documentation for verification. It also describes NSF's use of risk assessments, required training, and restrictions.

Terms and Definitions

1. Current and Pending (Other) Support and In-Kind Contribution

All financial and in-kind resources, including third-party contributions, that support an investigator's research activities and commitments, as described in NSF proposal and reporting requirements.

2. Faculty Associate

An individual other than the PI or co-PI considered by the performing institution to be a member of its faculty (or equivalent) or who holds an appointment as a faculty member at another institution, and who will participate in the project being supported.

3. Foreign Country of Concern

A country determined by the U.S. Secretary of State, including The People's Republic of China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, the Islamic Republic of Iran, or any other country deemed to be a country of concern.

4. Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Program

A foreign-sponsored program, position, or activity that offers compensation or benefits — such as funding, travel, jobs, titles, or other incentives — in exchange for activities that could improperly influence, compromise, or conflict with U.S. federally funded research or institutional responsibilities. These programs may involve requirements to transfer nonpublic research information, recruit others into the program, conceal participation, duplicate federally funded work, violate award terms and conditions, or create conflicts of interest or commitment. The term also includes programs sponsored by foreign countries of concern, certain designated foreign institutions, or organizations identified by the U.S. government as problematic foreign talent recruitment programs. The full definition of a [malign foreign talent recruitment program](#) can be found on NSF.gov.

5. Senior/Key Personnel

Individuals designated by the proposer/recipient organization and approved by NSF who contribute in a substantive, meaningful way to the scientific development or execution of a research and development project proposed to be carried out with a research and development award. There are two primary categories of senior/key personnel, (1) PIs and co-PIs and (2) faculty associates (faculty member) (or equivalent). Senior/key personnel typically do not include graduate students.

Policies

1. Post-award Disclosure of Current and Pending (Other) Support and In-Kind Contributions

If an organization identifies that a principal investigator (PI) or co-PI on an active award failed to disclose current and pending (other) support or in-kind contributions present at proposal submission, the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) must notify NSF within 30 calendar days of identification.

2. Update of Current and Pending (Other) Support in Annual and Final Project Reports

PIs and co-PIs must indicate changes in active other support in annual and final project reports since the submission of the proposal.

3. Research Security Assessment

NSF reserves the right to perform risk assessments of proposals and awards using analytical tools to assess nondisclosures of required information from senior/key personnel, and establish other policies and procedures for identifying, communicating, and addressing security risks that may threaten the integrity of NSF-supported projects.

4. Required Recipient Documentation

NSF proposers and recipients must maintain supporting documentation, including copies of contracts, grants, or any other agreements specific to foreign appointments, employment with a foreign institution, participation in a foreign talent recruitment program and other information reported as current and pending (other) support for all senior/key personnel that must be available to NSF upon request. Proposers and recipients are expected to review requested supporting documentation for compliance with NSF award terms and conditions.

5. Research Security Training Requirement

NSF requires research security training certifications from proposers and individuals identified as senior/key personnel. Proposers may use any training that addresses cybersecurity, international collaboration and international travel, foreign interference, and rules for proper use of funds, disclosure, conflict of commitment, and conflict of interest.

6. Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Program Prohibition

Individuals who are a current party to a malign foreign talent recruitment program (MFTRP) are not eligible to serve as a senior/key person on an NSF proposal or on any NSF award made after May 20, 2024.

The AOR must certify that all individuals identified as senior/key personnel have been made aware of and have complied with their responsibility to certify that the individual is not a party to a malign foreign talent recruitment program. Senior/key personnel must certify to not being a party to an MFTRP at the time of proposal submission and PIs and co-PIs on active awards made on or after May 20, 2024, must certify annually thereafter.

The following are not considered malign foreign talent recruitment programs:

- Making scholarly presentations and publishing written materials regarding scientific information not otherwise controlled under current law.
- Participation in international conferences or other international exchanges, research projects or programs that involve open and reciprocal exchange of scientific information, and which are aimed at advancing international scientific understanding and not otherwise controlled under current law.
- Advising a foreign student enrolled at an institution of higher education or writing a recommendation for such a student, at such student's request.

7. Foreign Financial Disclosure

Each recipient institution of higher education must annually report all current financial support, the cumulative value of which is \$50,000 or more per source, including gifts and contracts, received directly or indirectly from a foreign source which is associated with a foreign country of concern.

8. Confucius Institutes

No NSF funds may be awarded to an IHE that maintains a contract or agreement between the institution and a Confucius Institute. The NSF Director may issue a waiver for an IHE that maintains such a contract or agreement between the institution and a Confucius Institute if such contract or agreement includes clear provisions that:

- a) Protect academic freedom at the institution.
- b) Prohibit the application of any foreign law on any campus of the institution.
- c) Grant full managerial authority of the Confucius Institute to the institution including full control over what is being taught, the activities carried out, the research awards that are made, and who is employed at the Confucius Institute.
- d) Prohibit co-location with the institution's Chinese language, history, and cultural programs and require separate promotional materials.

Procedures

1. How to Notify NSF of Any Changes Regarding Research Security

- a) If an organization identifies a failure to disclose current support or in-kind contribution information, the AOR must update an award's current and pending (other) support, or in-kind contributions. The AOR must submit the required information via the Notifications and Requests Module in Research.gov within 30 calendar days of identification.

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- b) If changes occurred since submission of annual project reports, the individual must submit a revised current and pending (other) support document prepared in SciENCv as part of the project report.
- c) Other research security violations identified by the organization must be provided to NSF at researchsecurity@nsf.gov within 30 calendar days of identification.
- d) In all three instances, NSF may consult with the AOR, or designee, and determine the impact and take appropriate action, where necessary.

Authorities

The following authorities govern this guide:

- National Science Foundation Act of 1950
- CHIPS and Science Act of 2022

Guide 15: Property Management *Version 27-1 Effective [Month Day, Year]*

This guide explains:

- How organizations should manage equipment and property purchased with funding from the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF), making sure items are tracked, used properly, and reported throughout their lifecycle.
- Rules for ownership, inventory, and disposal, including how to handle federally owned property and request or use excess government equipment.

Principal Investigators (PIs), Authorized Organization Representatives (AORs) and Sponsored Project Offices (SPOs) should use this guide to understand to appropriately track, use and report equipment and property purchased with NSF funding.

A. Property Management Standards and Reporting

Property consists of real property and personal property, including equipment acquired with NSF funds. This section explains the standards and requirements for managing property acquired with NSF funds and outlines how property must be tracked, used, and disposed of. The section also details responsibilities for inventory reporting, recordkeeping, and accountability.

Terms and Definitions

1. Equipment

Tangible personal property (including information technology systems) has a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost that equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the recipient or subrecipient for financial statement purposes, or \$10,000.

2. Excess Personal Property

Any personal property under the control of a federal agency that the agency head determines is not required for its needs or for the discharge of its responsibilities.

3. Federally Owned Property (FOP)

Tangible personal property, real property, or equipment for which legal title is vested in the federal government. FOP includes government-furnished property and property acquired under a federal grant, cooperative agreement, or contract when legal title is retained by the federal government pursuant to statute, regulation, or award terms and conditions.

4. Government Property

All property owned or leased by the federal government. Government property includes both government-furnished property and contractor-acquired property. Government property includes material, equipment, special tooling, special test equipment, and real property. It does not include intellectual property and software.

5. Holding Agency

The federal agency that holds accountability for, and generally, possession of, the property involved.

6. Property

Property means real property and personal property (equipment, supplies, intangible property, and debt instruments), unless stated otherwise.

7. Real Property

Land, including land improvements, structures and appurtenances thereto, but excludes moveable machinery and equipment.

8. Tangible Personal Property

Personal property that has physical existence, to include equipment, as defined in [2 CFR 200.1](#). In the context of NSF awards, this includes items such as biological specimens, core samples, and other physical research products.

9. Recipient Titles Property (RTP)

Federally funded property is in custody of the recipient, including equipment, for which the recipient holds conditional title. RTP remains subject to applicable federal statutes, regulations, award terms and conditions, and other established obligations. RTP is held in trust for the beneficiaries of the project or program under which the property was acquired or improved, generally the scientific and research community. Recipients are responsible for the proper use, management, maintenance, reporting, and disposition of the property and generally may not encumber the property (e.g., place a lien on it) without authorization. At the conclusion of the award, ownership and disposition of the property will be determined in accordance with applicable Federal requirements and award terms and conditions.

10. Exempt Property

Property acquired under the federal award where the federal agency has chosen to vest title to the property to the recipient or subrecipient without further responsibility to the federal government. The federal agency may only exercise this option when permitted by federal statute and set forth in the terms and conditions of the federal award.

11. Title

The recognized, enforceable ownership of a property or asset under the law. It grants the holder formal rights to possess, use, transfer, or sell the asset and is officially recorded in public registries or evidenced by documents like a deed.

Policies

1. Federal Property Standards

Recipients must follow 2 CFR 200.310–316 standards for management and disposition of government-furnished property and property purchased with federal funds. Real property standards apply where relevant. Property acquired under or improved with the NSF award must be held in trust by the recipient or subrecipient for the beneficiaries of the project or program under which the property was acquired or improved.

2. Title and Use of Equipment

Title to equipment purchased with NSF funds normally vests in the recipient upon acquisition unless the award specifies otherwise (FOP). Major facility awards follow [2 CFR 200.313](#).

3. Equipment Disposition

Disposition requirements for equipment purchased or supplied under an NSF award are set forth in the applicable award terms and conditions.

4. Principles Relating to Use of NSF-Supported Instrumentation and Facilities

NSF promotes maximum productive use of instrumentation and facilities by academic and industrial users while preventing use that detracts from award obligations or unfairly competes with private providers. Recipients should implement these principles reasonably and address user complaints fairly.

5. FOP Requirements

If legal title to equipment is vested in the federal government, such FOP must be identified, tagged, or segregated in such a manner as to clearly indicate its ownership by the federal government. Unless otherwise provided in the award, such government property must be used only for the performance of the project. An inventory report must be submitted, and a physical inventory of FOP must be conducted every two years.

6. Annual Inventory Report for FOP

Recipients must submit to NSF an annual inventory report by its NSF award number for all FOP having an original acquisition cost of \$10,000 or more.

7. Final Inventory Report for FOP

Upon expiration of the award, the recipient must submit a final inventory report through the Central Property Inventory Repository (CPIR) identifying all FOP and RTP in excess of \$10,000 associated with the award, including property obtained through the GSA Personal Property Management System (PPMS). The final inventory report must contain the same information required for the annual inventory report and any applicable disposition information. NSF will review the submission and provide disposition instructions, as appropriate.

8. Government Vehicles

Government vehicles may include FOP furnished by the federal government or acquired under an award where title remains vested in the federal government. Federal government vehicles include passenger vehicles, trucks, buses, vans, specialized vehicles, and other conveyances subject to federal fleet management requirements.

Recipients may acquire, manage, use, and dispose of federal government vehicles only as authorized by NSF and in accordance with applicable award terms and conditions of the award. Recipients are responsible for ensuring that government vehicles are used solely for authorized purposes, properly maintained and safeguarded, and managed in a manner that supports accountability throughout the vehicle's lifecycle. Disposition of federal government vehicles must be conducted in accordance with NSF instructions and applicable federal requirements.

Procedures

1. How to Complete a Report on FOP and RTP

- a) Collect information for the annual inventory by NSF award number for all FOP and RTP having an original acquisition cost of \$10,000 or more.
- b) Include the information below for all FOP and RTP purchased or constructed, including land and buildings, under the award, inclusive of all subawards in the report. The recipient may use the OMB-approved Post-Award Reporting forms for Tangible Personal

Property (Standard Form (SF)-428, SF-428A, SF-428B, SF-428C, and SF-428S) accessed on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). Required inventory information:

- Description of the property.
 - A serial number or another identification number.
 - The source of funding for the property (including the Federal Award Identification Number (FAIN)).
 - The title holder.
 - The acquisition date.
 - The cost of the property.
 - The percentage of the federal agency contribution towards the original purchase.
 - The location, use and condition of the property.
 - Any disposition data including the date of disposal and sale price of the property.
 - A description of Construction-in-Progress (CIP) and Work-in-Progress (WIP) items and construction costs incurred to date.
- c) Include any FOP and RTP acquired through the GSA Federal Excess Personal Property Utilization Program and the Federal Surplus Personal Property Donation Program.
- d) Reporting must be specific to each NSF award number.
- e) Submit the annual inventory report to NSF Property Administrator no later than October 15 of each year using the NSF Central Property Inventory Repository (CPIR) system that can be accessed via [Research.gov](https://www.research.gov).

B. Federal Property Transfer

This section explains the process for transferring federal property.

Policies

1. Personal Property Transfer

NSF may sponsor transfers of excess federal personal property to eligible recipients in accordance with [41 CFR 102-36](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-41/chapter-102/subchapter-36) when the transfer meets specified conditions. These conditions include:

- The use of the property significantly furthers an NSF award-supported activity.
- The property is such that it would have been procured under the award for which property is being requested if additional award funds had been available.
- The property is used as part of the award activity and subsequently for research or science education purposes.
- The property is classified by GSA as scientific or engineering research equipment and has a unit acquisition cost of \$1,000 or more.

Eligible recipients are IHEs or non-profit organizations primarily engaged in research or science education. State/municipal governments, hospitals, for-profit firms, and individual PIs are not eligible under NSF sponsorship.

2. Visiting Holding Agency Facilities

Recipients or their representatives wishing to visit holding agency facilities to screen or freeze government excess personal property must receive prior certification from GSA. Because of security protocols, the holding agency may require written authorization for access. The primary

screener should be the PI. However, if the PI finds it impossible to screen, the PI may designate, in writing, a substitute. Normally, certification will be on a regional basis; however, NSF will, under certain circumstances, sponsor recipient representatives who need to make interregional visits to secure equipment not readily available within their region.

3. Dollar Limitation

To ensure equitable distribution of excess government personal property, recipients may be authorized to acquire property under each NSF award up to a total acquisition cost equal to the dollar value of that award. Any request for excess property which causes the total to exceed the value of the award will require additional justification beyond that requested. A higher percentage of excess property requested under a particular award by a recipient must be approved by an administrative level in NSF which is higher than the cognizant NSF Program Director. NSF will consider all factors in determining whether to approve transfers of excess property above the dollar value of a given award. Recipients are therefore urged to be selective in their requests for excess government personal property to limit quantities of each item where possible and to avoid stockpiling items for future use.

4. Restrictions and Eligibility Requirements

NSF will sponsor the transfer of excess government personal property (i.e., equipment) to eligible organizations only under project awards. "Project awards" refers to awards made for specific purposes with established termination dates (e.g., awards made to specific organizations to perform specific tasks within set time frames and costs). No excess property may be acquired on behalf of conference, publication-support awards, or travel awards.

In addition, on "summer-type training awards," no property may be acquired after the training period has terminated. Further, recipients should exercise judgment on the appropriateness of requesting excess personal property when only a 120-day period exists between the date of the property request and the completion or successful accomplishment of the NSF-supported activity.

GSA will consider items of personal property as research equipment for transfer without reimbursement to NSF for use by a recipient when the property requested has a unit acquisition cost of \$1,000 or more and is within Federal Supply Classification Groups:

- a) 12 Fire Control Equipment;
- b) 43 Pumps and Compressors;
- c) 48 Valves;
- d) 58 Communication, Detection and Coherent Radiation Equipment;
- e) 59 Electrical and Electronic Equipment Components;
- f) 65 Medical, Dental and Veterinary Equipment and Supplies;
- g) 66 Instruments and Laboratory Equipment;
- h) 67 Photographic Equipment;
- i) 68 Chemical and Chemical Products; or
- j) 70 General Purpose Automatic Data Processing Equipment, Software, Supplies and Support Equipment.

Automatic data processing equipment must be acquired under the provisions in 41 CFR 201.23.

5. Costs

Recipients pay for packing, transportation, installation, rehabilitation, and maintenance costs. Award funds may be used for these costs.

6. Title

Title to excess federal property remains with the federal government until delivery. Upon delivery, the recipient must forward a receipted SF-122 receipt to NSF. Title typically vests in the recipient, subject to continued use for research/education. NSF may retain legal title in specific cases and will notify the recipient. Under certain conditions, such as when highly specialized equipment is involved, NSF may retain legal title to excess property. When such a condition exists, NSF will inform the recipient. Excess government personal property may not be transferred to a foreign country without prior approval of the Grants Officer. Recipients may not unilaterally reclassify property obtained through the GSA Personal Property Management System (PPMS) from government-owned to RTP or exempt status. Title classification is governed by the award terms and applicable federal statute (see 2 CFR 200.312–200.313).

7. Accountability and Recordkeeping

Recipients must maintain appropriate inventory and accountability records for excess government personal property and permit NSF inspection and audit.

Procedures

1. How to Access Excess Government Personal Property

- a) Register as a user of the [GSA Personal Property Management System \(PPMS\)](#). Users are granted View Only (VO) permission by default.
- b) Once approved for an account, users may log in to PPMS to screen for items that are necessary to accomplish the NSF supported project.
- c) Recipients may use keywords or advanced search in PPMS. Advance searches allow multiple attributes to include State, Federal Supply Class, condition, Item Control Number, National Item Identification Number, property type, and National Stock Number. Search results typically present the item control number, name, location, quantity available, and unit of issue, original acquisition cost, surplus release date and condition of items posted. In some instances, a photograph of the property item is available.
- d) Recipients should inspect selected materials and equipment or contact the holding federal agency whenever possible to verify the condition of the items as interpretation of condition codes can vary among agencies.
- e) Select the materials and equipment and inspect them whenever possible, or the holding federal agency should be contacted by the recipient to verify the condition of the items, because interpretation of condition codes can vary among agencies.
- f) Once the recipient has identified items needed to support the NSF-funded project, the recipient must submit a written request via the [NSF Excess Government Personal Property Request and Authorization Form](#) to the NSF Program Director or Grants Officer describing the items and the specific award activity they support. Assets in PPMS will not be frozen or checked out in PPMS until approval is granted and documented.
- g) Upon receipt of the approved [NSF Excess Government Personal Property Request and Authorization Form](#) the NSF National Utilization Officer will submit the request in GSA PPMS. The availability and the status of the equipment will be determined by GSA. The NUO will notify the PO or G/AO and the recipient of the status and provide next steps in

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an email. All changes to the request, including cancellation should be communicated to the NUO at once by sending an email to nsfproperty@nsf.gov.

Authorities

The following authorities govern this guide:

- National Science Foundation Act of 1950
- America COMPETES Act of 2007
- 2 CFR 200
- 41 CFR 102-36 (Disposition of Excess Personal Property)

Guide 16: Financial Management and Payments

Version 27-1 Effective [Month Day Year]

This guide explains how U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) award funds must be managed, paid, and closed out. It covers:

- The responsibilities of organizations receiving NSF funding.
- When and how funds can be used.
- How NSF ensures that federal funds are handled properly throughout the life of an award.

Principal Investigators (PIs), Authorized Organization Representatives (AORs) and Sponsored Project Offices (SPOs) should use this guide to understand when and how funds from an NSF award can be used.

A. Financial Responsibility and Accountability for NSF Awards

This section explains that once an organization accepts an NSF award, it is legally required to follow all terms and conditions and properly manage the funds. It emphasizes that payments can only be made after official award approval, and that recipients must maintain compliant financial systems while keeping NSF funds separate and using them only for authorized purposes.

Terms and Definitions

1. Cash on Hand

The amount of NSF funds received by an organization minus what has already been spent.

Policies

1. Award Acceptance and Legal Obligation

Accepting an NSF award means the recipient must follow all award terms and conditions.

2. Signed Award Authorization

NSF funds cannot be paid until an award is signed by an NSF Grants Officer.

3. Applicability

The financial management policies contained in this guide apply to all NSF assistance awards, excluding contracts.

4. Financial System Compliance

Recipients must maintain financial systems compliant with [2 CFR 200.302](#).

5. Safeguarding Federal Funds

NSF funds must be kept separate from personal funds and cannot be used for personal purposes.

6. Prohibition on Excess Cash Retention

Recipients should not hold more NSF cash than they immediately need.

B. Award Payments

This section explains how and when NSF funds are paid. Payments may be made in advance or as reimbursement, but only to meet immediate project needs. NSF retains the right to recover unused or improperly used funds.

Terms and Definitions

1. Advance Payment

See [2 CFR 200.305](#).

2. Award Cash Management Service (ACM\$)

NSF's system for requesting and tracking payments by award.

3. Expenditures

See [2 CFR 200](#).

4. Improper Payment

See [2 CFR 200](#).

5. Obligations

See [2 CFR 200](#).

Policies

1. Advance and Reimbursement Authority

Recipients may request funds in advance or after costs are incurred, but these costs must be approved in the budget by the NSF Grants Officer.

2. Interest on Federal Advances

Interest earned on NSF advances is subject to federal requirements with limited retention allowed. Recipients generally must maintain advances in interest-bearing accounts, unless a stated exception applies (e.g., less than \$250,000 in federal awards per year, interest less than \$500/year, infeasible minimum balances, or foreign prohibition). Any additional interest earned on advance must be remitted annually to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. See procedures below.

3. Timing of Payments

Funds should only be requested when needed for immediate expenses.

4. Minimum Cash Need

Advance payments must be limited to the minimum amount necessary for immediate needs.

5. Subrecipient and Contractor Payment Standards

The same rules in this guide apply when paying subrecipients and contractors.

6. Cost Credits

Purchase discounts, rebates, allowances, credits resulting from overhead rate adjustments and other credits relating to any allowable cost received by or accruing to the recipient shall be credited against NSF award costs if the grant has not been financially closed out.

7. Payment Withholding

NSF may withhold payments for noncompliance or federal debts.

8. Erroneous Payments

Recipients must promptly return funds from advances or reimbursements made in error or excess funds not immediately needed.

Procedures

1. How to Prepare Your Organization to Receive NSF Payments

- a) Maintain current organizational banking information in SAM.gov.
- b) For individual postdoctoral fellows, update banking information in Research.gov. For more information, refer to the [Individual Banking User Guide](#) on Research.gov.

2. How Your Organization Requests Payments Through ACM\$

- a) The Awardee Preparer or Awardee Certifier logs in to Research.gov.
- b) Open Award Cash Management Service (ACM\$) under Manage Financials and select the award.
- c) Enter the payment amount requested and Recipient Account Number if applicable.
- d) Enter Remarks or Internal Comments if applicable.
- e) The certifier will submit the request to NSF.

3. When and How Your Organization Uses the Standard Form (SF)-270 for Payments

- a) Use the Form SF-270 if NSF designates if identified as a recipient on a special payment plan or foreign recipient without access to a U.S. bank.
- b) Submit this form to the cognizant NSF Grants Officer via email with the required supporting documentation.

4. How Your Organization Refunds Erroneous or Excess Payments

- a) Identify the excess or erroneous amount.
- b) Refund promptly using [Pay.gov](#) and select "NSF Remittance Form – Grantees" or visit the [Treasury's Credit Gateway](#).

5. How to Remit Additional Interest Earned on Advances

- a) Remit annually to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) using the one of the below methods:
 - 1) [Payment Management System \(PMS\)](#).
 - 2) For ACH Returns use the following:
 - Routing Number: 051036706
 - Account number: 303000
 - Bank Name and Location: Credit Gateway—ACH Receiver St. Paul, MN

- 3) For Fedwire Returns* use the following:
- Routing Number: 021030004
 - Account Number: 75010501
 - Bank Name and Location: Federal Reserve Bank Treas NYC/Funds Transfer Division New York, NY

*Please note organization initiating payment is likely to incur a charge from its Financial Institution for this type of payment.

- 4) For International ACH Returns use the following:
- Beneficiary Account: Federal Reserve Bank of New York/ITS (FRBNY/ITS)
 - Bank: Citibank N.A. (New York)
 - Swift Code: CITIUS33
 - Account Number: 36838868
 - Bank Address: 388 Greenwich Street, New York, NY 10013 USA
 - Payment Details (Line 70): Agency Locator Code (ALC): 75010501
 - Name (abbreviated when possible) and ALC Agency POC: Michelle Haney, (301) 492-5065

- b) For recipients that do not have electronic remittance capability:
- Please make check** payable to: "The Department of Health and Human Services."
 - Mail Check to Treasury approved lockbox: HHS Program Support Center, P.O. Box 530231, Atlanta, GA 30353-0231

**Please allow 4-6 weeks for processing of a payment by check to be applied to the appropriate PMS account.

- c) Questions should be directed to PMS at 877-614-5533 or PMSSupport@psc.hhs.gov.

Reminder: Payments may be delayed if banking information is outdated.

C. Program Income

This section focuses on program income and its uses. Program income includes, but is not limited to, income from fees for services performed, the use of rental or real or personal property acquired under the grant, the sale of commodities or items fabricated under the grant, license fees and royalties on patents and copyrights, and principal and interest on loans made with grant funds. Interest earned on advances of federal funds is not program income.

Terms and Definitions

1. Program Income
See [2 CFR 200.1](#).

Policies

1. Program Income Applicability

NSF implements program income in accordance with [2 CFR 200.307](#).

2. Standard Program Income Use

Unless otherwise specified, program income must be added to the total allowable costs, increasing the overall total amount of the federal award.

3. Program Income Reporting

Failure to report program income to NSF may result in enforcement actions, including suspension of payments. The federal share of program income should be kept in a separate account or reported on and/or remitted for such periods as may be reasonable under the circumstances.

Postdoctoral fellowship awards made to individuals and SBIR/STTR awards are exempt from this annual reporting requirement.

Procedures

1. How Your Organization Reports Program Income

- a) Download the Program Income Reporting Worksheet from Research.gov. For additional information, including the download for the worksheet, refer to the [Reporting Worksheet Instructions](#). Note this information is only available to authorized users and requires login.
- b) Include the following in the report:
 - Award number.
 - Program income earned.
 - Program income expended.
 - Unexpended balance.
- c) Submit the report within 45 days after the end of the federal fiscal year that ends on September 30.
- d) Standard treatment of program income is "Additive" unless otherwise specified in the award terms and conditions. Additive treatment means income earned is to be retained by the recipient and added to the funds committed to the project by NSF, and thus used to further project objectives.
- e) In exceptional cases, NSF may approve use of special treatment for the award via the deductive method.
- f) If no program income was earned, follow instructions to validate that status.

Reminder: Failure to report may result in suspension of payments.

D. Closeout and Federal Funds Control

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This section describes award closeout and financial responsibilities for reporting. NSF does not require recipients to submit Federal Financial Reports for each award for purposes of final award accountability. NSF procedures have been designed to extract the final financial data from the entries in ACM\$.

Terms and Definitions

1. Unexpended Balance

The sum of the awarded funds not yet obligated by the recipient and obligated balances not yet paid by the recipient. An unexpended balance is the result of awarded funds not being spent, or when the total expenditures for a project are less than the amount awarded. It can also be defined as the unspent portion of a budgeted amount, available for authorized future expenses during the award period.

2. Unliquidated Obligations

See [2 CFR 200.1](#).

3. Unobligated Balance

See [2 CFR 200.1](#).

Policies

1. Final Unexpended Balance

NSF will recover unexpended balances at award completion.

2. 120-Day Closeout

Recipients must complete financial closeout within 120 days of the award end date. Awards that end on May 31 may be closed early, on or before the last day ACM\$ is available for drawing down funds in September, to accommodate NSF's federal fiscal year end closeout.

3. Canceling Appropriations

Awards funded by canceling appropriations must be liquidated and returned to U.S. Department of the Treasury by September 30 (end the federal fiscal year).

If only a portion of the awarded funds is cancelled, then NSF will reduce the available balance of the award. If all funds under the award are canceling appropriations, then NSF must financially close the award no later than September 30 regardless of the award end date.

No extensions, requests for payment, or upward adjustments will be allowed beyond the end of the federal fiscal year in which the funds cancel. Although in this situation awards may be financially closed early, recipients will still have the full 120-day closeout period to submit final annual project reports in accordance with the award terms and conditions.

Procedures

1. How to Complete Financial Closeout for an NSF Award

- a) Complete the steps below within 120 days after the award end date.
- b) Liquidate all obligations.
- c) The Awardee Preparer or Awardee Certifier enters the final payment amount in ACM\$.

- d) The Awardee Preparer or Awardee Certifier resolves refunds, credits, and program income data.
- e) NSF will automatically de-obligate remaining funds and close the award.

2. How to Close an NSF Award Early in ACM\$

- a) In ACM\$, the Awardee Preparer or Awardee Certifier selects the Final Flag.
- b) The Awardee Certifier submits the transaction.
- c) Note that the Final Flag cannot be undone.

3. How to Make Post-Closeout Financial Adjustments

- a) After closeout, if final disbursements change by \$1.00 or more from the final award amount, then the recipient should submit an "Adjustment to a Financially Closed Award" through the ACM\$ payment process.
- b) Upward adjustments due to increases in costs can be made up to 14 months after closeout (or until funds cancel). Downward adjustments due to decreases in costs are allowed until funds cancel.
- c) If funds have canceled, return amounts are due using NSF refund procedures.

E. Post-Award Financial Monitoring

This section explains the types of notifications NSF sends to alert recipients about potential financial issues, such as expiring funds, large unspent balances, or lack of recent payment activity. These alerts are meant to prompt recipients to review their awards and ensure funds are being managed appropriately.

Terms and Definitions

1. Awards with No Payment Activity Notifications

A notice sent by NSF to the recipient highlighting open awards with no ACM\$ payment requests in over one year, and over \$5,000 in remaining unexpended balances.

2. Canceling Appropriation Notifications

A notice sent by NSF to the recipient highlighting open awards with unexpended balances funded by canceling appropriations for recipients to properly expend and draw down funds before the end of the federal fiscal year.

3. Large Unexpended Balance Notifications

A notice sent by NSF to the recipient highlighting open awards approaching the end of their period of performance, with high remaining unexpended balances.

Procedures

1. What Steps Should Be Taken When in Receipt of a Notification

- a) Review award status and expenditures.

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- b) Do not draw funds unless there is an immediate expenditure need.
- c) Take corrective action if needed.

Authorities

The following authorities govern this guide:

- National Science Foundation Act of 1950
- Budget and Accounting Procedures Act of 1950
- Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990
- 2 CFR 200

Guide 17: Renewal and Supplemental Funding Support

Version 27-1 Effective [Month Day, Year]

This guide explains U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) policies and procedures for additional funding beyond an original award. It describes:

- Types of additional support (renewal awards, continuing grant increments, cooperative agreement increments, and supplemental support).
- When each support type applies and key requirements.
- How to request or receive additional funding.

Principal Investigators (PIs), Authorized Organization Representatives (AORs) and Sponsored Project Offices (SPOs) should use this guide to understand how to request additional funding from NSF beyond an original award.

A. Renewed Support

This section explains what a renewal award is and how it is treated financially. A renewal is a new award that continues a project after a previous award ends. It is considered a distinct award and funding period, meaning funds and costs generally cannot be carried over from the prior award. It also outlines how to request a renewal award.

Terms and Definitions

1. Renewal Award

An award made after an expiring NSF award whose start date is contiguous with, or closely follows, the end date of the expiring award. It funds a distinct period of performance and is generally awarded in a competitive process. See [2 CFR 200.1](#) for more information.

Policies

1. Renewed Support

Costs from the prior award generally may not be transferred to the renewal. Residual funds in the old award normally cannot be moved to the renewal.

2. Institution of Higher Education (IHE) Submissions

Proposals for renewed support from IHEs must include information on human resources development for postdoctoral scholars, graduate, and undergraduate students as part of Results from Prior NSF Support. This may involve, but is not limited to, the role of research in student training, course preparation and seminars (particularly for undergraduates). Graduate students who participated in the research should be identified by name. This requirement does not apply to non-academic organizations.

Procedures

1. How to Submit a Renewal Proposal

- a) Follow NSF proposal preparation instructions for renewal proposals in Guides [3](#), [4](#), and [5](#) and discuss with your cognizant NSF Program Director before submission.

- b) Submit the renewal proposal at least six months before additional funding is required or by the deadline, target date, or submission window.
- c) For additional information, refer to the [About Proposal Preparation and Submission](#) page on Research.gov. For detailed requirements on which sections and compliance checks are in place, refer to the [Automated Compliance Checking of NSF Proposals](#) page on NSF.gov.

B. Support Under Continuing Grants and Cooperative Agreement Increments

This section explains how NSF provides ongoing funding for multi-year awards through periodic increments rather than awarding all funds upfront. It outlines how NSF releases these increments and describes the steps recipients must take to continue receiving funding. Funding increments for continuing grants are normally not placed in competition with new or renewal proposals.

Terms and Definitions

1. Continuing Grant/Cooperative Agreement Increment

A planned portion of funding for an ongoing continuing grant or cooperative agreement, typically released periodically as indicated in the original award notice.

Policies

1. Increment Funding

Unless the original award notice provides otherwise, each increment will be funded at the level shown in the award notice without a formal request. Incremental funding is subject to NSF's judgment of satisfactory progress, available funds, and approval of required annual reports. NSF may reduce continuing increments to respond to broad funding changes or new priorities.

2. Annual Project Reports

To obtain a committed increment and preserve continuity, the PI must submit the annual project report and secure NSF Program Director approval before the current budget period ends.

3. Cooperative Agreement Increments

Funding for Cooperative Agreements increments is recommended by the cognizant NSF Program Director consistent with the award terms. Continued funding depends on satisfactory progress, milestones or other award requirements, available funds, and receipt and approval of required annual reports and, if applicable, annual cost sharing certification.

Procedures

1. How to Obtain Continuing Grant Increments

- a) Submit the required annual project report in Research.gov for the current budget period.
- b) Ensure the report is approved by the cognizant NSF Program Director before the end of the current budget period to preserve continuity of funding.
- c) Await email notification from the NSF Program Director and any instructions from the Sponsored Projects Office (SPO) regarding the increment.

2. How to Obtain Cooperative Agreement Increments

- a) Comply with award terms and conditions, including milestones and any budget submission requirements.
- b) Submit required annual reports and any required cost share certifications.
- c) Coordinate with the cognizant NSF Program Director on recommended funding and any requested budget revisions.

C. Supplemental Support

This section explains how recipients can request supplemental funding. It outlines when supplements are appropriate, what must be included in the request, and how NSF reviews and approves them. It also clarifies key limits and explains that approved supplements are added through an award amendment without extending the overall project period.

Terms and Definitions

1. Supplemental Support

Additional funds requested to further the original scope of an awarded project, typically small in amount and duration and provided under special circumstances.

Policies

1. Purpose and Timing

Supplemental funding consisting of additional support may be requested. Requests must be submitted at least two months before funds are needed.

2. NSF Review

NSF Program Directors may recommend small supplements without external merit review. Larger supplements will require external merit review.

3. Prohibited Uses

NSF will not approve supplements to cover general salary increases, increased staff benefits, or additional indirect cost reimbursement resulting from changes in indirect cost rates or base (see applicable cost policy).

4. Availability of Appropriations

Recipients should note that supplemental funding does not extend the period of availability of the original appropriation for cancellation.

5. Special Programs

Some NSF programs (e.g., Research Experience for Undergraduates) provide funding via supplements to other awards. See [Guide 7](#) for more information or the applicable funding opportunity.

Procedures

1. How to Request Supplemental Support

- a) Coordinate with your Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) early when planning or requesting additional funding.

- b) Contact the cognizant NSF Program Director to discuss whether a supplemental funding request is possible. Always consult the applicable funding opportunity or program guidance for program-specific requirements.
- c) Upon concurrence from the cognizant NSF Program Director, prepare a supplemental request in Research.gov. The request should include a summary of proposed work; a justification for the supplemental funds; and a budget and budget justification showing how the additional funds differ from the original budget by budget category.
- d) Obtain signature from the AOR via the Authorized Organizational Representative functions in Research.gov.
- e) Be prepared for NSF Program Director review. Small supplements may be recommended without external review. Larger supplements may undergo external merit review.
- f) If approved, expect an award amendment from the NSF Grants Officer indicating the supplemental amount and updated cumulative funding.

Authorities

The following authorities govern this guide:

- National Science Foundation Act of 1950
- Single Audit Act of 1984
- Government Performance and Results Act of 1993
- CHIPS and Science Act of 2022
- 2 CFR 200

Guide 18: Award Reporting and Closeout

Version 27-1 Effective [Month Day, Year]

This guide explains U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) requirements for:

- Project reporting.
- Public project outcome reports.
- Foreign financial disclosure.
- Award closeout.
- Record retention.
- Audit responsibilities.

Principal Investigators (PIs) should use this guide to understand how and when to prepare and submit annual project reports and project outcome reports for NSF-funded projects, how to notify NSF of any changes in cost sharing, how to work with NSF to close an award, and how to meet award record retention requirements.

Authorized Organization Representatives (AORs) and Sponsored Project Offices (SPOs) should use this guide to ensure annual project reports and project outcome reports are complete and submitted on time, to notify NSF of any changes in cost sharing, to comply with foreign financial disclosure procedures, and to work with NSF to close an award, and comply with award record retention requirements.

A. Project Reporting (Annual and Final Annual Reports)

This section defines NSF annual and final project reports and establishes that all reporting follows the Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) structure, focusing on progress within the current budget period rather than cumulative performance. Timely and accurate submission is critical, as overdue reports can delay funding, administrative actions, and proposal reviews.

Terms and Definitions

1. Annual Project Report

A report on progress for the current budget period.

2. Final Annual Project Report

The last annual report for the project, submitted after the award end date that certifies the scope of work is complete.

Policies

1. Reporting Standards

NSF uses the governmentwide Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) structure. Except where another format is approved by OMB for use by an NSF program, this means that the "where practicable" requirement is not required as the RPPR does not relate financial information to performance data.

2. Annual Project Report Coverage

Annual project reports should address progress in all activities of the project, including any activities intended to address the Broader Impacts criterion that are not intrinsic to the research. These reports are not cumulative and should be written specifically for the current budget period.

3. Annual Project Report Submissions

The report covers the current budget period only (not cumulative) and must be submitted no later than 90 days before the end of the current budget period.

4. Cooperative Agreements

The annual project report is required before NSF approves future funding increments. See [Guide 17](#) for more information.

5. Special Provisions

For continuing grants that have a duration of 18 months or more per increment, two annual reports are required. A report must be submitted for the first 12 months of the project, and then another report for the remaining months of the increment. Continuing grants that include an increment of 24 months will require an annual report for each 12-month period.

6. Final Annual Project Reports

The final report should address all activities of the project in its final year. The report is not cumulative. By submitting the final annual project report, the principal investigator (PI) or co-PI is signifying that the scope of work for the project has been completed and that the PI does not anticipate that any further research activities (including a no-cost extension or supplemental funding) need to be completed on the project. The final report is due no later than 120 days after the award end date. The recipient must provide any unique reports or other end items specified in the award, including any requirements from the funding opportunity. The report must include final cost share notification documented and certified by the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) for awards where there is mandatory cost sharing.

7. Overdue Reports

If the report has not been submitted by the PI and approved by the cognizant NSF Program Director by the period required above, the report becomes overdue.

8. Certifications

PIs/co-PIs certify that statements in annual and final reports are true and complete (excluding scientific hypotheses/opinions) and that publications and report content are original work of the signatories or their supervised personnel. Any misrepresentations and/or omissions may be subject to prosecution and liability.

Reminder: Failure to submit timely reports will delay processing of additional funding, administrative actions, and review of pending proposals for identified PIs and co-PIs.

Reminder: Submission of the final annual project report does not preclude the recipient from requesting any further payments for costs incurred during the period of performance.

Procedures

1. How to Submit Annual and Final Annual Project Reports

- a) Draft a brief, plain-language summary of annual progress. Ensure that the summary is not cumulative, including that of the Final Annual Project Report.
- b) Prepare and submit the Annual or Final Annual Project Report in [Research.gov](#) before the current budget period end date.
- c) Ensure report content follows research performance progress report (RPPR) components: Accomplishments; Products; Participants/Organizations; Impact; Changes/Problems; and Special Requirement (if applicable).
- d) Retain copies of submitted reports and supporting documents.
- e) For additional information, refer to the [About Project Reporting System](#) page on Research.gov. Note this information is only available to authorized users and requires login.

Reminder: Information from these reports is used in annual reports to Congress and may be made available to the general public through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

B. Project Outcomes Report (POR) for the General Public

This section explains the purpose, requirements, and submission process for the Project Outcomes Report, a public-facing summary of NSF-funded project results written for a general audience. It outlines content restrictions, establishes the 120-day post-award submission deadline, and describes how the report is prepared, reviewed, and publicly posted by NSF.

Terms and Definitions

1. Project Outcomes Report

A brief, public-facing summary of project outcomes and impacts, written for a lay audience.

Policies

1. Confidential and Proprietary Information

PIs must avoid including the following in their reports: confidential or proprietary information, unpublished data that would hinder publication, invention disclosures that could impair patent rights.

2. Personally Identifiable Information

PIs must not submit reports that contain any personally identifiable information (PII), such as home contact information, individual demographic data, or individually identifiable information collected from human subjects research participants.

3. Submission

The POR must be submitted no later than 120 days after the end date of the award. The report becomes overdue the day after the 120-day period ends if it has not been submitted by the PI. Submission of the project outcomes report does not preclude the recipient from requesting any further payments for costs incurred during the period of performance.

Procedures

1. How to Submit the Project Outcomes Report (POR)

- a) Draft a brief, plain-language summary of outcomes, addressing Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts in 2-3 paragraphs. NSF will automatically include all publications associated with the award that are reported in annual and final annual project reports. You may upload up to 6 supporting images.
- b) Review the report to ensure that it does not contain any confidential, proprietary, or personally identifiable information.
- c) Submit the POR in [Research.gov](https://www.research.gov) no later than 120 days after the award end date. Once your report has been submitted, you have 30 days to edit your report.
- d) NSF will automatically include all publications and datasets associated with the award that are reported in annual and final project reports. NSF will add the following disclaimer to the published report:

"This Project Outcomes Report for the General Public is displayed verbatim as submitted by the Principal Investigator (PI) for this award. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this Report are those of the PI and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF); NSF has not approved or endorsed its content."

- f) For additional information, refer to the [About Project Reporting System](#) page on Research.gov. Note this information is only available to authorized users and requires login.

Reminder: The Project Outcomes Report will be posted publicly by NSF as submitted.

C. Mandatory Cost Sharing Records and Reports

Terms and Definitions

1. Cost Sharing
See [2 CFR 200.1](#).

Policies

1. Recipient Records

Recipients shall maintain records of all project costs that are claimed by the recipient to meet mandatory cost sharing requirements specified in an NSF program funding opportunity. Records for cost share contributed to NSF awards must be compliant with the requirements of [2 CFR 200.306](#) and are subject to audit.

2. Recipient Reports

The amount of mandatory cost sharing must be documented (on an annual and final basis), certified by the AOR, and reported to the cognizant NSF Program Director. Such notifications

must be submitted no later than 90 days prior to the end of the current budget period to meet the annual notification requirement, and no later than 120 days following the end date of the award to meet the final notification requirement. The cost share notification is considered due during the 90- or 120-day period respectively. The notification becomes overdue the day after the respective 90- or 120-day period ends.

3. Changes to Cost Sharing

If the recipient is unable to provide the cost sharing of the cost sharing amount identified on Line M of the NSF award budget, the AOR must sign and submit a request to revise the agreed upon cost sharing amount.

Failure by the organization to notify NSF, in accordance with the paragraph above, may result in the disallowance of some or all of the costs charged to the award; the subsequent recovery by NSF of some or all of the NSF funds provided under the award; possible termination of the award; and may constitute a violation of the terms of the award so serious as to provide grounds for subsequent suspension or debarment.

Procedures

1. How to Notify NSF of Any Changes in Cost Sharing

- a) The recipient should notify the AOR of any changes in cost sharing.
- b) Navigate to the Notifications & Request module in Research.gov. The AOR can select the "Prepare New" button to select type of change. The request must provide a description of why the cost sharing amount cannot be provided, and either indicate steps the recipient plans to take to secure replacement cost sharing; or indicate the plans that the recipient has to either continue or phase out the project in the absence of the approved level of cost sharing. The AOR will sign and submit a request to NSF.
- c) Should NSF agree to the organization's proposed plans, the NSF Grants Officer will modify the award accordingly, including, if appropriate, reducing the amount of NSF support.
- d) Should the organization's plans be unacceptable to NSF, the award may be subject to termination. NSF modifications to proposed cost sharing revisions are made on a case-by-case basis.

D. Foreign Financial Disclosure Reports

This section outlines the requirements for foreign financial disclosure by institutions of higher education, including what must be reported, who is subject to the requirement, and how foreign support is attributed. It establishes an annual reporting obligation for qualifying foreign financial support which must be reported at Research.gov from foreign countries of concern, along with deadlines, exclusions, and documentation expectations. It also describes compliance procedures, including submission, record retention, and NSF's authority to request supporting documentation. More information about foreign financial disclosure reports can be found at [Research.gov](#).

Terms and Definitions

1. Foreign Financial Disclosure

Annual reporting of foreign financial support, the cumulative value of which is \$50,000 or more per source, associated with a foreign country of concern, required of recipient institutions of higher education (IHEs).

Policies

1. Reporting Threshold

Each recipient institution of higher education that is a direct NSF funding recipient must report annually cumulative foreign financial support of \$50,000 or more per source, including gifts and contracts, received directly or indirectly from a foreign source that is associated with a foreign country of concern.

2. Subawards or Individuals

Reporting applies only to direct recipients of NSF funding. This requirement does not apply to subrecipients.

3. Coverage

Reports cover direct support received by a foundation to the institution and related entities and payments from agents of a foreign source associated with a foreign country of concern. The determination of a direct recipient of NSF funding is based on the entity receiving NSF awards through its own UEI. Satellite, branch or regional campuses that are not direct recipients of NSF funding must report any financial support via the main campus of the IHE.

4. Country of Citizenship

Financial support is attributable to the country of citizenship, or if unknown, the principal residence for a foreign source who is a natural person, and the country of incorporation/establishment, or if unknown, the principal place of business, of a foreign source that is a legal entity.

5. Tuition

Tuition payments for a specific student(s) are excluded from the reporting requirement (e.g., parent payment for child/children or other relatives). However, if the payment of tuition is in the form of a grant, scholarship, or other form of financial aid that is conditional on a specific criterion (e.g., the student's country of origin – all students from a particular country; students with a particular major; or students studying a particular language, etc.) but not for the benefit of a specific student, then that payment is reportable when a cumulative \$50,000 per source is received by the institution.

6. Reporting Period

The report must be submitted by October 31 of each calendar year. Negative reports are required to be submitted.

7. Recordkeeping

Institutions must maintain a copy of the relevant records subject to the disclosure requirement until the latest of:

- a) The date that is four years after the end date of the award.
- b) The date on which the agreement terminates.
- c) The last day of any period for which applicable State public record law requires that a copy of such agreement to be maintained.

NSF may request copies of contracts, agreements, or documentation supporting disclosures. Annual reporting requirements are included in NSF award terms, and violations may affect post-award status.

Procedures

1. How to Comply with Foreign Financial Disclosure Procedures

- a) Each IHE direct recipient compiles information on reportable foreign financial support.
- b) Each IHE submits the annual disclosure to NSF by October 31 each year. Remember to submit a negative report if no reportable support was received.
- c) If requested by NSF, provide copies of contracts, agreements, or documentation related to disclosed support.

E. Award Closeout

This section defines the award closeout process, explaining how NSF finalizes an award through financial reconciliation and administrative review after the period of performance ends. It establishes the timeline, required reports and conditions for full closeout, and circumstances that may delay or extend the process. It also outlines consequences for noncompliance and describes how NSF and recipients coordinate to complete closeout.

Terms and Definitions

1. Financial Closeout

Final accounting and financial reconciliation of an award.

Policies

1. Coverage

Award closeout confirms completion of administrative actions and required work.

2. Timing

Financial closeout typically occurs 120 days after award expiration. Administrative closeout usually follows financial closeout. Some awards (e.g., those with mandatory cost sharing or federally owned equipment) may be held for review by an NSF official before administrative closeout.

3. Reports Required for Closeout

All required reports (Final Annual Project Report and POR) and any award-specific end items must be submitted to achieve full closeout.

4. Period of Performance

If required reports are not submitted within one year after the period of performance end date, NSF must report a material failure to comply to the OMB-designated integrity and performance system and may pursue additional enforcement actions.

5. Audit

If a final audit is completed after closeout and recommends disallowed costs, NSF reserves the right to recover funds.

Procedures

1. How to Work with NSF to Close an Award

- a) NSF will initiate financial closeout, normally 120 days after the award end date, based on recorded costs at that time.
- b) Administrative closeout will follow financial closeout unless held for review (e.g., cost sharing, federally owned equipment).
- c) If additional documentation is required to complete closeout, NSF will notify the recipient. The recipient must respond promptly to avoid delays.
- d) If required reports remain outstanding one year after an award ends, NSF will report material failure to a governmentwide system and may take further enforcement actions.

F. Record Retention and Audit

This section establishes the requirements for maintaining records and complying with audit obligations after an NSF award is closed. It specifies retention timelines, outlines recipient responsibilities, and clarifies how NSF awards are classified and treated for audit purposes. It also describes how post-closeout audit findings may lead to cost disallowances and potential recovery of funds, along with expectations for recipient response and documentation.

Policies

1. Record Retention

Recipients must retain financial records, supporting documents, statistical records, and other records relevant to the award for three years from award financial closeout.

2. Single Audit Act

States, local governments, and non-profit recipients are responsible for arranging audits and must provide audit reports to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse.

3. Audit Classification

NSF awards are classified as Research and Development (R&D) for audit purposes; auditors should identify NSF awards in the R&D cluster on the Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards (SEFA). Auditors need not report classification differences related to indirect cost treatment unless the auditee charges an indirect rate different from that specified in the award.

Procedures

1. How to Prepare for Post-Closeout Adjustments

- a) If audit findings or other reviews identify disallowed costs after closeout, NSF may recover funds consistent with the audit results and applicable regulations.
- b) Recipients should monitor final audit outcomes and be prepared to respond to NSF requests relating to post-closeout adjustments.

Authorities

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The following authorities govern this guide:

- National Science Foundation Act of 1950
- Single Audit Act of 1984
- Government Performance and Results Act of 1993
- CHIPS and Science Act of 2022
- 2 CFR 200

Guide 19: Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and Assault

Version 27-1 Effective [Day Month Year]

This guide:

- Establishes the policies and procedures U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) recipients must follow to comply with civil rights laws, maintain safe and harassment-free research environments, and uphold scientific integrity.
- Prohibits discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment and assault.
- Makes clear that recipient institutions are responsible for investigating complaints, preventing retaliation, and maintaining appropriate policies.
- Outlines reporting requirements, recordkeeping expectations, and cooperation with NSF oversight.

Principal Investigators (PIs) should use this guide to understand how to comply with civil rights laws, maintain safe and harassment-free research environments, and uphold scientific integrity.

Authorized Organization Representatives (AORs) and Sponsored Project Offices (SPOs) should use this guide to understand how to comply with civil rights laws, maintain safe and harassment-free research environments, and uphold scientific integrity — including how to respond to NSF referrals of discrimination complaints and how to report harassment-related findings or actions.

A. Discrimination

This section describes the civil rights rules that NSF recipients must follow to ensure their programs are fair, accessible, and free from discrimination. It also provides guidance on reporting incidents, responding to NSF-referred complaints, and maintaining records to ensure accountability and consistent enforcement.

Policies

1. General

Federal laws and regulations prohibit discrimination in NSF-funded programs. Recipients, subrecipients, and successors must not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, disability, sex, or age.

2. Complaint Acknowledgment

When NSF receives a discrimination complaint, NSF may refer the complaint to the recipient or another entity with authority to investigate when it does not meet NSF requirements for investigation. When the complaint is referred to the recipient by NSF, the recipient must acknowledge receipt and inform NSF of the final disposition of the complaint.

3. Investigation Responsibility

Recipients are responsible for investigating complaints and ensuring compliance with all applicable civil rights laws and regulations.

4. Intimidation, Coercion, or Retaliation

Recipients must not intimidate, coerce, or retaliate against anyone who files or cooperates in a discrimination complaint, including. Any person who attempts to assert a right protected by these statutes and their implementing regulations or cooperates in any part of NSF's review, investigation, and compliance resolution or enforcement process.

5. Compliance Reviews

NSF may conduct reviews before or after an award to ensure compliance with civil rights authorities.

6. Access to Records

Recipients must provide NSF access to records, staff, participants, and facilities as needed to assess compliance.

7. Availability of Information

Recipients must inform participants and the public about their rights and protections under civil rights authorities.

Procedures

1. How to Respond to NSF Referrals of Discrimination Complaints

- a) Visit the [Stopping Harassment and Assault](#) page on NSF.gov for guidance.
- b) Investigate or refer to your institution's procedures.
- c) For questions, contact NSF Office of Civil Rights at programcomplaints@nsf.gov.
- d) Report the outcomes to NSF and provide records if requested.

B. Sexual Harassment and Assault

This section explains NSF's expectations for maintaining safe and harassment-free research environments and the requirements for reporting sexual harassment or assault. It requires recipients to ensure appropriate conduct across all award-related activities and outlines the steps and information required to submit these reports to NSF.

Policies

1. Standards of Behavior

Recipients must maintain standards of behavior and safe research environments. All award personnel must comport themselves in a responsible and accountable manner during the performance of award activities whether at the recipient organization, on-line, or outside the organization, such as at field sites, facilities, or during conferences and workshops.

2. Reporting of Sexual Harassment and Assault

The Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) must notify NSF Office of Civil Rights within ten business days of any finding, administrative leave, or administrative action involving a PI or co-PI related to sexual harassment, other forms of harassment, or sexual assault. Individual recipients are required to self-report on any of these findings.

3. Safe and Harassment-Free Working Environments for Off-Campus/Off-Site Research

For any award that provides support for an NSF-sponsored conference (in whole or in part), the recipient is required to have a policy or code-of-conduct that addresses sexual harassment, other forms of harassment, and sexual assault, and that includes clear and accessible means of reporting violations of the policy or code-of-conduct. The policy or code-of-conduct must address the method for making a complaint as well as how any complaints received during the conference will be resolved. The policy or code-of-conduct must be disseminated to conference participants prior to attendance at the conference as well as made available at the conference itself. Recipients are not required to submit the policy or code-of-conduct for review by NSF.

Procedures

1. How to Report Harassment-Related Findings or Actions

- a) Visit the [Stopping Harassment and Assault](#) page on NSF.gov for guidance.
- b) Submit notifications through the NSF [Organizational Notification of Harassment](#) form.
- c) Report within ten business days and include the:
 - i. Award number.
 - ii. Name of PI or co-PI being reported.
 - iii. Type of notification (e.g., finding/determination, placement on administrative leave).
 - iv. Description of the finding.
 - v. Reasons/conditions for organizational actions.
- d) Provide supporting documents where needed.
- e) AORs are responsible for timely submission of materials.
- f) Individuals seeking information regarding available support resources, reporting options, or other assistance related to sexual assault or sexual harassment may contact the [NSF Sexual Assault and Harassment Prevention and Response program office \(NSF SAPHR\)](#) by emailing saferscience@nsf.gov. Members of the NSF research community can also reach out to the [NSF Safer Science Helpline](#), a confidential resource that provides sexual violence support services to individuals who experience sexual assault or sexual harassment. The helpline is available to the NSF research community including current and former recipients. Individuals can access the NSF Safer Science Helpline in the following ways:
 - Phone Number: 833-673-1733
 - Text: 202-932-7569
 - To chat or to find other resources available: NSFSaferScienceHelpline.org

Authorities

The following authorities govern this guide:

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
- Age Discrimination Act of 1975

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- 45 CFR 611 - NSF regulation implementing Title VI of the Civil Rights Act
- 45 CFR 605 - NSF regulation implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
- 45 CFR 617 - NSF regulation implementing the Age Discrimination Act
- 45 CFR 618 - NSF regulation implementing Title IX of the Education Amendments

Guide 20: Research Safety and Protection of Living Organisms

Version 27-1 Effective [Day Month Year]

This guide establishes the policies and procedures that U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) recipients must follow to ensure the safe, ethical, and compliant conduct of research involving humans, animals, and potentially hazardous biological materials. It explains:

- Responsibilities for obtaining and maintaining approvals from oversight bodies.
- Responsibilities for ensuring adherence to federal assurances and regulatory standards and agency policies.
- Reviews and approvals needed before research activities involving living organisms are initiated.
- Appropriate management of changes.
- How to maintain accountability, documentation, and communication with NSF.

Principal Investigators (PIs) should use this guide to understand how to prepare for research involving human subjects, live vertebrate animals, and potentially hazardous biological materials.

Authorized Organization Representatives (AORs) and Sponsored Project Offices (SPOs) should use this guide to understand organizational and PI responsibilities for ensuring the safe, ethical, and compliant conduct of research involving humans, animals, and potentially hazardous biological materials.

A. Human Subjects

This section explains the requirements for protecting participants involved in NSF-funded research. For investigators conducting human subjects research, it may require obtaining approvals from an Institutional Review Board (IRB), updating the IRB when there is the intent to change the project scope, and notifying NSF of any research compliance issues. It also includes additional protections when research involves children or individuals with impaired decision-making capacity.

Terms and Definitions

1. Federalwide Assurance (FWA)

A formal, binding, written agreement filed with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) by an institution, ensuring that all human subjects research conducted, supported, or regulated by federal agencies, including NSF, complies with ethical standards and federal regulations.

2. Institutional Review Board (IRB)

An independent ethics committee responsible for reviewing, approving, and monitoring research involving human subjects to protect their rights, safety, and welfare.

Policies

1. IRB Approval

Recipients are responsible for the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects, must obtain IRB approval or exemption whenever human subjects research is involved, and must keep approvals current for as long as the work continues.

2. Indefinite Research Plans

For projects lacking definite plans for the use of human subjects, NSF may allow an IRB determination that stipulates that no work (including recruitment) with human subjects may begin until full approval is granted.

3. Project Modifications

If the scope of work or protocols change substantively, recipients must obtain new IRB approval and deliver the approval letter to the cognizant NSF Program Director with references to the award title and award number before continuing work.

4. FWA Cancellation or Lapse

In the event the recipient organization's Federalwide Assurance (FWA) is canceled or lapses, the recipient should stop the project and must immediately notify the cognizant NSF Grants Officer.

5. Supplements

Supplements to awards do not require a new IRB approval letter. If the scope of the project has substantively changed, however, a new signed IRB approval letter is required, indicating approval of the covered activities, and explicitly referencing the title of the award.

6. Pre-College Students

For projects that involve pre-college students in research or development, or pilot-testing, evaluation, or revision of experimental or innovative curriculum development projects, recipients must:

- a) Provide to the school board, or comparable authority, information concerning the need for and purposes of the project, the proposed content of the material for use, the benefits to be derived and other information to assist the jurisdiction in arriving at a decision on participation.
- b) Obtain written approval for participation in the project activities after the responsible authority has carried out its procedures.
- c) Provide information and materials to the school authority to assist it in carrying out its own established procedures regarding the participation of students in project activities.
- d) Provide information to NSF describing compliance with the above provisions.
- e) Provide in every publication, testing, or distribution agreement involving instructional material developed under an award (including but not limited to teacher's manuals, textbooks, films, tapes, or other supplementary material) that such material will be made available within the school district using such material, for inspection by parents or guardians of children engaged in educational programs or projects of that school district.

Procedures

1. How to Prepare for Research With Human Subjects

- a) Obtain IRB approval or exemption before starting any human subject's work.
- b) Provide approval documentation to NSF when requested via email to the cognizant NSF Program Director.

- c) Obtain and submit updated approval before implementing any significant changes in project scope.

B. Live Vertebrate Animals

This section establishes the requirements for the humane care and use of live vertebrate animals in NSF-funded research, including mandatory oversight and compliance with federal animal welfare standards. It requires oversight, adherence to federal standards, and proper approvals before and during the research.

Terms and Definitions

1. Animal Welfare Assurance

A legally binding contract between an institution and the federal government that details the organization's commitment to the humane care and use of live vertebrate animals in research, testing, and training.

2. Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)

A federally mandated committee responsible for overseeing an institution's vertebrate animal care program, procedures, and facilities.

Policies

1. Humane Care

Recipients must ensure humane care and treatment of live vertebrate animals involved or intended for involvement in such activities as field or laboratory research, development, training, experiments, biological testing, or for related purposes.

2. Guidance

Recipients must follow the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) publication, "[Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals](#)" and comply with the [Public Health Service Policy and Government Principles Regarding the Care and Use of Animals](#) (included as Appendix B to the NASEM guide). Taxon-specific guidelines may be used as supplemental references.

3. IACUC Approval and Animal Welfare Assurance

Recipients must obtain and maintain IACUC approval from an organization with Public Health Service (PHS)-approved Animal Welfare Assurance.

4. Protocol Modifications

Substantive changes to approved scopes of work or IACUC protocols require new IACUC approval. Promptly notify and provide a copy of the new IACUC approval letter to the cognizant NSF Program Director. The approval letter must include:

- a) The title of the award.
- b) The NSF award ID.
- c) The name and signature of the IACUC Chair or equivalent institutional official.

5. Lapses in Animal Welfare Assurance

In the event the recipient's PHS-approved Animal Welfare Assurance is canceled or lapses, the recipient must immediately notify the cognizant NSF Grants Officer.

6. Supplements

Supplements to awards do not require separate IACUC approval. If the scope of the project has been substantively changed from the parent award, however, a new IACUC approval is required, and a copy of the new IACUC approval letter must be provided to the cognizant NSF Program Director.

7. Foreign Institutions or Field Sites

Recipients with projects at a foreign institution or foreign field site require approval of research protocols by the U.S. recipient's IACUC. If the project is to be funded through an award to a foreign organization or through an individual fellowship award that will support activities at a foreign organization, NSF will require a statement from the international organization explicitly listing the proposer's name and referencing the title of the award to confirm that activities will be conducted in accordance with all applicable laws in the foreign country and that the [*International Guiding Principles for Biomedical Research Involving Animals*](#) will be followed.

Procedures

1. How to Prepare for Research with Live Vertebrate Animals

- a) Obtain IACUC approval before starting live vertebrate animal research.
- b) Provide a copy of the IACUC approval letter to the cognizant NSF Program Director. The IACUC approval letter must include:
 - i. The exact same title as the NSF proposal.
 - ii. The NSF proposal ID.
 - iii. The IACUC approval date.
 - iv. The institution's PHS-approved Animal Welfare Assurance number.
 - v. The name and signature of the IACUC Chair or equivalent institutional official.

Demonstration of valid IACUC approval is required before NSF can make an award for work involving live vertebrate animals. If the organization does not have a PHS-approved Animal Welfare Assurance, notify the cognizant NSF Program Director.

- c) Obtain new IACUC approval for significant changes before proceeding.
- d) Maintain valid IACUC approval and Animal Welfare Assurance.

C. Recombinant and Synthetic Nucleic Acid Research

NSF recognizes that recombinant DNA and synthetic nucleic acids are critical reagents for biology and biotechnology, and, as such, is committed to ensuring that their use in NSF-funded research is managed. This section establishes the requirements for conducting recombinant and synthetic nucleic acid research, including compliance with National Institutes of Health (NIH) guidelines and oversight by an Institutional Biosafety Committee.

Terms and Definitions

1. Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC)

A faculty-led expert panel that reviews, approves, and monitors research involving hazardous biological materials, recombinant/synthetic nucleic acids, and infectious agents to ensure safety.

Policies

1. Registration

Recipients must comply with the NIH [Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant DNA or Synthetic Nucleic Acid Molecules](#), as amended in April 2024, hereafter referred to as the "Guidelines" for recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid research when performing such research.

2. Standing IBC

Each organization involved in the conduct of NSF-supported recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid research subject to the Guidelines must have a standing Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC). Recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid research subject to the Guidelines must be registered with the IBC indicating compliance with the containment requirements.

3. Prior Approval

Recipients must not initiate research without IBC approval and determination of containment levels by the Director of the NIH. This includes:

- a) Research for which containment levels are not explicitly specified by the Guidelines.
- b) Research involving experiments prohibited by the Guidelines, i.e., requests for exceptions to the Guidelines.
- c) Requests to perform experiments without regard to the containment specified in the Guidelines, i.e., exemptions from the Guidelines.

4. Procurement of Synthetic Nucleic Acids

Recipients performing research that falls within the scope of the [U.S. Government Framework for Nucleic Acid Synthesis Screening \(NSC, 2024\)](#), hereafter referred to as the "Framework" must comply with it, including:

- a) Procuring synthetic nucleic acids of lengths equal to or greater than 200 bases only from providers that screen such nucleic acid orders for sequences of concern as defined by the Framework.
- b) Procuring benchtop equipment for the synthesis of nucleic acids only from manufacturers who also adhere to the Framework.

NSF will follow implementing guidance and requirements set forth by [Executive Order 14292 - Improving the Safety and Security of Biological Research](#).

Procedures

1. How to Prepare for Research with Recombinant/Synthetic Nucleic Acids

- a) Register covered recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid research with your IBC.
- b) Keep IBC records and registration materials available for NSF review.
- c) For research requiring NIH Director approval or specific containment determinations, do not start work until the required reviews are complete.

D. Dangerous Gain of Function Research

NSF is committed to preserving the benefits of life sciences research while minimizing the risk of misuse of the knowledge, information, products, or technologies provided by such research. This section establishes requirements for identifying, overseeing, and mitigating risks associated with dangerous gain of function research.

Terms and Definitions

1. Dangerous Gain of Function Research

Scientific research on an infectious agent or toxin with the potential to cause disease by enhancing its pathogenicity or increasing its transmissibility. Covered research activities are those that could result in significant societal consequences and that seek or achieve one or more of the following outcomes:

- h) Enhancing the harmful consequences of the agent or toxin.
- i) Disrupting beneficial immunological response or the effectiveness of an immunization against the agent or toxin.
- j) Conferring to the agent or toxin resistance to clinically or agriculturally useful prophylactic or therapeutic interventions against that agent or toxin or facilitating their ability to evade detection methodologies.
- k) Increasing the stability, transmissibility, or the ability to disseminate the agent or toxin.
- l) Altering the host range or tropism of the agent or toxin.
- m) Enhancing the susceptibility of a human host population to the agent or toxin.
- n) Generating or reconstituting an eradicated or extinct agent or toxin.

2. Institutional Review Entity (IRE)

A specialized committee established by research institutions that oversees dangerous gain of function research.

Policies

1. Applicability

NSF will follow implementing guidance and requirements set forth by [Executive Order 14292 - Improving the Safety and Security of Biological Research](#).

2. NSF Funding Considerations

NSF will not fund research that would lead to dangerous gain of function. Proposals with potential dangerous gain of function research will be considered for funding only after NSF has conducted a review and assessed the associated risk.

Purely computational (in silico) research that may include the development of computational models and software or may use such means to design novel forms of biological agents is not prohibited.

Procedures

1. How to Prepare for Projects with Potential Dangerous Gain of Function Research

- c) Screen projects for dangerous gain of function by first reviewing [EO 14292](#).
- d) If you are unsure if a new or ongoing project meets criteria within EO 14292 for dangerous gain of function, notify your IRE and contact your cognizant NSF Program Director to discuss whether the research can proceed and, if it can proceed, which risk mitigation strategies should be employed.

Authorities

The following authorities govern this guide:

DRAFT

- Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects (Common Rule)
- 45 CFR 690.118 (Human Subjects Regulation)
- Animal Welfare Act of 1966, as amended and related PHS/NASEM guidance
- 9 CFR 1.1-4.11 (Animal Welfare Regulation)
- NIH Guidelines for Recombinant or Synthetic Nucleic Acid Molecules
- Executive Order 14292 - Improving the Safety and Security of Biological Research

Guide 21: Intellectual Property

Version 27-1 Effective [Day Month Year]

This guide addresses U.S. National Science Foundation policies and procedures governing intellectual property (IP) created under NSF awards, including patents, inventions, and copyrighted materials. It explains:

- Aspects of recipients' rights and responsibilities regarding inventions, including invention disclosure, retention of rights, and reporting requirements.
- Special provisions for nonprofit-operated facilities.
- Special provisions for international agreements.
- Exceptions to standard IP rights.
- How copyright ownership and use are managed, ensuring that research outputs are appropriately protected, shared, and aligned with federal policy objectives.

Principal Investigators (PIs), Authorized Organization Representatives (AORs) and Sponsored Project Offices (SPOs) should use this guide to understand how to disclose inventions and patents resulting from NSF awards and how copyright ownership and use are managed.

A. Patents and Inventions

The disposition of rights to inventions made during NSF-assisted research is principally governed by the Bayh-Dole Act ([35 USC 200 et seq](#)). The Department of Commerce (DOC) is the lead agency for implementing the Bayh-Dole Act and has published guidance for federal agencies at [37 CFR 401](#).

NSF has implemented [37 CFR 401](#) via its own regulations at [45 CFR 650](#), including NSF's standard Patent Rights terms and conditions, which are identical to those prescribed in the DOC guidance ([37 CFR 401.14](#)) except for certain permissible modifications and tailoring. To the extent there is any question about rights and responsibilities with respect to an invention, recipients should consult [37 CFR 401](#) and [45 CFR 650](#).

Terms and Definitions

1. iEdison

An interagency reporting system for recipients of federal funding agreements to report subject inventions to the federal funding agency.

2. Inventor

The individual(s) identified by the recipient as inventors when submitting an invention report to NSF.

3. March-In Rights

The federal government's authority to require licensing of an invention under certain circumstances, including when the awardee has not taken sufficient steps to commercialize an invention or make it available to the public on reasonable terms, when it is necessary to address public health/safety needs, or when U.S. manufacturing requirements have not been met and no waiver has been granted.

Policies

1. Patent Rights

NSF generally applies its standard Patent Rights terms and conditions in awards for research, consistent with the Bayh-Dole Act, with the recipient normally retaining principal rights to inventions subject to certain exceptions.

2. Delegation of Authority

The NSF General Counsel is responsible for implementing the NSF Patent Policy and is authorized to make any exceptions to, or extensions of time called for by, the NSF Patent Policy as may be required by particular circumstances. The NSF General Counsel will designate an NSF Patent Assistant who is authorized to carry out the assigned functions with assistance from others assigned in the Office of the General Counsel (NSF Patent Team).

3. Non-Profit Operation of Government-Owned/Contractor-Operated Facility

If the award is made to a non-profit organization and is for the operation of a government-owned, contractor-operated facility, after payment of patenting costs, licensing costs, payments to inventors, and other expenses incidental to the administration of subject inventions, the balance of any royalties or income earned and retained by the contractor during any fiscal year on subject inventions under this or any successor contract containing the same requirement, up to an amount equal to 5% of the budget of the facility for that fiscal year, shall be used by the contractor for scientific research, development, and education consistent with the research and development mission and objectives of the facility. This includes activities that increase the licensing potential of other inventions of the facility. If the balance of royalties exceeds 5%, 15% of the excess above 5% shall be paid by the contractor to the Treasury of the United States and the remaining 85% shall be used by the contractor only for the same purposes as described in the preceding sentence. To the extent it provides the most effective technology transfer, the licensing of subject inventions shall be administered by contractor employees on location at the facility.

4. Reporting

Recipients must use iEdison for invention disclosures and required communications unless the NSF Patent Team grants an exception.

5. Special Patent Provisions

At the request of the prospective recipient, or on recommendation from the cognizant NSF Program Director, the cognizant NSF Grants Officer may negotiate special patent provisions when it has been determined that exceptional circumstances require restriction or elimination of the right of a prospective recipient to retain title to any subject invention in order to better promote the policy and objectives of the Bayh-Dole Act or the National Science Foundation Act. Unless doing so is inconsistent with an obligation imposed on the NSF by statute, international agreement, or pact with other participants in or supporters of the research, every special patent provision will allow the recipient, after an invention has been made, to request that inventor be allowed to retain principal rights to that invention.

6. Non-Research Awards

Awards not primarily intended to support scientific or engineering research, like travel, conferences, or fellowships, are not required to contain a patent provision. NSF claims no rights to inventions made by fellows or trainees.

7. International Agreements

On rare occasions, NSF may require the recipient to transfer to a foreign government or research performer such rights in any subject invention as are contemplated in a treaty or other international agreement.

8. Retention of Rights by the Inventor

If a recipient elects not to retain rights to an invention, the inventor may request approval, in writing, from the NSF Patent Team to retain principal patent rights. The inventor will be subject to the same terms and conditions that would have been applied to the recipient, except that the special restrictions imposed on nonprofit organizations will not apply to the inventor.

9. Unwanted Inventions

NSF will normally allow any patent rights not wanted by the recipient or inventor to be dedicated to the public through publication in scientific and engineering journals or, as a statutory invention registration. However, if the NSF Patent Team believes that another federal agency is interested in the relevant technology, the NSF Patent Team may, after receiving the recipient's election not to patent and ascertaining that the inventor also does not want to patent, send a copy of the invention disclosure to that agency to give it an opportunity to review and patent the invention.

10. Inventions with Another Federal Agency

If an invention is made under awards made by more than one federal agency, the agencies involved will, at the request of the recipient or on their own initiative, designate one agency to be responsible for the administration of the invention.

11. Requests for Extensions, Waivers or Other Approvals

Requests for extension of time to disclose, make an election to retain title to, or file a patent on a subject invention will be granted by the NSF Patent Team unless it is determined that such an extension would either imperil the securing of valid patent protection or unacceptably restrict the publication of the results of the NSF-supported research. A written request for extension of time to disclose, elect, or file can be assumed to have been approved unless the NSF Patent Team replies negatively within ten business days of the date such request was made. Requests for approvals or waivers should explain why an approval or waiver is justified under the stated criteria. The requester will be provided with a written explanation of the reasons for denial of a request covered by this section.

12. Approvals for Nonprofits

Approval of assignments by nonprofit organizations will be granted by the NSF Patent Team unless it is determined that the interests of the U.S. government will be adversely affected by such assignment.

13. Approvals for Long-Term Exclusive Licensing

Approval of long-term exclusive licensing of NSF-assisted inventions by nonprofit organizations will be granted by the NSF Patent Team unless it is determined that the interests of the U.S. government will be adversely affected by such waiver.

14. Special Restrictions

Special restrictions on or limitation of the right of a recipient to retain title to subject inventions may be waived by the cognizant Grants Officer whenever it is determined, after consultation with the cognizant NSF Program Director, that the reasons for imposing the restrictions or limitations do not require their application to a particular invention.

15. Small Business Preference

Small business firms that believe a nonprofit organization is not meeting their obligations under paragraph (k)(4) of [37 CFR 401.14](#) may report their concerns to the NSF Patent Team at patents@nsf.gov.

16. March-in Rights

Petitions requesting that NSF exercise a march-in right should:

- Identify the patent or patent application involved and the relevant fields of use of the invention.
- State the grounds for the proposed march-in.
- Supply evidence that one or more of the four conditions creating a march-in right (lack of practical application, unsatisfied health or safety needs, unmet requirements for public use, or failure to prefer U.S. industry) is present.
- Explain what action by NSF is necessary to correct that condition.

The NSF General Counsel will determine whether and how NSF should exercise a march-in right.

17. Appeals

The denial of an inventor's request to retain rights to a subject invention; denial of a request for waiver; denial of the existence of a material dispute; a request to convey title to a subject invention; a refusal to eliminate restrictions on or limitation of a recipient's right to retain title to subject inventions; and the decision to exercise march-in rights may be appealed. Detailed provisions on the procedure for such appeals, including to whom such appeals should be addressed, and relevant deadlines are set forth in 45 CFR 650.15.

18. Background Rights

NSF will acquire rights to a research performer's pre-existing technology only in exceptional circumstances where, due to the nature of the research being supported, NSF requires greater control over resulting inventions. If the affected recipient is a small business firm or nonprofit organization, the provision will conform to the requirements of the Bayh-Dole Act.

19. Subawards

Recipients should normally use the same standard patent terms and conditions in all subawards. At the request of the recipient or subrecipient or on recommendation from NSF staff, the cognizant Grants Officer may direct the recipient to insert into subawards relating to scientific research a special patent provision.

Procedures

1. How to Disclose Inventions and Patents

- a) Disclose inventions in iEdison as soon as possible after invention by visiting [the iEdison website](#).
- b) Submit required communications electronically as pdf/TIFF through iEdison unless you receive permission to use another format.
- c) If you choose not to retain rights, notify the NSF Patent Team via iEdison.
- d) Requests for inventor retention, waivers, or extensions may be made via iEdison.

- e) For patent questions and iEdison support, contact the NSF Patent Team at patents@nsf.gov.

B. Copyright

This section explains how rights to copyrighted materials created under NSF awards are handled. As a general matter, recipients keep ownership while NSF retains only the rights needed to support its programs.

Terms and Definitions

1. Public Access Repository (PAR)

NSF's designated repository where investigators deposit peer-reviewed, published journal articles, juried conference papers, and books.

Policies

1. Rights to Copyrighted Material

Unless negotiated otherwise, NSF acquires only necessary rights in copyrighted material. Recipients normally retain rights and income, subject to award terms. In exceptional circumstances, NSF may restrict or eliminate a recipient's control of NSF-supported copyrighted material and of income earned from it if NSF determines that this would best serve the purposes of a particular program or award.

2. Public Access to Copyrighted Materials

- a) **Author's Accepted Manuscript (AAM) Deposit:** Final versions of manuscripts accepted for publication after peer-review in either scholarly journals or juried conference proceedings or as books (collectively referred to as author's accepted manuscripts, or AAMs) must be deposited as files in NSF's Public Access Repository (PAR) at or before the time of publication. Further, such deposits in PAR are required for these products to be included as part of the annual project reporting process. Products that are produced after an award has expired should also be deposited in PAR and associated with the award. PAR deposits do not require the payment of any third-party fees, but those fees are still allowable expenses on NSF awards.
- b) **Data and Research Product Sharing:** Data and research products must be made publicly available as per the Data Management and Sharing Plan of the associated award (See [Guide 5](#)). Scientific datasets underlying peer-reviewed scholarly publications resulting from federally funded research must be made publicly available by the time of publication. NSF program-specific policies may provide additional guidance for data and research product sharing, including data, samples, physical collections, software curriculum materials, or other material produced during the project.
- c) **Persistent Identifier:** AAMs and datasets must be reported in PAR with a persistent identifier (e.g. a digital object identifier, or DOI). For published products, the persistent identifier should reference the published version, or version of record (VOR). For datasets, the persistent identifier should reference the repository where the dataset can be accessed.

- d) **Metadata:** AAMs and datasets should possess a minimum set of descriptive metadata elements as specified in the annual project reporting requirements. These metadata elements are normally supplied automatically in association with recording the persistent identifier; if a persistent identifier (e.g., DOI) is not yet available at the time of submission of the annual project report, metadata must be manually entered.
- e) **For AAMs arising from NSF awards:** NSF reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the work for federal purposes and to authorize others to do so. This includes the right to require recipients and subrecipients to make such works available through the NSF PAR. Deposits of AAMs in PAR satisfy the requirement to ensure that published products are accessible publicly.

3. Special Provisions

At the request of the prospective recipient or on recommendation from NSF staff, the cognizant NSF Grants Officer, with the concurrence of the cognizant NSF Program Director, may negotiate special copyright provisions when the Grants Officer determines that exceptional circumstances require restricting or eliminating a recipient's control of NSF-supported copyrighted materials and of income earned from it. Every special copyright or patent provision will allow the recipient, after copyrighted material has been created, to request that it be allowed to retain principal rights to that material, unless doing so would be inconsistent with an obligation imposed on NSF by statute, international agreement, or pact with other participants in, or supporters of, the research.

4. Non-Research Awards

Awards not primarily intended to support scientific or engineering research, like travel, conferences, or fellowships, are not required to contain a copyright provision. NSF claims no rights to copyrighted material made by fellows or trainees.

Authorities

The following authorities govern this guide:

- National Science Foundation Act of 1950
- Bayh-Dole Act of 1980 (35 USC 200 et seq.)
- 37 CFR 401 (guidance regulations under Bayh-Dole Act)
- 45 CFR 650 (NSF's Bayh-Dole implementing regulations)
- Executive Order 12591 - Facilitating Access to Science and Technology
- Executive Order 12618 - Uniform Treatment of Federally Funded Inventions

Guide 22: International Activities

Version 27-1 Effective [Day Month Year]

This guide establishes the requirements and responsibilities for U.S. National Science Foundation recipients conducting research and travel outside the United States, emphasizing compliance with foreign laws, permits, and international coordination. It explains recipient responsibility for:

- Securing necessary approvals.
- Adhering to host-country regulations.
- Meeting travel requirements.

Overall, it ensures that foreign activities are conducted lawfully, safely, and in alignment with U.S. and international requirements while maintaining proper documentation and oversight.

Principal Investigators (PIs), Authorized Organization Representatives (AORs) and Sponsored Project Offices (SPOs) should use this guide to understand how to comply with NSF and federal policies governing research and travel outside the U.S.

A. Research Activities Outside the United States

This section establishes that recipients are responsible for ensuring all research activities conducted outside the United States are properly coordinated with relevant authorities and comply with applicable U.S. and foreign laws. It requires recipients to obtain all necessary permits, licenses, and approvals before beginning work.

Policies

1. International Coordination

Recipients should ensure that activities carried on outside the U.S. are coordinated as necessary with appropriate U.S. and foreign government authorities. NSF does not assume responsibility for recipient compliance with the laws and regulations of the country in which the work is to be conducted.

2. Licenses and Permits

Recipients must obtain any required licenses and permits and comply with the laws of host countries for foreign activities. NSF does not assume responsibility for foreign legal compliance.

B. Travel

This section establishes the requirements for NSF-funded international travel. The section reinforces that recipients — not NSF — are accountable for ensuring travel complies with applicable laws and requirements.

Policies

1. U.S. Flag Air Carriers

Recipients must use U.S.-flag air carriers for travel funded by NSF when service is available (Fly America Act), subject to specific exceptions. Recipients should review the [U.S. General Service Administration's regulation](#) for more information.

2. Foreign Flag Carrier Exceptions

A foreign-flag air carrier may be used if the transportation is provided under an air transportation agreement between the U.S. and a foreign government that the U.S. Department of Transportation has determined meets the requirements of the Fly America Act. Information on "Open Skies" agreements in which the U.S. has entered is available on the [GSA website](#). Recipients should review the [U.S. General Service Administration's regulation](#) for more information.

3. Passports and Visas

NSF assumes no responsibility for securing passports or visas required by any person because of participation in an NSF-supported project. It should be noted that some countries that normally do not require visas for tourists do require special visas for scientists and engineers engaged in research or studies.

Authorities

The following authorities govern this guide:

- National Science Foundation Act of 1950
- Fly America Act
- 2 CFR 200

Guide 23: Publication of Award Materials and Handling of Information

Version 27-1 Effective [Day Month Year]

This guide describes U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) requirements for how research results and data are shared, published, and managed under an award. It explains:

- That recipients are required to properly acknowledge NSF support in all outputs.
- Responsibilities for publishing.
- Requirements for collecting, managing, and releasing information under an NSF award.

Principal Investigators (PIs), Authorized Organization Representatives (AORs) and Sponsored Project Offices (SPOs) should use this guide to understand how to properly acknowledge NSF support in award-related outputs; how to collect, manage, and release information under an NSF award; and how NSF handles Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests and other transparency requirements.

A. Publication of Award Materials

This section outlines requirements for publishing and disseminating NSF-funded research.

Policies

1. General

NSF advocates and encourages open scientific and engineering communication. NSF expects significant findings from research it supports to be promptly submitted for publication, with authorship that accurately reflects the contributions of those involved. Authorship and submission for publication of significant research findings are the responsibility of the investigators, consistent with such policies and procedures as the recipient may prescribe.

2. NSF Recognition

The recipient is responsible for ensuring that an acknowledgment of NSF support is made and that the acknowledgment aligns with the [NSF Policy on Brand Standards](#). This applies to publication of any material based on or developed under an NSF project by including the NSF logo along with the following language:

"This material is based upon work supported by the U.S. National Science Foundation under Award No. (NSF award number)."

NSF support also must be orally acknowledged during all news media interviews, including popular media such as radio, television, and news magazines.

3. Instrumentation Branding

Instrumentation/equipment acquired or developed under an NSF award must be marked with the NSF logo by the recipient if the purchase price is \$150,000 or above, in accordance with the guidance specified in the [NSF Policy on Brand Standards](#).

4. Large Dollar Awards

Awards of \$1 million or more must follow additional guidelines found in the [NSF Policy on Brand Standards](#) related to logo use and naming conventions, signage, websites, social media, and filming and advertising.

5. Disclaimer

The recipient is responsible for ensuring that every publication of material (including webpages) based on or developed under an NSF award, except scientific articles or papers appearing in scientific, technical, or professional journals, contains the following disclaimer:

"Any opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. National Science Foundation."

Procedures

1. How to Acknowledge NSF Support

- a) Acknowledge NSF support in all publications, webpages, media, or equipment using the required award citation. Refer to the [NSF Policy on Brand Standards](#) for details.
- b) Include the following disclaimer in non-journal publications:

"Any opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. National Science Foundation."

B. Handling of Information

This section establishes requirements for collecting, managing, and releasing information under an NSF award. It also outlines rules for public communications, including press releases and handling Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, as well as transparency requirements. The procedures guide recipients on obtaining approvals and coordinating with NSF when collecting or sharing information.

Policies

1. Information Collection

Under the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regulations at 5 CFR 1320.3, if a recipient obtains information from 10 or more persons by means of identical questions, it is considered "sponsored" by NSF only if:

- a) The recipient is collecting information at the specific request of NSF; or
- b) The terms of the award require that NSF specifically approve the collection or its procedures.

If either of these conditions are met, clearance from OMB is generally required, and recipients should obtain the necessary control number from the cognizant NSF Program Director.

2. Representation

Data collection activities are the responsibility of recipients, and NSF support of a project does not constitute NSF approval of the survey design, questionnaire content or data collection procedures. Recipients must not represent that data collection is for or in association with NSF or the federal government unless the collection is "sponsored" by NSF as defined in paragraph B.1 above. However, this requirement does not preclude mention of NSF support of the project in response to an inquiry or acknowledgment of such support in any publication of this data.

3. Press Releases

Awards for projects which appear to be of special interest to the public may be made the subject of an NSF or joint NSF/recipient press release to the news media.

4. Statutory Disclosure of Information

Certain laws may require NSF to release to the public information, correspondence, and documents received by NSF from recipients, unless certain limited exceptions apply. These include:

- a) FOIA Requests: NSF will provide agency records, with certain exceptions, if the request:
 - Is in writing and clearly identified as a FOIA request.
 - Includes the requester's name.
 - Includes a means of contact, such as an email address or mailing address.
 - Describes the records sought with sufficient specificity to permit identification.

The requester also must agree to pay fees that are chargeable under the NSF regulations. NSF FOIA regulations are found at [45 CFR 612](#).

- b) Sunshine Act: All meetings of the National Science Board (NSB) must be open to public observation unless the subject falls within one of ten exemptions. NSF's Sunshine Act regulations are found at [45 CFR 614](#).

5. Release of Project Reports

To the extent permitted by law, NSF will honor requests from recipients that release of Annual and Final Annual Project Reports be delayed to permit orderly dissemination of significant findings through refereed channels. Unless such a request is received, or material is marked as proprietary, such reports may be made available to others without notice to the recipient. Information that might invade personal privacy, if disclosed, will be redacted before release.

Authorities

The following authorities govern this guide:

- Freedom of Information Act of 1996, as amended
- Government in the Sunshine Act of 1976
- Availability of Records and Information
- Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, as amended
- 5 CFR 1320, Controlling Paperwork Burdens on the Public

Guide 24: Other Administrative and Operational Provisions

Version 27-1 Effective [Day Month Year]

This guide establishes requirements that accompany acceptance of federal financial assistance, including U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) awards. It explains compliance expectations (including when to notify NSF or halt work) related to:

- Environmental impacts.
- Historic preservation.
- National security.

Principal Investigators (PIs), Authorized Organization Representatives (AORs) and Sponsored Project Offices (SPOs) should use this guide to understand how to prepare for projects that have environmental and historic property considerations and how to notify NSF if project results involve potentially classifiable information.

A. Administrative and Operational Provisions

This section outlines requirements tied to acceptance of an NSF award. It provides a reminder of a recipient's responsibilities related to environmental impacts, wage requirements, historic properties, and national security concerns. The procedures provide practical steps for managing property and responding to environmental or historic preservation issues.

Policies

1. Environmental Considerations

Prior to making an award, NSF considers the anticipated environmental impacts associated with the activities described in the proposal. The assessment of environmental impacts is based, in part, on information provided by the organization.

If, while performing the work required by the award, the recipient learns of any potential or actual unanticipated environmental impacts, the recipient shall immediately notify NSF of such impacts. The recipient shall also cease all work anticipated to cause or that is causing such unanticipated environmental impacts until NSF has had a reasonable opportunity to assess the situation, carry out any required environmental compliance activities, and provide further direction to the recipient.

Other post-award environmental obligations include meeting any requirements to implement mitigation measures and/or meet reporting requirements identified during the environmental review process. These requirements may be the responsibility of the recipient and/or NSF.

2. Historic Properties

If award activities affect historic properties, the recipient must coordinate with NSF and applicable state or local historic preservation officers.

3. National Security

NSF awards are for unclassified, publicly releasable research. The recipient will not be granted access to classified information. NSF does not expect that the results of the research project will involve classified information. Recipients must notify the cognizant NSF Program Director

promptly if research results involve potentially classifiable information that warrants government restrictions on the dissemination of the result.

4. Davis-Bacon Act

The Davis-Bacon and Related Acts apply to contractors and subcontractors performing on federally funded or assisted contracts in excess of \$2,000 for the construction, alteration, or repair (including painting and decorating) of public buildings or public works. Davis-Bacon and Related Acts contractors and subcontractors must pay their laborers and mechanics employed under the contract no less than the locally prevailing wages and fringe benefits for corresponding work on similar projects in the area.

5. Permits

For awards that include activities requiring permits from appropriate federal, state, or local government authorities, the recipient should obtain any required permits prior to undertaking the proposed activities.

6. Liabilities

NSF cannot assume any liability for accidents, bodily injury, illness, breach of contract, any other damages or loss, or any claims arising out of any activities undertaken pursuant to the award, whether with respect to persons or property of the recipient or third parties.

7. Metric Usage

Recipients are expected to use metric measurements in NSF-supported activities when appropriate or specified by program requirements.

Procedures

1. How to Prepare for Projects That Have Environmental and Historic Property Considerations

- a) If recipients discover unanticipated environmental impacts of NSF-funded activities, recipients must stop the affected work and notify NSF immediately.
- b) Cooperate with the instructions NSF provides regarding environmental review and mitigation.
- c) If activities affect historic properties, coordinate with NSF and state/local historic preservation officers as required.

Authorities

The following authorities govern this guide:

- Davis-Bacon Act of 1931
- National Historic Preservation Act of 1966
- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
- The Metric Conversion Act of 1975
- Executive Order 12770 - Metric Usage in Federal Government Programs

Guide 25: Suspensions, Terminations, and Research Misconduct

Version 27-1 Effective [Month Day, Year]

This guide explains the U.S. National Science Foundation's (NSF) process for suspending or terminating awards. It covers:

- How award recipients can request a review of those decisions.
- The responsibilities of both NSF and recipients in handling research misconduct.
- Key definitions.
- The process for suspension and termination.
- How disputes are resolved.
- The roles, timelines, and reporting requirements involved.

Principal Investigators (PIs), Authorized Organization Representatives (AORs) and Sponsored Project Offices (SPOs) should use this guide to understand situations where NSF may pause or end an award and how to respond to an NSF notice or suspension or termination.

A. Suspensions and Terminations

This section explains when NSF may pause (suspend) or end (terminate) an award and how that process works. It includes common reasons such as noncompliance with agency award terms and conditions, changes in priorities, or research misconduct, and describes the steps NSF typically follows to correct the issues. It also outlines recipient financial responsibilities after award termination and how recipients can request a review of a suspension or termination decision.

Terms and Definitions

1. Suspension

An action by NSF to stop all award efforts funded by NSF while performance or administrative issues are being addressed.

2. Termination

See [2 CFR 200.201](#).

Policies

1. Suspension or Termination by NSF

NSF may suspend or terminate an award for cause in whole or in part, pursuant to

- a) [2 CFR 200.339](#) and [2 CFR 200.340](#) or
- b) NSF's Regulation on Research Misconduct ([45 CFR 689](#)).

2. Costs Incurred After Suspension or Termination

Costs incurred while an award is suspended or after an award is terminated are generally not allowed, unless they cannot be avoided or were specifically approved by the NSF Grants Officer.

3. Summary of Progress

Within 30 days of the date of termination, recipients must submit a progress summary and detailed accounting of costs.

4. Final Payments

Final allowable costs under a termination settlement shall be in accordance with the terms of the award and the governing cost principles, giving due consideration to the progress under the award. Total payments under a terminated award shall not exceed the award amount or the NSF pro rata share when cost sharing was anticipated, whichever is less.

5. Settlement Reviews

Terminations and/or the final settlement amount may be reviewed through the dispute process. See [Guide 26](#) for more information.

6. Reporting

NSF will report award terminations to the federal systems, where appropriate, but only after the recipient has had an opportunity to use review procedures.

Procedures

1. How NSF Issues an Award Suspension or Termination

- a) In most instances, NSF will notify the recipient in writing (notice of non-compliance) if it is not in compliance with terms and conditions of the award and allow the recipient time to correct the issue. NSF, however, may immediately suspend or terminate an award when NSF believes such action is necessary to protect the interests of the government.
- b) The notice of non-compliance will provide a timeline for the recipient to respond, usually within 30 days, by taking corrective actions or submitting a corrective action plan to the cognizant NSF Program Director.
- c) If no satisfactory response is received within the time indicated in the notice, NSF may issue a notice of suspension, in whole or in part, that immediately suspends performance and funding under the award. The notice will be sent to the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) with a copy to the PI. NSF copies go to the NSF Office of the Chief Financial Officer and the cognizant Program Director. The notice will state the suspension terms and effective date.
- d) Suspension usually lasts up to 60 days to complete corrective action, but NSF has discretion to impose a shorter or longer timeframe. If the issue is not corrected to NSF's satisfaction, NSF may terminate the award.
- e) In the event that NSF moves to immediately suspend or terminate an award to protect government interests, then a notice of non-compliance and corrective action plan will not be issued under (a) and (b), above.
- f) Cases involving research misconduct follow separate procedures set forth at [45 CFR 689](#), NSF Research Misconduct Regulation.

2. How to Initiate Termination by Mutual Agreement

- a) If the recipient wishes to terminate the project, the AOR should notify the NSF Grants Officer in writing and send a copy to the cognizant NSF Program Director.

- b) If NSF wishes to terminate the project, the NSF Grants Officer will notify the recipient's AOR in writing and send copies to the PI and the cognizant NSF Program Director.
- c) Within 30 days after receipt of request from either party for termination by mutual agreement, the other party will provide an appropriate written response. In the event of disagreement between the parties, the NSF Grants Officer will make a final decision, subject to the review procedures prescribed in Guide 26. Following termination, award closeout procedures will be initiated.

Reminder: NSF may act immediately to suspend or terminate if needed to protect government interests.

B. Research Misconduct

Terms and Definitions

1. Research Misconduct

Research misconduct means fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing or performing research funded by NSF, reviewing research proposals submitted to NSF, or in reporting research results funded by NSF. NSF takes research misconduct seriously and will take appropriate action against individuals or institutions upon a finding that research misconduct has occurred.

Policies

1. General

NSF has developed its research misconduct regulation, which contains additional information at [45 CFR 689](#).

C. Confidentiality, Privacy, and Records Relevant to Suspensions, Terminations, Research Misconduct, and Disputes

This section explains how NSF and recipients must protect sensitive information in the context of suspensions, terminations, research misconduct, or dispute allegations and investigations. It requires safeguarding personal and proprietary data, limiting disclosure to what is legally required, and maintaining accurate, accessible records for oversight, audits, and transparency.

Policies

1. Confidential Handling

NSF and recipients will restrict distribution of allegation related information to those with a legitimate need to know and consistent with legal obligations.

2. Record Retention

Organizations must retain records of allegations, inquiries, investigations, and outcomes for the period required by 2 CFR 200 and NSF guidance and provide records to NSF and the NSF Office of Inspector General (OIG) upon request.

3. Reporting

Complainants, respondents, institutional officials, and NSF will be notified at key milestones consistent with law and policy (receipt of allegation, initiation of inquiry/investigation, findings, and final NSF action). Information is limited to those who need access. Disclosures outside permitted channels require institutional or NSF authorization or are made as legally required. Institutions must provide interim and final reports to NSF or OIG as required and respond to follow-up requests.

Authorities

The following authorities govern this guide:

- National Science Foundation Act of 1950
- False Claims Act of 1863
- NSF Research Misconduct Regulation (45 CFR 689)
- 2 CFR 200

Guide 26: Appeals

Version 27-1 Effective [Month Day, Year]

This guide explains:

- Procedures and timelines for requesting an independent U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) review when an organization disagrees with certain proposal or award management decisions.
- Which decisions are not eligible for appeal.
- Policies and procedures for appealing decisions on proposal financial or administrative declines and post-award disputes resulting from suspensions or terminations.

Principal Investigators (PIs), Authorized Organization Representatives (AORs) and Sponsored Project Offices (SPOs) should use this guide to understand how to appeal a financial or administrative decline of an NSF proposal or award, and which decisions are eligible for appeal.

A. Disputes for Financial or Administrative Proposal Declines

This section explains the process for appealing NSF decisions to decline proposals for financial or administrative reasons by the cognizant NSF Grants Officer. It allows proposers to first discuss the decision with the Grants Officer and, if unresolved, submit a formal written appeal for independent review, which results in a final agency decision.

Policies

1. Opportunity to Discuss

Proposers declined for financial or administrative reasons may first discuss the decision with the cognizant NSF Grants Officer. NSF Grants Officers will take reasonable steps to explain the decision.

2. Request for Higher-Level Review

If unresolved, the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) may submit a written request for review to the next higher-level NSF official, who is either the cognizant grants branch chief or Office of Award Management Deputy Office Head, within 30 days of the declination notice. The request should state the basis for disagreement and include supporting facts and documents that were available at the time of the decision. The decision by the next higher-level official is final.

Procedures

1. How to Appeal a Financial or Administrative Declination

- a) A proposer who disagrees with NSF's decision to decline award may first contact the cognizant NSF Grants Officer.
- b) If unsatisfied with the reason provided by cognizant NSF Grants Officer, AORs have 30 days from the declination notice to submit a request at oamappeals@nsf.gov for review by the next higher-level official above the individual who made the decision to decline the proposal. The request should explain why the decision was incorrect and include supporting documentation available at the time the decision was made.

- c) The higher-level official will review or designate one or more individuals to review the matter. In no case will the review be undertaken by any individual involved with the decline decision.
- d) The reviewing official(s) will request additional information from the proposer, but only information that would have been available at the time the decision to decline was made will be considered. Request information includes:
 - A statement of the organization's position.
 - Facts for disputing the decision.
 - Any relevant supporting documentation.
- e) The higher-level official will communicate the decision in writing to the proposer normally within 30 days of receipt of the report, unless otherwise specified by NSF. This decision is final.

B. Post-Award Disputes

This section explains how recipients can request review of NSF post-award decisions. It applies to cost disallowances, award suspensions, terminations, and settlement amounts, ensures an independent review and results in a final agency decision.

Policies

1. Resolution

NSF will attempt to informally resolve disputes regarding the administration of an NSF award. NSF, however, provides resolution processes concerning disputes that may arise over NSF Grants Officer post-award decisions.

2. Limitations

The dispute review process does not apply to imposition of specific conditions pursuant to [2 CFR 200.208](#), decisions regarding NSF-prior approval, decisions regarding requests for revision of program plans or budgets, or decisions not to award a continuing grant or supplement.

Procedures

1. How to Request Review of a Post-Award Decision

- a) Requests for review of a post-award decision must be made in writing by emailing oamappeals@nsf.gov.
- b) Requests for review must be received no later than 30 calendar days after having been made aware of the decision at issue. NSF does not grant extensions.
- c) Recipients must clearly document the disagreement and include supporting facts and documents. Include any new information, or point out errors in facts, policy, or procedure relied upon in the original decision.
- d) The NSF appeals official will review or appoint one or more staff persons to review. These individuals will not include NSF employees that were involved in the disputed decision or in program/financial oversight of the award.

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- e) For appeals on terminations or termination settlement costs, reviewer(s) will normally complete a report within 90 days. The NSF Chief Science Officer (or designee) issues the agency's final, unappealable written decision, normally within 15 days after receiving the report.
- f) For appeals related to decisions other than terminations or termination settlement costs, reviewer(s) will normally complete a report within 30 days. The Office of Award Management Deputy Office Head will issue the agency's final, unappealable written decision, normally within 15 days after receiving the report.

Authorities

The following authorities govern this guide:

- National Science Foundation Act of 1950
- False Claims Act of 1863
- 2 CFR 200
- NSF Research Misconduct Regulation (45 CFR 689)
- Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) Policy on Research Misconduct