Submitting Your Grant Proposal and Getting it Past the Gate Keepers

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Submitting Your Grant Proposal and Getting it Past the Gatekeeper

- Submitting the proposal to NSF
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  - Grants.gov

- Getting it past the Gatekeeper
  - Using guidelines
  - Common problems
  - Special Instructions

- Submitting to Other Sponsors and Closing Comments

Submitting Your Grant Proposal

▸ Submitting
- PI Starts Proposal in Fastlane
- SRO Access/PINs
- PI/SRO Obtains Internal Permission to Submit
- PI/SRO Load Fastlane Items
- PI Gives Permission to Submit
- SRO Submits Proposal
- Proposal Updates, Revisions, and Withdrawals
- Special Notes (Subcontracts, Collaborative, Internal Competition, Letters of Intent, Pre-proposals)
- Grants.gov Notes

Submitting Your Grant Proposal

- PI Starts Proposal in Fastlane
  - PI needs NSF ID number and password
  - All other Co-PIs will also need an NSF ID and password – the PI will use that ID to add the Co-PIs to the Cover Sheet
  - PI sets up profile
- In Fastlane go under Proposal Functions, create your proposal
  - Cover Sheet must be done (select program announcement or general guidelines); cover page continuation sheet must also be completed
  - Cover Sheet continuation sheet includes Co-PIs, duration, start date, and other questions (do not enter budget amount)
- Fastlane training/help information on-line is very good and SRO office can help as you learn how to use the system

Submitting Your Grant Proposal

- SRO Access/PINs
  - PI allows SRO Access
    - Options are Read, Edit, and Submit
    - Read and Edit are minimum if SRO is to help you
      - Different SRO offices will do different levels of assistance and the level of assistance possible may vary depending on deadlines and timing
      - OU = we prefer loading budget tab and may help with uploading documents to other tabs
      - OSU = will vary depending upon the college. In DASNR, for example, PIs are responsible for the uploading of all documents, including the budget. In the College of Arts & Sciences, the business office will input the budget
    - Recommend do all three at one time but is the PI's option

Submitting Your Grant Proposal

- SRO Access/PINs
  - PINS allow anyone access to the proposal if they have a Fastlane account
    - They need proposal temporary id number and the PIN
    - Useful for access of Senior Personnel to proposal to load or check items (CoPI have access, if they have been added to the Cover Sheet)
    - Useful if you want a peer to review your entries.
    - Necessary if you are doing a collaborative proposal

Submitting Your Grant Proposal

- PI/SRO Obtains Internal Permission to Submit
  - Different institutions have different policies regarding internal permission
    - OU
      - Information Sheet starts process
      - No Firm Deadline but encourage several days before deadline and prefer week(s)
      - Internal routing involves sending a draft summary/abstract, budget, and draft budget justification around with a package for signatures (plus subcontract paperwork if applicable)
      - Ability to submit a proposal for most sponsors rests with an organizational representative–OU never delegates this outside of the ORS office (if the sponsor allows PI submission we do not negate that but the organization still reserves the right to withdraw any submission made)

Submitting Your Grant Proposal

- PI/SRO Obtains Internal Permission to Submit
  - Different institutions have different policies regarding internal permission
    - OSU
      - Contact the appropriate college research office
      - University routing process takes an average of 5 business days, however, most college research offices want notification much sooner
      - University routing must include Cover Sheet, Final Budget, Budget Justification, and the statement of work or draft abstract (plus subcontract documents, if applicable)
      - Once a VPR signature is received on the routing, the appropriate college office will submit – AOR authority has been delegated to the college offices for NSF submissions

Submitting Your Grant Proposal

- PI/SRO Obtains Internal Permission to Submit
  - Do not wait until the last minute to start the process; especially if there are letters or certifications needed from institutional persons (and some research offices have deadlines prior to submission that you need to meet)
  - Last minute/day submissions reduce the ability of the SRO office to assist you and result in increased chances of errors (on your and our part) and can be impacted by system difficulties
  - Be aware that all deadlines may not be the same—NSF usually uses 5pm local time as the deadline this can be different especially on revisions and updates. Some sponsors have deadlines based on time zones (Easter, Central, Pacific) and non standard times such as 230 or 1159 pm/am. (Sponsor deadline may not mean that ORS support is available as offices are not manned 24/7.)

Submitting Your Grant Proposal

- PI/SRO Obtains Internal Permission to Submit
  - Your proposal is submitted under the auspices of your organization; this provides fiscal, legal and audit support for your project
  - The grant is awarded to the institution, not to the PI. It is the institution's money, not the PI's money.
  - Legally you cannot commit the organization to any project work –only an authorized person can
  - The internal permission process gives personnel involved in the proposal notice they are involved and ensures your chain is aware of and approves of the submission

Submitting Your Grant Proposal

- PI/SRO Load Fastlane Items
  - Usually the PI is responsible for loading most of the Fastlane tabs
  - Uploading files vs. loading 'block or text' entries
  - Common tabs
    - Summary   Project Description
    - Biosketches   Current and Pending
    - References   Budget
    - Facilities and Equipment
    - Supporting Documents
    - Classification tab (only seen on occasion)
  - Be aware that different solicitations may have specific requirements to load or not load the tabs
  - You do not load the table of contents tab

Submitting Your Grant Proposal

- PI Gives Permission to Submit
  - Once everything is loaded the PI either contacts the SRO office that they are ready or if they haven't previously allowed SRO submit access in Fastlane then they must go the SRO access tab and assign Submit access.
  - Depending on time and SRO policy there may be actions the SRO takes prior to submission (electronic check, spot check of tab contents, ensuring certifications or special permissions obtained, etc)

Submitting Your Grant Proposal

▶ **PI Gives Permission to Submit**
- ◦ OU (time permitting)
  - • Load/check budget tab, check format and page limits on project summary, description, and references; spot check biosketches and current/pending, and run electronic check
- ◦ OSU (dependent upon college, time permitting)
  - • Verify that FastLane budget matches the internally routed, approved budget
  - • Check all uploaded documents for administrative compliance (number of pages, page numbers, etc)
  - • Run electronic check
  - • In very rare occasions, the college may review for content

Submitting Your Grant Proposal

▸ SRO Submits Proposal
  ◦ SRO logs in selects submit button
  ◦ Screen for certifications comes up (provided there are no warnings or errors detected)
  ◦ Selects button for continuing with the submission
  ◦ Screen comes up saying the temporary proposal number has been replaced with a permanent number
  ◦ OU –SRO requests electronic signature by Authorized Official (5 days are allowed for this to happened)
  ◦ OSU – AOR signatory authority has been delegated to the college offices, so in many cases, SRO submission constitutes AOR signature

Submitting Your Grant Proposal

- Proposal Updates, Revisions, and Withdrawals
  - Updates
    - May be done without permission prior to deadline
    - 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 or minor budget change; replacing entire project description without good reason might be seen as trying to circumvent the deadline
    - May be requested by the PO to replace or add information to the proposal
    - Must be initiated by the PI then access given to SRO (you must make a change before it will allow you to give SRO access)
    - Actual submission by SRO
    - Requires a new electronic signature by Authorized Official
    - May or may not be accepted by the Program Officer

Submitting Your Grant Proposal

- Proposal Updates, Revisions, and Withdrawals
  - Revision
    - Done at request of PO
    - Normally for budget or other changes in consideration of a possible award action
    - Must be initiated by the PI then access given to SRO (you must make a change before it will allow you to give SRO access)
    - Actual submission done by SRO
    - Requires a new electronic signature by Authorized Official
    - Scope of change for a revision may require new internal permission to submit

  - Withdrawals
    - May be done at initiation of PI or SRO
    - Copy before withdrawal if resubmitting (may lose all data)
    - Collaborative proposal withdrawal of any partner will 'kill' the collaborative entry (you may be asked to do an Update instead or to contact the PO)

Submitting Your Grant Proposal

- Special Notes (Subcontracts, Collaborative, Internal Competition, Letters of Intent, Pre-proposals)
  - Subcontracts
    - Usually require official letter of commitment from institution (for internal purposes but may also be loaded with submission)
    - Usually require separate subcontract budget information to be loaded into budget tab of Fastlane (this may be done by the subcontract organization/PI or the submitting organization/PI)
    - If the primary PI/organization is loading the subcontract budget you may need the organization's NSF ID number or Duns number to ensure you have the correct organization.
    - If the subcontracting organization has personnel designated at Co-PIs, that Co-PI's NSF ID (or email address) will be required to add them to the Cover Sheet

Submitting Your Grant Proposal

- Special Notes (Subcontracts, Collaborative, Internal Competition, Letters of Intent, Pre-proposals)
  - Collaborative
    - May or may not be allowed in solicitation
    - Funds are given to each organization involved
    - One organization is the prime and the other organizations are linked to it; only the prime loads the summary, description, and references; the non prime organizations load their own budget, biosketches, current and pending, facilities, and possibly supporting documents
    - Benefit is reduction in paperwork and IDC savings
    - Negative in less control by primary PI for the project

Submitting Your Grant Proposal

▸ Special Notes (Subcontracts, Collaborative, Internal Competition, Letters of Intent, Pre-proposals)
  ◦ Collaborative
    ‣ Negative in less control by primary PI for the project
    ‣ Linkage is done by only the prime organization using non prime temporary proposal IDs and PINs
    ‣ All parties must submit their portion within a reasonable amount of time (we recommend within 2 weeks or less)
    ‣ Other specifics
      ‣ titles should match exactly
      ‣ Lead institution can see all documents uploaded by the secondary, once link is established.
      ‣ Once submitted, both organizations can print/view the entire proposal for all parties involved

Submitting Your Grant Proposal

- Special Notes (Subcontracts, Collaborative, Internal Competition, Letters of Intent, Pre-proposals)
  - Internal Competition
    - If a solicitation limits the number of submissions for an organization it is normal for there to be some form of internal competition (and set deadlines for this competition)
    - Participation in subcontracts may also impact the organizational limits so be aware
    - If in doubt on an internal competition or if a subcontract affects a limit contact your SRO office
    - If limited, but an organization submits more than the allowed amount of proposals, it can cause ALL proposals to be rejected

Submitting Your Grant Proposal

- Special Notes (Subcontracts, Collaborative, Internal Competition, Letters of Intent, Pre-proposals)
  - Letters of Intent
    - Can be submitted by the PI; does not require SRO submission or AOR signature except in rare cases
    - Most colleges will ask that their SRO office be provided a copy of the Letter of Intent; some may wish to be involved prior to submission (especially if budget figures or commitments are given)
  - Pre-proposals
    - Usually requires less proposal documents to be uploaded
    - Often requires a zero-dollar budget
      - Some institutions will still require internal routing
    - Requires submission by SRO and electronic signature by AOR

Submitting Your Grant Proposal

▶ Grants.gov Notes
  ◦ Not all NSF proposals can be submitted via grants.gov but most can (Collaborative, updates, and revisions must be done through Fastlane)
  ◦ Budget and subcontract budget is much harder to load
  ◦ Checklist form must be completed
  ◦ Be very careful with compatible adobe versions, file names and name length, and file extensions
  ◦ Types of files needed are same as Fastlane (Summary, description, etc)
  ◦ Access to submitted proposal cannot be done through grants.gov but will post to Fastlane

Getting it Past the Gatekeeper

- Using guidelines
  - Be aware when writing your proposal you may need more than one set of guidelines (specific solicitation, general NSF guidelines [NSF 10-1], and if submitting in grants.gov the NSF grants.gov Application Guide)
  - Program specific guidelines (NSF 10-Xxxx) take precedence over the general application guide
  - You can submit unsolicited proposals (recommend check with program officer first)—unsolicited proposals fall under the general guidelines

Getting it Past the Gatekeeper

▸ Common problems
- Font and spacing requirements not met
- Project summary (too long, required statements missing, special instructions not followed)
- Project Description (page limit[s] not followed, requirements not met on special items to cover)
- Biosketch (incorrect headings, items left out, too many pubs/synergistic activities, using NIH format/forms for NSF submission)
- Supporting Documents (not including required items[post doc mentoring plan, commitment letters]), letters too long, letters of endorsement not support)

Getting it Past the Gatekeeper

- Common problems
  - References (too long; incorrectly formatted)
  - Using hyperlinks (sometimes specifically disallowed; cannot expect them to be checked by reviewer for content unless specifically requested in solicitation or by program officer)
  - 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)
  - Required tables/charts not provided or in incorrect location or not legible after submission

Getting it Past the Gatekeeper

- Special Instructions
  - Some solicitations have special instructions either for format/content of the summary and project description; they may limit or exclude budget entries, pages of any sections, etc
  - Some solicitations require submission of files or ppt after the submission via email or hard copy
  - Some solicitations require submission of Letter of Intent or preliminary proposal by a certain deadline for a full proposal submission to be allowed
  - Only if cost share is required is it entered in the Fastlane budget

Other Sponsors and Closing Comments

- If you are submitting to agencies other than Fastlane some things to be aware of:
  - Submission system may require special registration by PI or ORS
  - Submission system may not be user friendly
  - Conflicting guidelines are common for some agencies
  - Research on the guidelines/sponsor may be needed to determine indirect cost limits and cost share required (the PI may need to make cost share arrangements too)
  - Special certifications/letters/forms may need to be obtained

Other Sponsors and Closing Comments

▸ Closing comments
  ◦ Follow the guidelines and 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)
  ◦ If possible ask to be on a review panel and build a relationship with your program officers (some institutions help with this)
  ◦ Work with your SRO and please give us time to help you—our goal is to help get your proposal submitted on time; through the life of your proposal our job is to protect not only the interests of the university but to protect your intellectual property rights, assists with compliance issues and audits, and keep you out of jail