Sponsored Research: Pre-Award Overview
The Sponsored Project Life Cycle
What is a Proposal?

The document submitted to a prospective sponsor outlining and requesting support for a specific project and includes a description of the project’s goals, methods, timelines, personnel, and budget. The terms “proposal” and “application” are often used synonymously.

Reasons faculty submit proposals:
- Research (Basic & Applied)
- Instruction
- Training
- Construction
- Public Service
How do sponsors request proposals?

**Sponsored Project Solicitation:** Request from a sponsor for project proposals that outlines application requirements, submission information, review criteria, and in certain instances award terms and conditions.

**Variety of names:**
- Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)
- Program Announcement (PA)
- Request for Applications (RFA)
- Request for Proposals (RFP)

The solicitation serves as the roadmap.

For more: [SPOT - A Beginner's Guide to Sponsored Project Solicitations](#)
Proposal components

Technical Components

Administrative Components

Proposal
Statement of Work (SOW)
Describes the work being performed; referred to as “abstract” or “summary”

Technical Narrative
- Statement of need/impact
- Objectives/Goals
- Research Plan
- Specific sections vary from sponsor to sponsor

Other Technical Components
- References cited
- Schedule/Milestones
- Appendices
- Compliance Sections

*not an exhaustive list, examples of common items*
Biographical Sketches
Details the individual's professional/education background and research background

Facilities and Other Resources
A description of the resources available to perform the proposed project

Budget and Budget Justification
Itemized list of costs and narrative description justifying those costs

Current and Pending Support
Information pertaining to current and pending support for the individual from other sponsored projects

Administrative Components
Learn More about Budgeting

SPOT & Sponsored Research In-Person training courses available:

**Proposal Budgets 101**
- Define key terminology related to budgeting
- Explain how to calculate salary cost and fringe
- Explain how to choose the correct indirect rate and how to calculate indirect costs correctly
- Outline introductory strategies / process for budgeting

**Proposal Budgets 102**
- Explore in greater detail topics introduced in Proposal Budgets 101, including revising a budget, selecting the correct F&A rate based on project type, and budgeting for special direct cost categories
- Introduce additional key budget terms and concepts
How are Proposals submitted?

Two general submission methods:

- **System to System**: Submitted electronically directly from InfoEd to grants.gov
- **Non-System to System**: Submitted outside of InfoEd to the sponsor (e.g. over email or using an external submission platform like the National Science Foundation’s system FastLane)

ALL proposals require an InfoEd record

**InfoEd**: Electronic Research Administration support software that provides two major functionalities:

- **Proposal Development**: providing system-to-system proposal submission for many federal programs
- **Proposal Tracking**: Storing proposal and award data

For Additional Information: InfoEd Training Resources
Learn More about Proposal Development

SPOT & Sponsored Research In-Person training courses available:

**Anatomy of an Administrative Shell**

- Define key terminology related to the sponsored project proposal: the science and the administrative shell
- Identify the items that make up the administrative shell
- Understand how to fulfill internal Northwestern University requirements and sponsor-based requirements relevant to creating a complete Administrative Shell
Best Practices

• Consistent and clear communication is a must:
  PI ↔ RA ↔ GA/GO ↔ Agency

• START EARLY and establish a timeline to minimize last minute rushes; this will help ensure the best possible proposal goes out the door

• Review proposal guidelines and instructions carefully and thoroughly

• All sponsored projects **must** go through Sponsored Research for review and signature

• Be mindful of all deadlines
Questions?