Efforts to Reduce Administrative Burden

Council On Governmental Relations

Jean Feldman
Head, Policy Office

Richard Buckius
COO

National Science Foundation

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Topics

Administrative burden survey

Harmonizing across agencies

Proposal pilots

Proposal submission modernization
Administrative Burden Survey

“Select up to top five most helpful options in reducing the administrative burden that you experience when preparing and submitting NSF proposals”

1. Prepopulating proposals with existing data - 9989
2. Allowing certain documents or approvals (e.g. data management plan, detailed budgets, Institutional Review Board approval) to be submitted after proposal - 8931
3. Revising the format of NSF solicitations to identify the difference between solicitation-specific requirements and standard NSF proposal requirements - 8695
4. Developing and utilizing a common federal government-wide Biographical Sketch format - 8242
5. Tailoring the proposal interface to reflect the requirements of a given funding opportunity - 7314
6. Ensuring NSF systems have a consistent look and feel - 6112
7. Publishing and enforcing a NSF-wide list of proposal compliance requirements - 4255
8. Providing additional help functionality (e.g. LiveChat functionality) - 3451
9. Employing preliminary proposals more broadly - 3319
10. Other - 1421
“Rank potential efforts to assist in submitting compliant proposal?” (1=less helpful, 5=more helpful) ”

1. Streamlined proposal requirements (e.g. simplified budgets, phased submission of proposal sections as they are needed for NSF’s merit review process)

2. Additional/improved compliance warnings or error notifications

3. Clarification of the compliance rules required for successful proposal submission

4. More interaction with NSF program staff

5. Enhanced FastLane help functionality
Harmonize and standardize across agencies where possible

Research Performance Progress Report: a streamlined common data set for the submission of progress reports for use by Federal agencies that support research and research-related activities.

Research Terms and Conditions: With the implementation of the Uniform Guidance, NSF and NIH are jointly leading an initiative to develop an updated standard set of award terms and conditions for use with research and research related awards that are in compliance with the revised guidance.

Progress Reports: Due date has been changed from 90 days to 120 days for consistency with financial reporting information.
MPS and ENG will be conducting an experiment in FY16 that will involve only a budget justification for proposal submissions and full budgets for potential awards.

GEO has eliminated deadlines in one program with a marked reduction in the number of proposals.

NIH/NSF/USDA/VA are jointly funding some vertebrate animal training activities to improve IACUC training nationwide, with the ultimate intent to reduce burden for IACUCs and PIs.

SBE is testing one annual submission window with a limited number of proposals invited to revise and resubmit these proposals roughly six months prior to the annual submission deadline.
Proposal Submission Modernization

Assuring Proposal Proposal Compliance

Goals

• Enhance NSF proposal preparation and submission processes.
• Reduce administrative burden on PIs, organizations and NSF staff.
• Increase likelihood of proposal acceptance upon successful proposal submission in FastLane.

Approach

• Clarify policies and procedures in PAPPG.
• Standardize proposal formats.
• Improve existing functionality and migrate from FastLane to Research.gov
• Further automate compliance checking.
• Reduce programmatic review to a minimum set of essential elements
Proposal Submission Modernization

**PSM** is a multi-year initiative to modernize the proposal submission capabilities currently in FastLane and implement new capabilities in Research.gov.

**Areas** include pre-populating proposals with existing data; revising the format of NSF solicitations to identify the difference between solicitation-specific requirements and standard NSF proposal requirements; tailoring the proposal interface to reflect the requirements of a given funding opportunity.
Compliance checking surrounds proposals submitted in response to program solicitations. Warning messages are triggered if any of the following sections are not included: References Cited, Biographical Sketch(es), Budget Justification: Primary Organization, Budget Justification: Sub-recipient Organization, Current and Pending Support, Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources

Grants.gov does not perform these types of compliance checks and may allow a proposal to be submitted.
Questions?
Inappropriate for NSF: 74
Duplicates a proposal in review: 66
Did not address both merit review criteria in Project Summary: 187
Received past the deadline: 171

Not substantially revised: 37
Format problem: 130
Not responsive to solicitation, program announcement, or PAPPG: 960

From FY05 to FY14, there were between 2.8% and 4.5% of research proposals returned without review.
Administrative Burden Survey

“Select up to three proposal sections that place an unreasonable administrative burden on you during the proposal preparation process”

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<th>Section</th>
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