

## Quick Guide to Working with NSF's FastLane

The National Science Foundation's FastLane is a web-based computer system used for information exchange and business transactions between NSF and its client community.

All NSF investigators and their administrators must use FastLane to prepare and submit proposals, project reports, supplemental funding requests, and no-cost extensions and other notifications and requests, as well as perform other functions such as change principal investigators (PIs), transfer PIs, and add subawards. FastLane is also used for administration of proposals and awards by the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects (ORSP) and NSF, and for panel peer review.

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### **Registering and Logging On**

FastLane users (PIs and co-PIs) must be registered and have a password to access FastLane. To register for a NSF account you must have an NSF ID. This ID is a unique numerical identifier assigned to users by NSF through the registration process outlined below. For step by step information on how to create, view, and edit your account information, download the [Register for an NSF Account to Begin Using FastLane and Research.gov - Account Management Guide](#) PDF, watch the [Register for an Account Video](#), and [View and Edit my NSF Account Profile Information - Account Management Guide](#) PDF

To log in to FastLane, go to [Research.gov](#). Enter log in information.

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### **Proposal Functions**

The "Proposal Function" applications include proposal preparation and submission, proposal status, and revised submitted proposal budget.

FastLane proposal applications are organized in sections that follow the traditional format of NSF proposals. *A tip for users:* if you are lost or have made errors, navigate backwards ("Go back") to find your bearings or to check for mistakes.

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### **Proposal Preparation**

On the [FastLane home page](#), click "Proposals, Awards & Status," log on, then click "Proposal Functions" on the "What Do You Want To Work On?" page.

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## Starting a New Proposal

After reaching the Proposal Preparation link, PIs can check the accuracy of personal information and correct it, if necessary. Clicking “Prepare Proposal” will bring up the “Proposal Actions” screen; once there, click the “Create Blank Proposal” button to bring up the “Form Preparation” screen.

Preparing the Components of the Application:

- a. Applications must be prepared in accordance with the NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide (available online at [https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub\\_summ.jsp?ods\\_key=papp](https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=papp)) as well as the solicitation to which you plan to apply. Solicitations may include deviations from the general Guide, so be sure to review both thoroughly.
- b. Each application component is described in detail, beginning on page II-3 of the Guide linked above. Because of the document’s length, we suggest keeping an electronic version handy during the proposal development process and using an electronic search for specific sections or terms as needed.
- c. In general, applications to NSF will contain the following components. Specific format and content requirements are outlined in the Guide.
  - i) Cover Sheet (to be filled out in Fastlane)
  - ii) Project Summary (1 page)
  - iii) Table of Contents (automatically generated in Fastlane)
  - iv) Project Description (15 pages)
  - v) References Cited (may include only bibliographic citations)
  - vi) Biographical Sketches (2-pages each, one for each PI, Co-PI, and Senior Personnel)
  - vii) Budget (one budget per year, plus a budget justification of no more than 5 pages)
  - viii) Current and Pending Support (for each PI, Co-PI, and Senior Personnel)
  - ix) Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources
  - x) Supplementary Documents:
    1. Postdoctoral Researcher Mentoring Plan, if support is proposed for a postdoctoral researcher
    2. Data Management Plan (2 pages)
    3. Other documents defined in the Guide or program solicitation

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## Uploading Information

Proposers may upload files in Word, Excel, or PDF into the various sections of the proposal or use the FastLane templates. Some sections require the web templates to be used. For example, the budget template calculates and formats your information to the standard NSF budget page (Form 1030), and the Current & Pending template formats your data to the standard NSF Current & Pending page.

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## **Collaborations and Subawards**

The lead institution coordinates the submission process. To collaborate with other institutions, click the “Link Collaborative Proposals” button on the “Form Preparation” screen. Subaward budgets may be included either by clicking the “Add Another Organization” button in the budget section, or by giving the subawardee a proposal PIN so that they can enter their own budget.

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## **Working with ORSP (Sponsored Research Office-SRO) to Submit Proposals**

To allow ORSP to review and submit a proposal, the user must navigate back to the “Proposal Actions” page and click the “Allow SRO Access” button. Then choose “Allow SRO to view, edit, and submit proposal.”

PIs must submit a fully signed Proposal Routing Form, a Significant Financial Interest Form, and proof of Financial Conflict of Interest training (CITI training). After the PRF and proposal in Fastlane have been reviewed, ORSP will submit the proposal electronically to NSF.

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## **Proposal Status**

After the proposal is submitted by the SRO, this section (which can be accessed from the “Proposal Functions” screen) lists the date the proposal was received by NSF, the NSF division and program, the NSF program officer and contact information, proposal status, and peer or panel review dates. Proposal status can be checked as often as needed. FastLane is updated nightly with information entered that day by NSF program and grant officials on proposals being routed through the review process.

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### **Revised Submitted Proposal Budget**

Revised budgets are submitted only at the request of the program official. PIs may access their original budgets on FastLane under "Revise Submitted Proposal Budget" to make the requested changes. Clicking the "Forward Budget Revision to Sponsored Research Office" button sends an e-mail notice to the ORSP. ORSP then reviews and submits the revised budget. Neither NSF nor ORSP requires a paper copy.