**Conference Proposal Outline/Checklist**

National Science Foundation

This document summarizes key components of an NSF conference proposal. Review complete instructions in the [NSF 24-1 Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide](https://new.nsf.gov/policies/pappg/24-1) (PAPPG) and, if applicable, the solicitation.

**Checklist**

* Cover Sheet
* Project Summary (limited to 1 page)
* Project Description (limited to 15 pages)
* References Cited (potentially optional, no page limit)
* Budget
* Budget Justification (limited to 5 pages)
* Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources (no page limit)
* Senior Personnel Documents
  + Biographical Sketches (potentially optional, no page limit)
  + Current and Pending (Other) Support (no page limit)
  + Collaborators and Other Affiliations Information (only requested for conference proposals exceeding $50,000, no page limit)
  + Synergistic Activities (potentially optional, limited to 1 page per senior/key person)
* Special Information and Supplementary Documentation
  + Data Management and Sharing Plan (limited to 2 pages)
  + Mentoring Plan (if applicable, limited to 1 page)
  + Letters of Collaboration

**Formatting**

* Use one of these fonts: 10-point or larger Arial, Courier New, or Palatino Linotype; 11-point or larger Times New Roman or Computer Modern family of fonts.
* Fonts not specified above, such as Cambria Math, may be used for mathematical formulas, equations, or when inserting Greek letters or special characters.
* A font size of smaller than 10 points may be used for mathematical formulas or equations, figures, tables, or diagram captions and when using a Symbol font to insert Greek letters or special characters. The text must still be readable.
* Margins must be at least one inch. No proposer-supplied information may appear in the margins.
* Line spacing must not exceed six lines of text per vertical inch.
* Paper size must be no larger than standard letter paper size (8.5 by 11 inches).
* Research.gov automatically paginates documents; do not number pages unless otherwise directed.

**Cover Sheet**

Completed in Research.gov; work with departmental grants staff or Office of Sponsored Programs pre-award coordinator on this.

**Project Summary (1-page limit)**

The Project Summary should be informative to those working in the same or related fields and understandable to a broad audience within the scientific domain. It should not be an abstract of the proposal. The summary must include three separate sections:

1. **Overview**

Describe the activity that would result if the proposal were funded and state the objectives and methods to be employed.

1. **Intellectual Merit**

Describe the potential of the proposed activity to advance knowledge within its own field or across different fields, including the team’s qualifications to conduct the project and the extent to which the proposed activities suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts.

1. **Broader Impacts**

Describe the potential of the proposed activity to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes.

Each section heading must be placed on its own line with the section’s text beginning on the next line. Upload the Project Summary file as an attachment.

**Project Description (15-page limit)**

The Project Description should provide a clear statement of the work to be undertaken. Do not use URLs.

**Need for Proposed Conference**

* State the need for the conference, emphasizing how the conference will produce results that cannot be obtained by attendance at the regular meetings of professional societies.
* Describe the conference’s goal(s) and objective(s).
* List all conference topics.

**Intellectual Merit**

* Describe how the conference offers the potential to advance knowledge within a selected field or across different fields.
* Explain the extent to which the proposed conference suggests and explores creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts.

**Broader Impacts**

* Describe the potential of the proposed conference to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes.

**Recent Meetings on the Topic**

* List recent meetings on the same subject, including dates and locations.

**Chairperson and Organizing Committee**

* Provide the names of the chairperson and members of organizing committees and their organizational affiliations.

**Location and Dates**

* Provide information on the location and probable date(s) of the meeting and the method of announcement or invitation.

**Organization and Dissemination of Results**

* Describe how the meeting will be organized and conducted, how the results of the meeting will be disseminated, and how the meeting will contribute to the enhancement and improvement of scientific, engineering, and/or educational activities.
* Provide a plan for recruitment of, and support for, speakers and other attendees that includes participation of groups underrepresented in science and engineering (e.g., underrepresented minorities, women, and persons with disabilities).
* Describe plans to identify resources for childcare and other types of family care at the conference site to allow individuals with family care responsibilities to attend. Attendance for some participants will be dependent on the availability of such resources. This information should help enable attendees to make arrangements for family care, as needed.
* Summarize how the conference, including the facilities in which it will be held, will be accessible to participants with disabilities. Relevant facilities information can be detailed more fully in the Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources document.

**Results from Prior NSF Support (5-page limit)**

The purpose of this section is to assist reviewers in assessing the quality of prior work conducted with current or prior NSF funding. If any PI or co-PI identified on the proposal has received prior NSF support—including an award with an end date in the past five years or any current funding (including any no cost extensions)—information on the award is required for each PI and co-PI, regardless of whether the support was directly related to the proposal or not. In cases where the PI or any co-PI has received more than one award (excluding amendments to existing awards), they need only report on the one award that is most closely related to the proposal. Support means salary support, as well as any other funding awarded by NSF, including research, Graduate Research Fellowship, Major Research Instrumentation, conference, equipment, travel, and center awards, etc. Provide the following information:

* The NSF award number, amount, and period of support.
* The title of the project.
* A summary of the results of the completed work, including accomplishments, supported by the award. The results must be separately described under two distinct headings: Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts. If the project was recently awarded and therefore no new results exist, describe the major goals and broader impacts of the project.
* A listing of the publications resulting from the NSF award (a complete bibliographic citation for each publication must be provided either in this section or in the References Cited section of the proposal); if none, state “No publications were produced under this award.”
* Evidence of research products and their availability, including, but not limited to, data, publications, samples, physical collections, software, and models, as described in any Data Management and Sharing Plan.
* If the proposal is for renewed support, a description of the relation of the completed work to the proposed work.

**References Cited (potentially optional, no page limit)**

*Note: This document may be optional. Start the proposal in Research.gov to see the list of required and optional documents for your specific conference proposal.*

If submitting this document, provide a list of bibliographic citations relevant to the proposal. While there is no page limit, this section must contain bibliographic citations only and cannot include parenthetical information.

* Each reference must include the names of all authors (in the same sequence in which they appear in the publication), the article and journal title, book title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication.
* Identify the website address if the document is available electronically.
* Follow accepted scholarly practices in citing source materials relied upon in preparing any section of the proposal.

**Budget and Budget Justification (5-page limit for budget justification)**

Consult with departmental grant staff and/or staff in the Office of Sponsored Programs for advice on budget development and completing the appropriate budget justification attachments.

**Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources (no page limit)**

Provide a narrative description of the resources available to perform the effort proposed to satisfy both the Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts review criteria.

* Describe internal and external resources (both physical and personnel) that the organization and its collaborators will provide to the project, should it be funded.
* Describe any substantial collaboration with individuals not included in the budget; document each collaboration with a letter (see Letters of Collaborationbelow).
* Provide information on any other sources of support for the conference, if applicable.
* Describe only directly applicable resources.
* The description should be narrative in nature.
* Detail how the conference will be accessible to participants with disabilities. Conferences, including the facilities in which they are held, funded in whole or in part with NSF funds, must be accessible to participants with disabilities.
* Do not include any quantifiable financial information.

**Biographical Sketches (potentially optional, no page limit)**

*Note: This document may be optional. Start the proposal in Research.gov and check the “Senior/Key Personnel Documents” section to determine if biographical sketches are required or optional.*

If providing these documents, create an NSF-style biographical sketch for each person identified as senior/key personnel. SciENcv must be used to create the biographical sketches.

* See <https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/biosketch.jsp> for guidance.
* See [NSF Pre-award and Post-award Disclosures Relating to the Biographical Sketch and Current and Pending (Other) Support](https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/disclosures_table/may2024.pdf) for disclosure guidance.

**Current and Pending (Other) Support (no page limit)**

Provide NSF-style current and pending (other) support information for each person identified as senior/key personnel. SciENcv must be used to create the current and pending (other) support forms.

* See <https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/cps.jsp> for guidance.
* See [NSF Pre-award and Post-award Disclosures Relating to the Biographical Sketch and Current and Pending (Other) Support](https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/disclosures_table/may2024.pdf) for disclosure guidance.

**Collaborators and Other Affiliations Information (if applicable, no page limit)**

*Note: These spreadsheets are only requested for conference proposals exceeding $50,000.*

If providing these spreadsheets, prepare a collaborators and other affiliations spreadsheet for each person identified as senior/key personnel. Use the NSF-approved format at <https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/coa.jsp>.

**Synergistic Activities (potentially optional, 1-page limit per senior/key person)**

*Note: This document may be optional. Start the proposal in Research.gov and check the “Senior/Key Personnel Documents” section to determine if synergistic activities are required or optional.*

If providing these documents, each individual identified as a senior/key person must prepare a document of up to one-page that includes a list of up to five distinct examples that demonstrates the broader impact of the individual’s professional and scholarly activities that focus on the integration and transfer of knowledge as well as its creation.

* Examples may include, among others, innovations in teaching and training, contributions to the science of learning, development and/or refinement of research tools, computation methodologies and algorithms for problem-solving, development of databases to support research and education, broadening the participation of groups underrepresented in STEM, participation in international research collaborations, participation in national and/or international standards development efforts, and service to the scientific and engineering community outside of the individual’s immediate organization

**Data Management and Sharing Plan (2-page limit)**

The Data Management and Sharing Plan should describe the plans for the management and sharing of any data products resulting from the activity, as well as how the proposal will conform to NSF policy on the dissemination and sharing of research results and may include:

* The types of data, samples, physical collections, software, curriculum materials, and other materials to be produced during the project.
* The data and metadata format and content standards (where existing standards are absent or deemed inadequate, this should be documented along with any proposed solutions or remedies).
* Policies for access and sharing, including provisions for appropriate protection of privacy, confidentiality, security, intellectual property, or other rights or requirements.
* Policies and provisions for re-use, re-distribution, and the production of derivatives.
* Plans to archive and preserve access to data, samples, and other research products.

Data management and sharing requirements and plans specific to the Directorate, Office, Division, Program, or other NSF unit relevant to a proposal are available at <http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/dmp.jsp>. If guidance specific to the program is not available, then the requirements listed above apply.

Simultaneously submitted collaborative proposals and proposals that include subawards are a single unified project and should include only one supplemental combined Data Management and Sharing Plan, regardless of the number of non-lead collaborative proposals or subawards included. In such collaborative proposals, the Data Management and Sharing Plan should discuss the relevant data issues in the context of the collaboration.

A valid Data Management and Sharing Plan may include only the statement that no detailed plan is needed, as long as the statement is accompanied by a clear justification. Proposers who feel that the plan cannot fit within the limit of two pages may use part of the 15-page Project Description for additional data management information. Do not use the Data Management and Sharing Plan to circumvent the 15-page Project Description limitation.

**Mentoring Plan (if applicable, 1-page limit)**

Each proposal that requests funding to support postdoctoral scholars or graduate students must provide a description of the mentoring activities that will be provided for such individuals.

* Describe the mentoring that will be provided to all postdoctoral scholars or graduate students supported by the project, regardless of whether they reside at the submitting organization, any subrecipient organization, or at any organization participating in a simultaneously submitted collaborative proposal.
* Separate plans are not required for postdoctoral scholars or graduate students. The plan may, however, specify how different components of the mentoring program will be enacted for the two types of researchers.
* For NSF awards that will provide substantial support to postdoctoral scholars and graduate students, each individual must have an Individual Development Plan, which is updated annually, that maps the educational goals, career exploration, and professional development of the individual. NSF defines “substantial support” as an individual that receives one person month or more during the annual reporting period under an NSF award.
* Do not use the mentoring plan to circumvent the 15-page Project Description limitation.
* Note that in situations where a postdoctoral scholar is listed in Section A of the NSF Budget and is functioning in a Senior/Key Personnel capacity (i.e., responsible for the scientific or technical direction of the project), a mentoring plan is not required.
* Examples of mentoring activities include, but are not limited to, career counseling; training in preparation of grant proposals, publications, and presentations; guidance on ways to improve teaching and mentoring skills; guidance on how to effectively collaborate with researchers from diverse backgrounds and disciplinary areas; and training in responsible professional practices.
* The Office of Proposal Development’s [Mentoring Plan template](https://uofnelincoln-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/agirres2_unl_edu/EeEb8FlRiPFIop-dRNse_1EBPDHgToTeKnVw_b3SPnP3-A?e=pgeIsP) may be used.

**Letters of Collaboration**

Letters of collaboration should be limited to stating the intent to collaborate and should not contain endorsements or evaluation of the proposed project. Use NSF-suggested language for letters of collaboration:

“If the proposal submitted by Dr. [insert the full name of the Principal Investigator] entitled [insert the proposal title] is selected for funding by NSF, it is my intent to collaborate and/or commit resources as detailed in the Project Description or the Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources section of the proposal.”

Unless required by a specific program solicitation, letters of support should not be submitted as they are not a standard component of an NSF proposal. A letter of support is typically from a key stakeholder such as an organization, collaborator, or Congressional Representative and is used to convey a sense of enthusiasm for the project and/or to highlight the qualifications of the PI or co-PI.