NSF Toolkit

Contents

General Formatting

Pagination

NSF is phasing out the use of Fastlane as a proposal submission method. For now, if submitting via Fastlane, please paginate proposal documents as Fastlane does not do this automatically. If submitting via Research.gov, NSF asks proposers not to paginate attachments (or include any text in the margins) as the system will add page numbers automatically.

Font

Use one of the following NSF-approved fonts: Arial, Courier New, or Palatino Linotype at a font size of 10 or larger. Times New Roman or Computer Modern family of fonts at a font size of 11 or larger.

A font size of less than 10 points may be used for mathematical formulas or equations, figures, tables, or diagram captions and when using a Symbol font to insert Greek letters or special characters. Other fonts not specified above, such as Cambria Math, may be used for mathematical formulas, equations, or when inserting Greek letters or special characters. PIs are cautioned, however, that the text must still be readable.

Spacing

No more than six lines within a vertical one-inch space

Margins

At least 1-inch margins on all sides

Paper Size

No larger than 8 ½ x 11

Registrations

NSF ID

Investigators preparing proposals for submission to NSF should register for an NSF ID. Investigators with existing IDs from previous institutions should contact the Help Desk at (800) 673-6188 instead of creating a new ID.

Core Application Components

Project Summary

One page maximum summary of the proposed project consisting of three core sections: 1) Overview; 2) Statement on Intellectual Merit; 3) Statement on Broader Impacts.

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

Pay special attention to the solicitation for any deviation from these standard expectations. Some solicitations ask for the inclusion of a list of keywords, for example. Care should be taken to make this document understandable to broad audience.

Project Description

Typically limited to 15 in length – review solicitation details for any deviation from this standard length.

The Project Description should provide a clear statement of the work to be undertaken and 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, as well as to work in progress by the PI under other support.

The project description must contain a section within the narrative labeled "Broader Impacts". This section should provide a discussion of the broader impacts of the proposed activities. Broader impacts may be accomplished through the research itself, through the activities that are directly related to specific research projects, or through activities that are supported by, but are complementary to the project.

URLs must not be used in the project description.

If any PI or co-PI has received NSF support within the past five years information is required in a separate section titled "**Results from Prior NSF Support**", including: the NSF award number, amount and period of support; the title of the project; summary of the results described under separate headings of "Intellectual Merit" and "Broader Impacts"; a listing of publications resulting from the award (if none, state "No publications were produced under this award"; evidence of research products; 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.

References Cited

No established page limit. Each reference must include the names of **all authors** (in the same sequence in which they appear in the publication), the article and journal title, book title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication. Do not use et al. convention.

Biographical Sketches

This section of the proposal is used to assess how well qualified the individual, team, or organization is to conduct the proposed activities.

The biosketch is limited to three pages and must use an NSF-approved format – either SciENcv or NSF's fillable PDF.

Current & Pending Forms

This section of the proposal is used to assess the capacity of the individual to carry out the research as proposed, as well as to help assess any potential overlap/duplication with the project being proposed.

This information should be submitted using an NSF-approved format.

Budget & Budget Justification

Each proposal must contain a budget for each year of support requested broken out by category. The budget justification must be no more than five pages per proposal. The amounts for each budget line item requested must be documented and justified in the budget justification as specified below.

As a general policy, NSF limits the salary compensation requested in the proposal budget for senior personnel to no more than two months of their regular salary in any one year.

Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources

The purpose of this section is to assess the adequacy of resources available to carry out the proposed project. Describe only internal and external resources available that are directly applicable to the project.

Data Management Plan

Maximum two-page attachment detailing plans for data management and sharing of research products. Applicants should describe how the proposal will conform to NSF policy on the dissemination and sharing of results.

Collaborators & Other Affiliations

Everyone identified as senior personnel on the proposed project must complete COA information using NSF's COA template (https://nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/coa.jsp). Instructions are provided on the form. Aside from filling in the required content, the form should not otherwise be altered to avoid complications in processing and review. Information provided via this form is used to manage reviewer selection.

Conditionally required and optional attachments

Authorization to deviate from NSF proposal preparation requirements

In the rare instance that a program officer has given express permission to deviate from the standard proposal preparation requirements, details of this permission should be uploaded as an attachment.

List of 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 designate persons they would prefer not to review the proposal.

Postdoctoral Research Mentoring Plan

Each proposal that requests funding to support postdoctoral researchers must upload a mentoring plan describing the mentoring activities that will be provided for postdocs.

Letters of Collaboration

Documentation of collaborative arrangements of significance to the proposal substantiating the agreement to participate as described in the proposal. This should be limited to the following format:

"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."

Letters of support deviating from this format should not be included unless specifically allowed under the solicitation.

Additional Guidance

For full details of application requirements and/or a more in depth description of any section outlined above, please review the full forms instructions: Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg22_1/index.jsp).

Checklist

Core Required Attachments

- o Collaborators and Other Affiliations submitted for all senior personnel (use NSF template)
- o Project summary (1 page)
- o Project description (15 pages or limit specified in solicitation)
    - o Contains a broader impacts section
    - o Lists results from prior NSF support for PI/co-PI(s)
- o References
- o Biosketches for everyone identified as senior personnel (3 pages each – use NSF-approved format)
- o Budget
- o Budget justification (5 pages)
- o Current and Pending Support for everyone identified as senior personnel (use NSF-approved format)
- o Facilities, equipment and other resources
- o Data management plan (2 pages)

Optional/Conditionally Required Attachments

- o Authorization to deviate from PAPPG (conditionally required)
- o List of suggested reviewers (optional)
- o Postdoctoral mentoring plan (if budgeting for a postdoc – 1 page)
- o Letters of collaboration

Timeline

| 2+ Months to Deadline

Prepare proposal | 5 Days to Deadline: Budget and non-technical attachments due to RSP. Submit FP for review | 2 Days to Deadline: Full Proposal Due to RSP. PI grants permission to submit. | 1 Day to Deadline: Proposal Submitted | 6-8 Months post submission: Funding decision received |