

# Navigating the NSF Proposal Submission Process

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# Agenda

- NSF Overview
- Categories of Funding Opportunities
- ORS Routing Procedures
- NSF Proposal Components
- Submission Systems
- ORS Submission Policy
- Tips and Resources



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# NSF Overview

- The National Science Foundation is an independent federal agency created by Congress in 1950 to “promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare” by supporting research and education in all fields of science and engineering.
- NSF is the only federal agency whose mission includes support for all fields of fundamental science and engineering, except for medical sciences.
- Research with disease-related goals is normally not supported. This includes animal models of disease conditions and drug development and testing.



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# Categories of Funding Opportunities



**Program Descriptions**



**Program Announcements**



**Program Solicitations**



**Dear Colleague Letters (DCLs)**



**Unsolicited Proposals**



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## NSF Types of Submissions



**Letters of Intent  
(LOI)**



**Preliminary**



**Full Proposal**



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## Letters of Intent (LOI)

Some NSF program solicitations require or request submission of an LOI in advance of submission of a full proposal.

Their primary purpose is to help NSF program staff gauge the size and range of the competition, enabling earlier selection and better management of reviewers and panelists.

An LOI is not a binding document.

LOIs are submitted electronically to NSF. The guidelines indicate how to submit the LOI.

Usually have hard deadline.



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## Preliminary Proposals

Some NSF program solicitations require or request submission of a preliminary proposal in advance of submission of a full proposal.

Their primary purpose is to evaluate project alignment with program goals before a full proposal is submitted.

Invite/Not Invite or Encourage/Discourage Decisions: NSF may provide feedback on whether a full proposal should be submitted.

Require submission by Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) or a Sponsored Research Office (SRO)

Usually have hard deadline



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# Full Proposals

Outlines objectives and significance of research, qualifications of PI/team/organization, amount of funding, etc.

Some NSF programs require a Letter of Intent (LOI) or Pre-proposal before a full proposal can be submitted.

The PI prepares the proposal, but submission must be handled by the institution's SRO/AOR.

**Who may submit:** Organization is normally considered the submitter except on a few proposals that are paid to individuals like some fellowships.



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# Types of Proposals

Research Proposal

Equipment Proposal

Conference  
Proposal

Planning Proposal

Travel Proposal

Rapid Response  
Research (RAPID)  
Proposal

Early-concept  
Grants for  
Exploratory  
Research (EAGER)

Grant Opportunities  
for Academic  
Liaison with Industry  
(GOALI)

Ideas Lab Proposal

<https://www.nsf.gov/policies/pappg/24-1/ch-2-proposal-preparation#f-other-types-of-proposals-3d9>



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# Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide

- Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG) (NSF 24-1) | NSF - National Science Foundation
- <https://www.nsf.gov/policies/pappg/24-1>
- NSF program solicitations may modify NSF's standard proposal preparation guidelines; in these cases, follow the guidelines outlined in the solicitation.



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# OU Process for Submitting the NSF Proposal



Internal routing is required anytime a full proposal is being submitted through ORS. Preliminary proposals that required detailed budgets also require routing.



Internal routing ensures acknowledgment and certification of stakeholders within OU (e.g., PIs, Co-PIs, department chairs/college deans).



ORS has legal authority to submit the proposals through Research.gov after the internal routing is complete.



Internal routing should begin at least two weeks prior to sponsor deadline and four weeks prior if the proposal involves subcontracts.



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# Internal Routing Required Documents

## Documents required for all internal routing

- Draft Statement of Work (SoW), Summary, or Abstract
- Budget on OU Master Budget Template
- Budget Justification

## Additional required documents for some proposals

- If a subcontract is involved ORS will need a SoW, budget, budget justification, OU subrecipient form completed and signed by an authorized individual from the subcontract organization.



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# Reading a Funding Opportunity

- Title and NSF number
- Synopsis
- Updates and Announcements
- Program Events
- Awards already made through the program
- Program Guidelines
  - Number of Awards
  - Award Tracks
  - Limit on number of proposals
  - PI restrictions



[Home](#) / [Funding at NSF](#) / [Funding Search](#) / NSF National Innovation Corps Teams (NSF National I-Corps (TM) Teams) program

[Print](#)

## 1 NSF's implementation of the revised 2 CFR

NSF Financial Assistance awards (grants and cooperative agreements) made on or after October 1, 2024, will be subject to the applicable set of award conditions, dated October 1, 2024, available on...

+

## 1 Important information for proposers

All proposals must be submitted in accordance with the requirements specified in this funding opportunity and in the NSF [Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide \(PAPPG\)](#) that is in effect...

+

## 1 Updates to NSF Research Security Policies

On July 10, 2025, NSF issued an [Important Notice](#) providing updates to the agency's research security policies, including a research security training requirement, Malign Foreign Talent...

+

Supports NSF-funded researchers with entrepreneurial training, mentoring and funding to accelerate the translation of technologies from foundational research into emerging products, processes and services.

## Synopsis

The U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) continues to develop and nurture a national innovation

## Upcoming due dates

Full proposal accepted anytime  
Proposals accepted anytime.

## Program guidelines

Award information



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# Due dates and Table of Contents



## U.S. National Science Foundation

Directorate for Technology, Innovation and Partnerships

Directorate for Biological Sciences

Directorate for Computer and Information Science and Engineering

Directorate for Engineering

Directorate for Geosciences

Directorate for Mathematical and Physical Sciences

Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences

Directorate for STEM Education

Office of Integrative Activities

### Full Proposal Deadline(s) (due by 5 p.m. submitting organization's local time):

January 15, 2026

Tracks 2 and 5

March 12, 2026

Tracks 1, 3 and 4

## Table Of Contents

[Summary of Program Requirements](#)

[I. Introduction](#)

[II. Program Description](#)

[III. Award Information](#)

[IV. Eligibility Information](#)

[V. Proposal Preparation and Submission Instructions](#)

[A. Proposal Preparation Instructions](#)

[B. Budgetary Information](#)

[C. Due Dates](#)

[D. Research.gov/Grants.gov Requirements](#)

[VI. NSF Proposal Processing and Review Procedures](#)

[A. Merit Review Principles and Criteria](#)

[B. Review and Selection Process](#)

[VII. Award Administration Information](#)

[A. Notification of the Award](#)

[B. Award Conditions](#)

[C. Reporting Requirements](#)

[VIII. Agency Contacts](#)

[IX. Other Information](#)



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# NSF Proposal Components for Submission

**Cover Sheet**

**Project  
Summary**

**Project  
Description**

**References  
Cited**

**Biosketch**

**Synergistic  
Activities**

**Current &  
Pending**

**Budget and  
Justification**

**Additional  
Documentation**

**\*Please review solicitation carefully as some specific solicitations may require additional documents**



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# Biosketch

- Required for each senior/key person on the project.
- Includes:
  - Education/training
  - Appointments/jobs
  - Publications/Products
- Effective May 20, 2024 NSF requires submitted proposals to provide biosketches and current and pending funded programs in a specific format through SciENcv.
- There is no longer a page limitation to this section of the proposal.

<https://www.nsf.gov/policies/pappg/24-1/ch-2-proposal-preparation#ch2D2h>



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# Synergistic Activities

- A list of up to five examples demonstrating the broader impact of an individual's professional and scholarly activities, focusing on the creation, integration and transfer of knowledge.
- One-page limit.



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# Current and Pending

- Required for each senior/key person on the project. MUST use [SciENcv](#).
- List of current support including funded awards and pending proposals
- Ensures no scientific, budgetary, or commitment overlap in projects
- Time commitments must be reported in person-months, reflecting actual effort rather than salary or funding received.

<https://www.nsf.gov/policies/pappg/24-1/ch-2-proposal-preparation#ch2D2h>



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# Budget and Budget Justification

- Budget

- What funds do you need to pay for the work you propose to be completed?
- [ORS budget template](#) is required. The sponsor may require additional budget file formats.
- Voluntary cost share is prohibited

- Budget Justification

- A written document that describes in words how the funding will be used.
- Two months salary limit on all senior personnel.
- Justification has a five-page limit.



# Additional Documentation

- Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources
  - Data Management Plan
- Collaborators and Other Affiliations
  - Mentoring Plan
- Other documents are required by specific program solicitation



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# Collaborative Proposals

## LEAD INSTITUTION

- Cover Sheet
- Project Summary
- Table of Contents
- Project Description
- References Cited
- Biographical Sketches
- Current and Pending support
- Budget
- Facilities, Equipment and other Resources
- Data Management Plan
- Postdoctoral and GRA Mentoring Plan (if applicable)
- Collaborators & Other Affiliations Information

## NON-LEAD ORGANIZATION

- Cover Sheet
- Table of Contents
- Biographical Sketches
- Current and Pending support
- Budget
- Facilities, Equipment and other Resources
- Collaborators & Other Affiliations Information



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# NSF Proposal Submission System

## NSF proposal submission systems include:

- **Research.gov – ORS method of submission**
- **Grants.gov**
- To submit proposals to NSF and conduct other award-related activities using NSF systems, you must have an NSF ID.
- Co-PIs and all Key/Senior Personnel need an NSF ID and password – the PI will use that ID (or their email) to add the Co-PIs to the Cover Sheet (If they are not OU personnel, they must set their ID up and affiliate with their organization – not using OUs links)
- Requests to be affiliated to OU's organizational account can be done by contacting ORS at ris@ou.edu or visit <https://www.ou.edu/research-norman/research-services/proposal-submission>



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# Research.gov

## Proposal Initiation and Access

01

PI starts proposal in  
Research.gov

02

PI grants SRO/AOR  
access to the Office of  
Research Services

03

The PI will upload all the  
required documents in  
Research.gov and the  
Proposal Specialist will  
enter the budget and  
upload the budget  
justification.

# NSF Conflict of Interest Disclosure and Training Requirements before Submission

## NSF Financial Conflict of Interest (FCOI) Disclosure for Investigators

- The [National Science Foundation \(NSF\)](#) requires that investigators disclose all significant financial interest that are held personally or by a spouse or dependent

## Research Security Training

- Applies to all senior/key personnel (PI's, Co-PIs, Project Directors, co-project directors, and faculty associates)
- Must be within 1 year prior to the proposal submission
- Through OnPoint



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# ORS Submission Policy

ORS submission policy requires all final proposal documents be uploaded to research.gov **at least three business days** prior to the sponsor submission deadline.

Proposal documents uploaded at least three business days prior to the submission deadline will be reviewed for compliance.

Documents uploaded *later than* three business days will be submitted without a review or compliance check.

- ***The PI and their respective Department or College will assume the responsibility for any rejections due to non-conformity/non-compliance. This includes resolving any financial discrepancies with the budget.***



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# Key Takeaways



At OU completion of the routing is what gives the PI and ORS the permission to submit any proposal



Be cognizant of submitting accurate subcontract and consultant information – is what you are submitting officially approved?



All submissions must be made through Research.gov



The PI is responsible for uploading all required documents except for the budget and budget justification, which will be done by ORS. Proposal Specialists may assist with uploading files provided by the PI if time and workload allows.



Ensure that Co-PIs in other collaborating organizations have active NSF accounts before proposal submission.



Be familiar with the current PAPPG.



Ask ORS if you need help with Research.gov; let us know of any difficulties as soon as possible.

# Resources

- **Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG) (NSF 24-1):**  
<https://www.nsf.gov/policies/pappg/24-1>
- **ORS Website:** <https://www.ou.edu/research-norman/research-services/>
- **ORS Training Website :**  
<https://www.ou.edu/research-norman/research-services/training>
- **ORS FAQs:** <https://www.ou.edu/research-norman/research-services/faq>
- **Center for Faculty Excellence (CFE); The Research & Creative Activities Team:**  
<https://www.ou.edu/cfe/research>
- **ProposalShortTips.pdf**
- **Proposal Development Page**



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# Contact Information

- **Research Information Services**  
([ris@ou.edu](mailto:ris@ou.edu)) can answer general questions or direct you to the appropriate person
- **Sogol Rasouli**, Associate Director of Research Information Services  
([Sogol.rasouli@ou.edu](mailto:Sogol.rasouli@ou.edu))
- **Bonnie VanWinkle**, Associate Director, Proposal Services ([bvanwinkle@ou.edu](mailto:bvanwinkle@ou.edu))
- **Leslie Flenniken Kelly**, Associate Director of Award Administration  
([lflenniken@ou.edu](mailto:lflenniken@ou.edu))
- **Jennifer O'Hern**, Faculty Relations and Operational Excellence Manager  
([jennifer.ohern@ou.edu](mailto:jennifer.ohern@ou.edu))



# CoRA for Frequently Asked Questions and Website Navigation



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## Office of Research Services

### Federal Grant and Assistance Directives FAQ Now Available

In a recent **communication**, President Harroz acknowledged questions and concerns raised by recent federal executive orders and Executive Branch communications related to federal assistance and grants essential to the university's research enterprise. **Additional information is now available online** and will be updated as needed.

The goal of the Office of Research Services (ORS) under the Vice President for Research and Partnerships (VPRP) is to function as a highly trained, customer service-oriented organization whose primary purpose is to support externally funded research and sponsored activities within the university community. ORS has responsibility for pre-award and award administration on the Norman campus and Norman campus-related programs on the Tulsa campus. ORS is the institutional unit authorized by the Board of Regents to submit proposals to and accept awards from external entities for financial support in the form of grants, contracts, and cooperative or other agreements.

For general questions, call the ORS main phone number, (405) 325-4757, or contact us at [ris@ou.edu](mailto:ris@ou.edu).

*Calculate Your Submission Processing Timeline(MM/DD/YYYY):*

<https://www.ou.edu/research-norman/research-services/research-services-home>

### Quick links

[Submit Proposal Information Sheet](#)

[Cayuse Research Administration](#)

[Staff Directory](#)

[Obtaining Accounts and Registrations](#)



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# Questions



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