Funding Opportunities at the National Science Foundation

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Presentation

- NSF in a larger context
- How to navigate NSF funding programs
- How to prepare competitive proposals
- What to expect after submission (the review process)
- What to do if awarded or declined
NSF mission
"to promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; to secure the national defense..."

NSF funds basic research, instrumentation and training in STEM, to create knowledge that transforms the future.

https://www.nsf.gov/about/
NSF as a Federal Agency

- **Established by NSF Act of 1950 as an independent agency governed by the National Science Board**

- **Organized into discipline-based Directorates and Offices; Special responsibilities: Antarctic Program, Science and Engineering Indicators, International Science**

- **Budget: >$8 billion (FY19)**

- **In FY18: 11,700 awards from 48,300 submissions with ~ 24% success rate**

- **Supports ~386,000 faculty, researchers, fellows, students**

- **Permanent staff and “rotators” (Federal temps, visiting scientists and IPAs)**
How to navigate funding programs: where do you submit your ideas?


Directorate → Division → Program →

Get info on NSF contacts, award abstract, program description, deadlines (Send your questions and your proposed ideas to NSF Program Officer contacts)

Sign up for “Email Updates”
www.nsf/mynsf
Where within NSF is research in my discipline supported?
Research at Undergraduate Institutions (RUI)

- Designed to support Research in Predominantly Undergraduate Institutions (PUI)
- RUI is a mechanism, not a separate funding stream
- ~10% of proposals submitted to BIO research programs are RUIs
- “RUI” should be designated in the title of the proposal
- Five page (max) “RUI impact statement” must accompany proposal
How to prepare competitive proposals
Start by finding a home for your ideas
Know various types of proposal submission

Solicited vs. Unsolicited

• Solicited proposals have a published Program Solicitation / Program Announcement

• Unsolicited proposals are associated with regular research programs (check websites)

➢ For Solicited: Preliminary proposals or Letters of Intent

Submission Due Dates

❑ No deadlines (e.g. workshops, EAGERs)  ❑ Target dates
❑ Deadlines  ❑ Submission windows
Preparing competitive proposals

➢ Read program description, solicitation or announcement
➢ Read prior award abstracts
➢ Develop a one pager and send to NSF contacts
➢ Ask any other question: eligibility, good fit, budget, etc.
➢ Prepare full submission and have someone review your idea. Remember each program looks for different ideas
➢ Upload submission using FastLane, grants.gov or research.gov
Your proposal goes through several review processes.
What to do IF

• Your proposal got FUNDED
  – PO may negotiate scope and budget
  – Most awards are given as grants. Big awards like centers are given as cooperative agreement.
  – Be aware of your responsibility – know what you can and cannot do with the funds
  – Progress reports are typically due 90 days before the anniversary date of the award. Final report due on the anniversary date.
  – No cost extensions are available, so are supplements.

• Your proposal got DECLINED
  – Resubmit!
  – Read reviews and panel comments carefully
  – Contact PO if you have any questions about interpreting the reviews
Contact us by email:

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