Sponsored Research: Pre-Award Overview
The Sponsored Project Life Cycle

1. Identify Funding Opportunities
2. Proposal Development & Submission
3. Award Negotiation & Acceptance
4. Award Set-Up
5. Award Management
6. Award Closeout
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)

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

Technical Components

Administrative Components

Proposal
Technical components

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

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

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

*not an exhaustive list, examples of common items*
Administrative components

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

Biographical Sketches
Details the individual's professional/education background and research background

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

• What is it? Itemization of the costs required to complete the proposed project
  – Funding requested must be based on a realistic and reasonable estimate of the cost to complete the work
  – All budgeted costs must be allowable on and allocable to the project
    • IMPORTANT: Check the solicitation to ensure no line items or budget categories included in the budget are prohibited by the sponsor either in general or in the particular solicitation
  – Understanding the SOW is an important piece of budget development

• A large portion of the budget will be devoted to personnel costs (salary and fringe benefits) for most projects
• Other costs might include supplies, services, consulting costs, travel, subcontracts, and indirect (i.e. facilities & admin) costs
Direct vs. Indirect Costs

• **Direct costs**: Directly allocable to the project, common examples include personnel costs, materials and supplies, and travel costs
  – Special considerations: Different types of personnel (e.g. faculty, students), fringe costs, and special cost categories (e.g. Subcontracts, equipment, research subjects / participants costs)

• **Indirect or Facilities and Administrative (F&A) Costs**: Incurred for common or joint objectives and cannot be assigned to a specific sponsored project.
  – Facilities: buildings, maintenance/utilities, library
  – Administrative: general university / departmental admin and services
Budgets: The Big Picture

- Personnel
- Subcontracts
- Materials & Supplies
- Travel
- Direct Costs
- Indirect (F&A) Costs

Base Salary + Fringe = Personnel + Subcontracts + Materials & Supplies + Travel + Direct Costs = Indirect (F&A) Costs + Budget

F&A Rate Calculation
Budget Justification

• What is it? A detailed description and explanation of the requested funding by line item
• Use categories developed by agency
• Relate line items to program objectives
• Ensure level of detail meets sponsor requirements
• Follow sponsor formatting guidelines
• Provide any required backup documentation

Examples:
– If equipment of $200,000+ is on the proposal, provide a quote for capital equipment
– If a consultant is on the proposal, provide a consultant letter outlining the work they will be conducting and their hourly rate
Overview of the Budget Building Process

*Begins and ends with sponsor guidelines/templates*

1. Read and evaluate the solicitation
2. Identify key budget elements & outline development approach
3. Work in iterative fashion to develop budget and justification
4. Submit final budget and justification to OSR
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 chose 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 introduce 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
Pre-submission Review Process

• **Administrative Proposal Review:** Set of standard review criteria and related routing processes for OSR review, endorsement, and submission of competing grant proposals
  – **Opportunity for Review:** Single opportunity for a thorough review of the required administrative components by Sponsored Research
  – **Submission Timing:** Execution of all review processes is contingent upon receipt of required administrative components by Sponsored Research sufficiently in advance of a sponsor’s deadline [Best practice: Department should route the InfoEd record with completed administrative portions of the proposal at least five days before the sponsor’s deadline]

• **What is reviewed?** Very generally speaking…
  – Reviewed: Compliance, personnel, budget, justification, subcontracts
  – Not reviewed: Technical components, formatting, other inclusions

• Visit the Sponsored Research for
  – [Administrative Proposal Review job aids and complete review criteria](#)
  – More about [Proposal Review and Submission](#)
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
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