



# PI Proposal Basics – Funding Sources, Types of Proposals, Decision Terminology, Restricted Submissions, Understanding Deadlines, Formatting

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# Understanding Proposals

- Part 1: Funding Sources
- Part 2: Types of Proposals
- Part 3: Decision Terminology
- Part 4: Restricted Submissions
- Part 5: Understanding Deadlines
- Part 6: Formatting
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# Funding Sources

- Who can you approach to fund your research or sponsored activities?
  - Internally (Department, College, VPRP)
    - Internal competitions
  - OU Foundation (Must be a gift; not having idc doesn't make it a gift)
  - Federal Agencies (Funding Opportunities, Grants.gov, SAM.gov, websites. ListServes)
  - State Agencies (RFPs, contacts, websites; idc)
  - Local Entities (contacts, websites; idc)
  - Commercial Entities (contacts, websites; COI; proprietary info; idc; agreements)
  - Non-Commercial/Non-Profit Entities (Foundation Directory, Candid, contact, website; clearance to proceed; ORS vs OU Fd, submission paperwork, idc)
  - Fellowships/Internships (Funding opportunities, Grants.gov, websites, contacts; Provost policy, self acceptance vs ORS)
- Diversify your funding portfolio
- Learn your sponsor(s) and build relationships
- Consider different research teams and team diversification

# Types of Proposals....

- Letters of Intent (LOI), Statement of Interest (SOI), Notice of Intent (NOI)
  - Usually very short (1-2 pages or a form)
  - Primary used to gauge interest and preliminary COI
  - Usually, can be submitted by PI but some require SRO/AOR submission
  - Some are required and some are requested
  - Some have hard deadlines

**At OU we consider ALL of the above to be a type of Preliminary Proposal and they do require submission of an information sheet prior to submission.**

# Types of Proposals

- Preliminary/Pre-proposal, Concept Paper, White Paper, One-Pager, Random Order of Magnitude (ROM)
  - Usually require less proposal documents to be uploaded than a regular proposal (but there are some very complicated ones too)
  - May be used to gauge interest or COI
  - May have a wide variety of special instructions
  - May have no budget, zero or place-holder budget entry, estimate, or detailed budget.
  - Some submissions by PI; some require submission by SRO/AOR
  - Usually have hard deadline
  - Increasing trend
  - Some are very complicated and may have detailed budgets and special forms

**At OU we consider ALL of the above to be a type of Preliminary Proposal and they do require submission of an information sheet prior to submission.**

# Types of Proposals

- Full Proposal
  - May or may not require some type of LOI or Preliminary Submission
  - Types of Contents:
    - Summary/Abstract
    - Project Description/Research Strategy/ Technical Narrative
    - References/Bibliography
    - Team Qualifications/Key Personnel/ Bio sketch, Current & Pending, Collaborators/COI
    - Facilities and/or Equipment (normally on-hand)
    - Budget, Budget Justification/Cost proposal
    - Other: Forms, Certifications, Representations, Letters

**At OU, we do require submission of an Information sheet and completion Of internal routing prior to submission of all Full proposal.**

# Types of Proposals

- Subcontracts
  - Preliminary
    - May require budget estimate or detailed budget
    - May require letters or special forms
    - At minimum require an email or letter acknowledging participation from the ORS equivalent office
  - Full Submission
    - Statement of work
    - Budget
    - Budget Justification
    - Official Letter of Intent or Subrecipient Form
    - Other items may be needed – special forms for the sponsor; personnel forms for the team members (bio, C&P, etc.), input on facilities, equipment, human subjects, animals, or other parts of the submission

# Types of Proposals

- Supplements/Supplementary
  - Tied to an award
  - May have timing deadlines associated with them (such as XX days to end of project)
  - Examples: REU, Administrative, Equipment, Conference
- Revisions/Update
  - Usually tied to an award consideration or processing of a proposal submission
  - May involve changes in submission components (usually budget is a revision)



# Types of Proposals

- Renewals
  - Tied to an award
  - May have deadlines associated (such as xx days prior to end of project)
  - May be competing or non-competing
- Resubmissions
  - Same submission being resubmitted (may be counted as a new submission by ORS)
  - Usually has an area to address response to reviewer comments or may require extra or special documents that were not required on the first submission
  - May be limited on how many can be done

# Types of Proposals

- Zero Budget Proposals
  - Captures quantified cost share being made with/to another organization
  - Should be done at submission (usually found at award or audit)
  - Encourage non-quantification but some sponsors won't allow
  - So far we have mainly seen these in relationship to HSC collaborations (example, HSC OCAST award with OU Norman PI time quantified)

# Types of Proposals

- Many organizations have Special proposals—
  - Usually deviate from normal full proposal instructions
  - May be a stand-alone submission or some may be done as part of a regular full proposal submission or may be tied to a prior submission
  - Some have specific budget and time limits (both when they can be submitted and length of budget period)
  - Examples: Equipment, travel, conference; NSF-- Rapid Response Research Proposal (RAPID); Early-concept Grants for Exploratory Research (EAGER); Facilitation Awards for Scientists and Engineers with Disabilities (FASED); NIH – Diversity Supplements, Administrative Supplements

# Decision/Submission Terminology

- Requested- usually indicates something is desired for PO needs, but they will still consider follow-on actions as being open for participation
- Recommended – same as requested but higher level of interest being expressed
- Required – usually indicates a need that will prevent follow-on actions being allowed if you have not provided
- Invite/not invite (Decision final)
- Encourage/Discouraged (Decision advisory)

# Decision Terminology

- Withdraw (pulled from review or further action; may be PI, OU, Sponsor initiated)
- Solicited/Unsolicited
  - Usually solicited is in response to some type of call or specific solicitation while unsolicited is a submission that is going in 'open' or not tied to a specific solicitation (may be submitted against general guidelines in some cases)
  - Note that NASA doesn't use the term this way. A solicited proposal for NASA is one in which a program officer has specifically requested the PI to submit a proposal and it is possible it may involve no prior contact between the PI and PI..
- Accepted, Approved
  - Varies by sponsor but usually just means something has been accepted in the system or meets minimum requirements for a certain stage of processing; Does not normally mean awarded or funded.
- Rejected
  - Most of the time this means no further action is allowed and the proposal is either not allowed to proceed further in processing or has been determined to be not desired or not selected; however, there are some sponsors that have a process to address rejections so ask your PDS if you are interested.

# Decision Terminology

- Notice of Award, Awarded, Funded, Just in Time, At or Below Pay line, Selected, Sponsor Award Announcements
  - These terms are usually related to POSSIBLE award action being in consideration but until an official notice comes to ORS and is ACCEPTED by the University do not assume that there really is an award action and DO NOT spend
  - Read anything you receive closely (there are some agencies that send 'Congratulations' emails that say you were selected but were below the pay line which means they liked the proposal but they don't have funds for you)
  - If you receive anything from a sponsor or if a sponsor does some public announcement, be sure to contact ORS

# Restricted Submissions

## Limited Competition (solicitation limits numbers of submissions)

- If an organizational limit is specified in the solicitation, it is normal for there to be some form of internal competition (and set deadlines for this competition)
  - If there is no notice of intent issued **do not** assume you may submit
  - At OU, internal competitions are conducted by ORS (ors\_limitedsubs@ou.edu)
- The solicitation may prescribe limits on how many proposals can be submitted by the organization, by the PI, or by the PI as a CoPI.
- Participation in subcontracts may also impact the organizational limits so be aware.
- If an organization (or PI) submits more than the allowed amount of proposals it can cause ALL proposals to be rejected or they may accept the first one(s) received, or they may ask ORS who is approved to represent OU (it is usually the PO's choice, what action to allow but sometimes the agency specifies in the solicitation).

# Deadline Terminology & Info

- Special Exceptions to deadlines (may be allowed but usually require permission before the deadline)
  - Natural Disasters and Technology Issues
  - Personal Issues
  - Courtesy (reviewer, etc.)
- No-deadline submissions (open window/rolling deadline) which means you can submit throughout the year – requires close communication with the program officer or you may miss a review panel.
- Collaborative submission by multiple organizations normally must be submitted by all organizations before deadline by each locality or entire proposal is rejected



# Deadline Terminology & Info

- Be aware of the solicitation's stated deadline date and time (watch for unusual times such as Eastern/Mountain)
- If no time is given or if the area of time is not specified, you ask ORS (they may know based on prior experience or can ask the sponsor)
- For many Federal sponsors if they give a date the time is 5 pm local
- Deadline – no acceptance after the deadline date; no exceptions except unusual circumstances (agency closed, natural/anthropogenic disaster, organization unable to submit)
  - If a deadline falls on a weekend or holiday see if the sponsor has a policy that it is due on Friday or extended to following business day
- Submission window – end date is the same as a deadline date
- Target – proposal is accepted after deadline, but it may miss a review panel or meeting (consequential funding impact) (recommend consider target same as Deadline)
- Some Divisions in NSF are going to no-deadline submissions (open window/rolling deadline) which means you can submit throughout the year – requires close communication with the program officer or you may miss a review panel.

# Formatting

- Guidance on Formatting is usually either in the specific solicitation or in the agency's General Guidance
  - Good rule of thumb:
    - Margins 1 inch all around
    - Common font like Times New Roman, Arial
    - Legible (usually not smaller than 10.5)
  - Some sponsors limit typefaces and fonts; Some sponsors provide measurements for formatting
  - Watch file names
  - Page numbers may or may not be allowed.
  - Don't circumvent page limits by stashing info
  - If the proposal is loaded in the application by section (and not one whole file) you may want to include section names in your document
  - Usually best to pdf before loading but watch instructions; there are times the solicitation may instruct a certain format be uploaded
    - Watch interactive pdfs (sometimes allowed most often not)
    - Check PDFs to make sure they don't creep over or have a blank page

**ORS has seen proposals rejected for using the wrong font or font size**

# Internal Considerations at OU

- Proposal process at OU starts with submission of the information (info) sheet.
- You are assigned a Proposal Services contact when the info sheet is processed in ORS.
- ORS assists with the internal routing in Cayuse.
- Internal routing completion is what gives the authorization for ORS or the PI to submit the proposal.
- Recommended timing =
  - Submit info sheet 4 weeks before deadline
  - Routing package 2 weeks before deadline
  - Final submission documents (and submission at 1 week prior to deadline

# Take-a-Way

- If you are a PI, decide your likely sponsor pool and research it (website, organization, review cycle, where/how announcements are made, contacts/program officer, submissions).
- Be aware of general instructions and timing for announcements.
- Project a timeline for your submission.
- Don't forget to do the info sheet early and talk to your Proposal Services contact on submission system and registration needs.
- Check for eligibility restrictions (limited competition protects you).
- Don't submit items to one sponsor that are formatted or organized to another sponsor's instructions.