

Navigating the National Science Foundation (NSF) Proposal Submission Process Part 3

Fran Stephens, University of Oklahoma

fran@ou.edu

11/18/2021

NSF Proposal Submission....

- Part 1: Background Information
 - NSF Website – ‘who we are, what we do, how we work’
 - General information
 - Submission Portals
 - Take-a-Way
- Part 2: Proposal Contents
 - Format Guidance
 - Common Proposal Requirements and Issues-Tab by Tab
 - Take-a-Way
- Part 3: After Submission
 - Other Actions
 - Review
 - Special Notes and Take-a-Way

NSF Proposal Submissions....

Part 3: After Submission

- Other Actions (Updates, Revisions, Withdrawals)
- Review
- Special Notes and Take-a-Way

NSF Proposal Submissions....

- **Proposal Updates, Revisions, and Withdrawals**

- Updates

- May be done without permission prior to deadline (usually auto-accepted)
- Cannot be done in Grants.gov.
- After deadline usually allowed by Program Officer(PO) prior to proposal being pulled for review but you may need permission from PO before it can be initiated (do as soon as possible)
- Minor corrections such as adding or replacing a supporting document; replacing entire project description without good reason might be seen as trying to circumvent the deadline
- Must be initiated by the PI then access given to SRO/ARO (PI must make a change before it will allow SRO access)
- Actual submission by SRO/ARO in ORS
- May or may not be accepted by the Program Officer
- No budget or budget justification change can be done in Update; you must use Revision function

NSF Proposal Submissions....

- **Proposal Updates, Revisions, and Withdrawals**
 - Revision
 - Usually done at request of PO (there are limitations on what they should request revisions to)
 - Cannot be done in Grants.gov.
 - Normally for budget changes in consideration of a possible award action (non budget changes are usually via Update function)
 - Must be initiated by the PI then access given to SRO/ARO (PI must make a change before it will allow SRO/ARO access)
 - Actual submission done by SRO/ARO in ORS
 - Scope of change or amount of revision may require new internal permission to submit (i.e.. re-routing)
 - If your budget is substantially cut, you need to consider modifying the work being done or how you are meeting the 'gap' in funding otherwise it looks like you initially asked for more money than what was needed.

NSF Proposal Submissions....

- **Proposal Updates, Revisions, and Withdrawals**
 - Withdrawals
 - May be done at request of PI, PO, or SRO/AOR
 - SRO/AOR normally does action, but NSF can
 - Proposal Duplicate Withdrawal is an NSF action that prevents submission of a new proposal if a duplicate (same organization, PI, or title) has been submitted within last two weeks (it will give option to withdraw old and proceed, change new and proceed, or stop the new submission).
 - Copy before withdrawal if resubmitting (usually you lose all data)
 - Collaborative proposal -- withdrawal of any partner will 'kill' the collaborative entry (PI may be asked to do an Update instead or to contact the PO)

NSF Proposal Submissions....

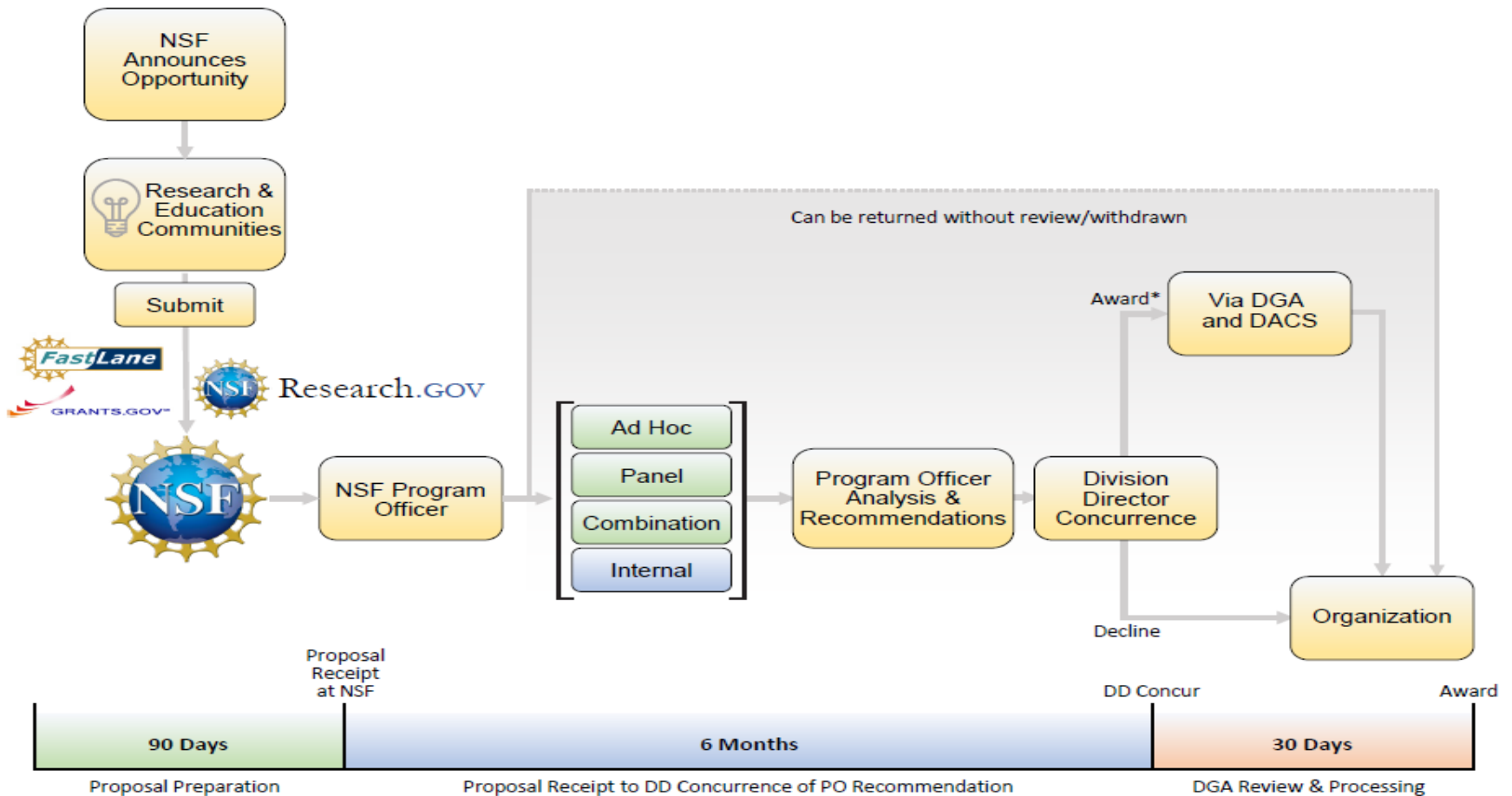
Special Notes – Process Overview



NSF Proposal Submissions....

Special Notes – Process Overview with Time Line

Exhibit III-1: NSF Proposal & Award Process & Timeline



* In accordance with Chapter III.F, the Division of Grants and Agreements (DGA) or the Division of Acquisition and Cooperative Support (DACs) may decline a proposal recommended for award after conducting a review of business, financial and policy implications.

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Review Process

- PO builds review panels (this may start prior to proposal deadline); panels are reviewed for COI with submissions
- Nearly every proposal is evaluated by a minimum of three independent reviewers consisting of scientists, engineers and educators who do not work at NSF or for the institution that employs the proposing researchers.
- PO receives evaluations, analyzes them, and makes 'award' or 'decline' recommendations.
- Recommendations are sent to the NSF division director; final decision is made at division level.
- Declined proposals receive an explanation for declination and copies of reviews considered in making the decision.

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Other Review related notes

- NSF provides a list of items related to why a proposal won't be accepted for review such as not responsive to solicitation, insufficient lead time before proposed work is to begin, non-compliance with PAPPG, etc. (page IV-2 in NSF 22-1)
- If your proposal was declined and you want more information than what was provided by the program officer in the initial contact, you may request additional information. You may also ask for reconsideration (however you may not provide any additional or modified information beyond the initial submitted items)
- You may resubmit a proposal after it has undergone substantial revision. Check with the division the proposal is being submitted to and the program officer as they may have additional guidance on resubmission. A resubmission, once submitted is treated as a new proposal and goes through the standard review process.
- Decision terminology was in Session 1 but is also available in the PAPPG.

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- Special Notes-General Comments-

- NSF usually puts an announcement out at least 90 days before deadline
- When a proposal is submitted to NSF it is normally reviewed within 6 months unless it is a particularly large or complex proposal
- Program officer may request additional information from the PI during or after the review of the proposal
- PO may notify the PI or organization of intent to award or request a revision with intent to award. **Note this is not notification of award and any spending is done at own risk.**
- Division of Grants and Awards (DGA) is given the PO intent to award list once all actions with PI/organization are resolved. DGA usually makes decision to award or decline within 30 days after PO recommendation.
- Special programs or event funding may be funded in a shorter cycle (for example RAPID)

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• **Special Notes (Collaborative-multi organization)**

• Collaborative

- May or may not be allowed in solicitation
- Funds are given to each organization involved
- One organization is the lead and the other organizations are linked to it; only the lead loads the Summary, Description, References; DM Plan, and Post Doc Mentoring Plan (even if the prime doesn't have the post doc)
- Both organizations load their own Budget, Bio sketches, Current and Pending, Collaborators and Other Affiliations, Facilities, and possibly supporting documents (depends on what they are)
- Lead does the linkage using the non lead's proposal number and pin
- Must be submitted near each other time-wise; all submitted by their deadline
- Title must match
- Once submitted both organizations can view all documents under print option
- Benefit is reduction in paperwork and IDC savings
- Negative in less control by primary PI for the project
- Lead and non lead submit separate annual and final reports

NSF Proposal Submissions....

- **Special Notes--Common Submission/Post Submission Issues**
 - Title incorrect (collaborative; special types of proposals may specify certain information that must be in title)
 - Incorrect file type uploaded (may not display or print after submission is done—**Check print entire proposal before submit if you can**)
 - Items (especially charts and tables) not legible after submission
 - Follow the guidelines; Make sure you are using a current copy (even a few months can be important to recheck for updates)
 - Do not assume past familiarity with program requirements will stand you in good stead (there have been many changes lately)

NSF Proposal Submissions....

- **Special Notes--Common Submission/Post Submission Issues**
 - Some solicitations require submission of files or ppt soon after the submission via email or hard copy—usually with special instructions on format and with a deadline
 - After submission you may be asked to provide supplemental information such as information on environmental impact. Sometimes this is done via Update function and sometimes via email to Program officer
 - **NEW** – NSF 22-1 incorporates new requirements from 2CFR; if all required reports are not submitted within one year after grant closeout NSF must report the grantee's material failure to comply with the terms and conditions to the OMB (Note, the OMB will post this to website accessible to all the federal agencies, Congress, and I believe the public.)

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- **Special Notes - Getting Help**

- When you have questions contact ORS first
- Contact the 'Point of Contact' given in the solicitation and if none is given reach out to the Division that issued the solicitation.
- There is an NSF Fastlane 'Help' document on-line
- Research.gov has some video help and a 'test version' that can be used for training (entries/files required are very similar to Fastlane).
- If you are having a submission issue you can't resolve, contact the Fastlane Help Desk as soon as possible (at OU you would normally go through ORS)
- Don't be afraid to contact the NSF Policy Office especially if the issue involves a possible conflict in normal procedures/instructions (at OU you would normally go through ORS).

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• **Take-a-Way**

- If possible, PI should ask to be on a review panel.
- Build a relationship with your program officers (some institutions help with this by travel to NSF – OU does on occasion).
- PO change at NSF on regular basis; ask questions if given strange instructions (they may be incorrect).
- Use proposal checklist (in PAPPG) – annotate it for your submission if specific instructions differ.
- Watch for notices of overdue reports (PI and all CoPI) after submission – they may prevent review.

Contacts for Help

- RIS@ou.edu will answer questions or put you in contact with who can answer your questions for anything pre-award/Office of Research Services (ORS) related.
- Submit an info sheet [Office of Research Services - Proposal Information Sheet | The University of Oklahoma \(ou.edu\)](#) and someone from ORS will contact you
- Center for Faculty Excellence (CFE) provides proposal assistance to include SciENCv training cfe@ou.edu
- If your question is related to post award then contact Research Financial Services (ReFS) refsinfo@ou.edu