

Successful Grant Writing Strategies

Sally Bond

Assistant Director of Research Development Services

Proposal Coordination

Office of the Vice President for Research

Purdue Research Development Services

Office for the Vice President for Research services and resources

PURDUE UNIVERSITY Office of the Vice President for Research

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Home Integrity/Regulatory/QA Research Development Funding Partnerships Center Support Policies Publications/Awards

Services & Resources

- Research Development Home
- Funding
- Limited Submissions
- Proposal Preparation
- Teambuilding
- Site Visits
- Grantsmanship Events
- FAQs
- Where do I go for help with...
- Other Useful Links

Research Development

The goal of the OVPR Research Development staff is to assist faculty in the development of research and education proposals. Our staff provide a broad range of services and resources related to funding and grantsmanship. Below are some of the ways we can assist.

FUNDING
The funding page provides information on internal, external, seed, and early investigator funding opportunities. Links to helpful funding search tools and e-mail alerts can also be found here.

LIMITED SUBMISSIONS
Check here for details on internal competitions including deadlines, templates and submission guidelines.

PROPOSAL PREPARATION
Research Development staff can provide assistance with both large and small proposals. This page explains our services and provides links to other useful proposal preparation resources.

TEAMBUILDING
Building a strong team is an important part of successful proposals. This link provides information on our project coordination services as well as resources for creating on-line expertise profiles.

SITE VISITS
Our staff can assist with the logistics and coordination of site visits allowing the research team to focus on their science and team. Follow this link to find out more about these services.

EVENTS
The events page provides information on upcoming grantsmanship workshops and events including dates, times, and registration information. Presentations from previous events can also be accessed from this site.

OTHER USEFUL LINKS
Our *Guide to the Grants Process at Purdue University* is available here as well as links to other programs and resources related to grantsmanship.

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, and SUGGESTIONS
We'd like to hear from you about services and resources that are valuable to you. Please e-mail us with questions, comments,

Grant Writing Assistance

Large proposal development and smaller proposal consultations

http://www.purdue.edu/research/vpr/rschdev/proposal_preparation_assistance.php

The screenshot shows the Purdue University website's navigation and content. At the top, the Purdue University logo is on the left, and the text "Office of the Vice President for Research" is in the center. To the right of the logo is a search bar with the text "OVPR Main | OVPR Staff | Contact OVPR" above it. Below the logo and text is a horizontal navigation menu with links: Home, Integrity/Regulatory/QA, Research Development, Funding, Partnerships, Center Support, Policies, and Publications/Awards. The main content area is titled "Grant Writing Assistance" and is divided into two columns. The left column is a sidebar menu titled "Services & Resources" with the following items: Research Development Home, Funding, Limited Submissions, Grant Writing (highlighted with a blue diamond), Teambuilding, Site Visits, Grantsmanship Events, FAQs, Where do I go for help with..., and Other Useful Links (highlighted with a blue diamond). The right column contains the main text, which is organized into sections: "Large Proposal Development Services" (with a sub-header in italics), "Small Proposal Development Services" (with a sub-header in italics), and "Grant Writing Resources" (with a sub-header in italics). The text under "Large Proposal Development Services" describes the role of OVPR grant writers and lists services such as proposal preparation timelines, compelling storylines, agency mission requirements, meeting logistics, assessment and outreach, writing of non-technical text, document control, graphics support, institutional support letters, and addendum forms. The text under "Small Proposal Development Services" describes the role of OVPR grant writers for small grant proposals and lists services such as agency solicitation requirements, proposal preparation timelines, proposal organization, guidance for graphics, and specific proposal sections. The text under "Grant Writing Resources" describes the content of the Grant Writing Resources page and lists resources such as Data Management Plan resources, Citable e-Pubs text, Self-Help Tools, Federal agency proposal guides, and General writing and editing resources.

PURDUE UNIVERSITY Office of the Vice President for Research Search

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Grant Writing Assistance

Large Proposal Development Services

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- proposal preparation **timelines** and processes
- a compelling "**storyline**" or gap analysis
- agency mission and requirements of specific grant competitions
- meeting logistics
- assessment, outreach, and diversity component needs
- writing of non-technical text and transitions
- document control and copyediting
- graphics support
- institutional support letters (see **Self-Help Tools**)
- addendum forms such as conflict of interest and biosketches

(For information about cost-sharing commitments, please visit our **Cost Sharing** page)

Small Proposal Development Services

OVPR grant writers are also available to consult individually with faculty who are writing small grant proposals for *external* funding. We can help you with:

- agency solicitation requirements
- a proposal preparation **timeline**
- proposal organization
- guidance for graphics
- specific proposal sections such as storyline or specific aims

You can request a proposal coordinator by sending an e-mail to proposalcoordinator@purdue.edu preferably no later than one month before the deadline.

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Key Online Resources

OVPR e-Pubs for searchable, citable, up-to-date institutional text

<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/ovpr/>



PURDUE UNIVERSITY e-Pubs

Home About FAQ My Account

Enter search terms:
 Search
in this collection
[Advanced Search](#)

Notify me via email or RSS

Links for Authors
Submit Research
Policies and Help Documentation
Author Addendum

Links
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Browse
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Access. Knowledge. Success.

Home > [OVPR](#)



OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT OF RESEARCH

[The Office of the Vice President for Research](#) supports faculty in all aspects of research, including funding access, proposal development, research integrity, corporate and foundation relations, and interdisciplinary infrastructure. Richard Buckius is the current vice president for research.

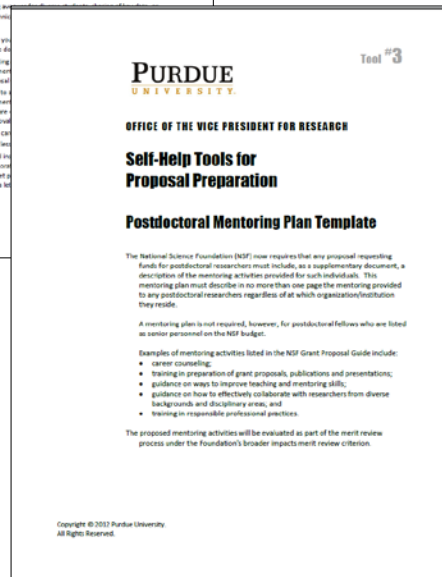
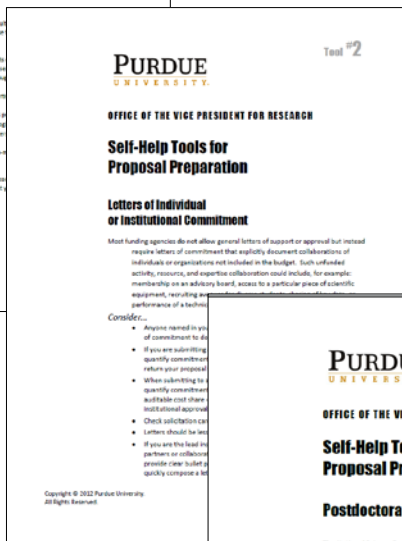
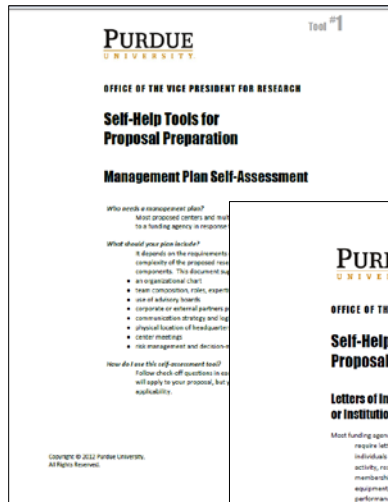
[Follow](#)

Browse the *Office of the Vice President of Research* Collections:

- [Purdue University General Facility Descriptions](#)
- [University Research Core Facilities](#)

Key Online Resources

Self-help tool series



- *Management Plan Self-Assessment*
- *Letters of Individual or Institutional Commitment*
- *Postdoctoral Mentoring Plan Template*
- *Tips for Major Research Proposals* **Coming soon!**

Where Do I Go for Help?

A Visual Guide to the Grants Process at Purdue

http://www.purdue.edu/research/vpr/rschdev/proposal_preparation_assistance.php



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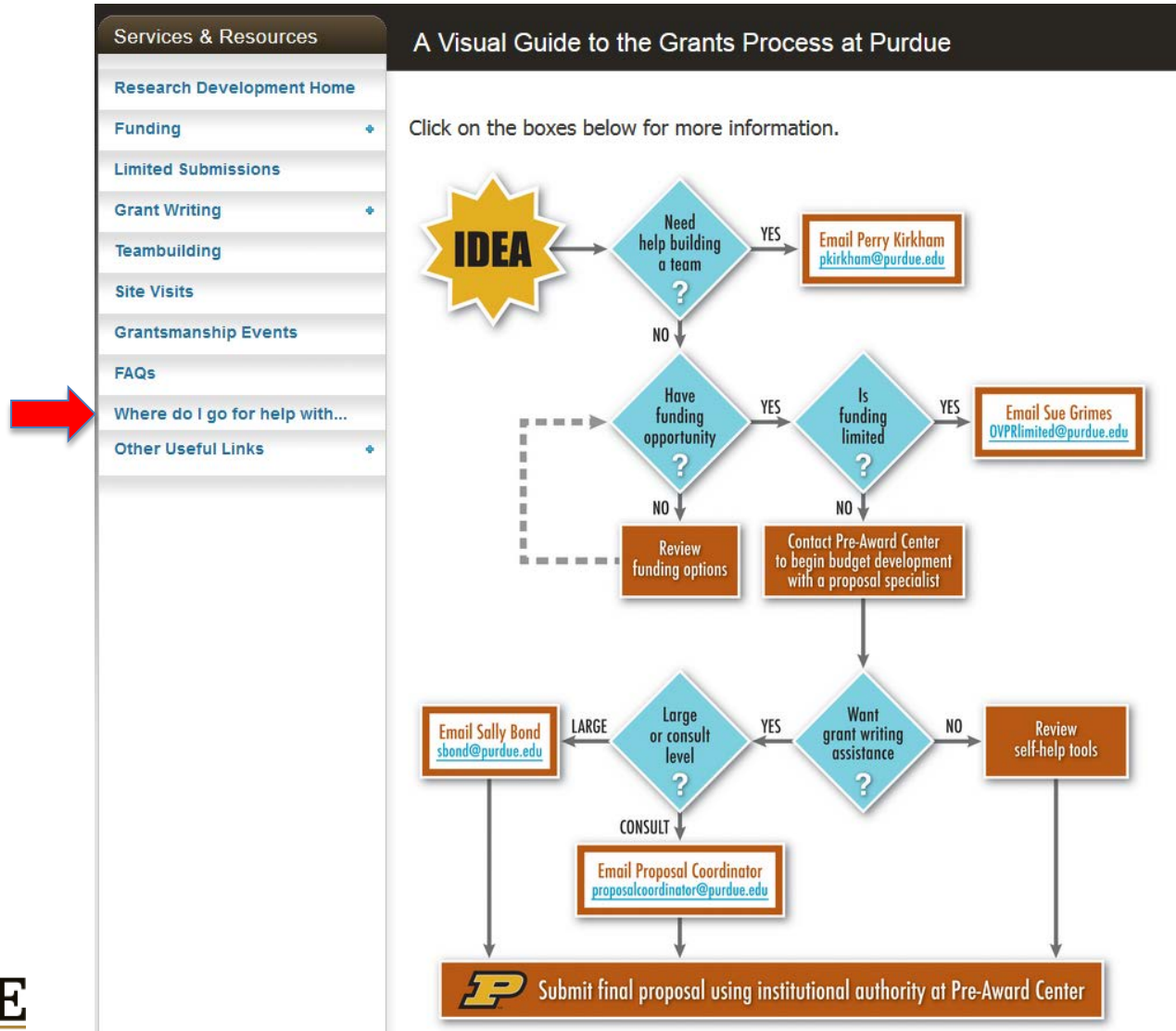
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Where Do I Go for Help?

Hyperlinked "help" flowchart



Being intentional

Basic grant writing strategies apply to almost any proposal

Figure removed for posting due to copyright

And so you just
threw everything
together?...
Mathews, a posse is
something you have
to *organize*."

From *The Far Side* by Gary Larson

Proposal Preparation Timeline

Have a plan

General 10-week project timeline:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Analysis and Planning										
Distribute documents noted in RFP	■									
Identify previously successful proposals	■									
Identify PI	■									
Notify Pre-Award Center for assigned specialist	■									
Problem Overview										
• <i>What is the problem</i>	■	■	■							
• <i>What has already been done to address problem</i>	■	■	■							
• <i>What gaps remain</i>	■	■	■							
• <i>How we propose to address gaps</i>	■	■	■							
Vision										
Goals			■							
Identify proposal win themes/discriminators			■							
Program Officer Input										
Contact PO	initial	■	■							
Team debrief on meeting			■							
Refine initial analysis/planning				■						
Proposed Outline										
Discuss/refine outline structure				■						
More detailed outline, if needed				■						
Identify graphics needed			■	■						
Partnerships										
Recruit collaborative partners		■	■							
Produce "talking points" brochure or website			■	■						
Recruit industry affiliates					■	■	■	■		
Recruit advisory board members						■	■	■	■	
Collect letters of commitment								■	■	■
Management and Personnel										
Identify basic management structure			■	■						
Collect biosketches			■	■	■	■	■	■		
Proposal Writing and Editing										
Assign writing			■							
Write section components				■	■	■				
Compile 1 st draft						■				
Project team 1 st edit							■			
Any outside review input/edit								■	■	■
Editing iterations									■	■
Write summary or abstract										■

Red Text: Important to have agreement (and explicit text for problem overview) prior to proposal writing

Key Strategies

Avoid common trouble spots

- tell a compelling storyline
- answer “Why Purdue?”
- be responsive to solicitation
- know your reviewer
- conduct internal review

Building the Storyline

Storyline first!

General 10-week project timeline:

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Problem Overview	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
• <i>What is the problem</i>	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
• <i>What has already been done to address problem</i>	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
• <i>What gaps remain</i>	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
• <i>How we propose to address gaps</i>	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Vision			■							
Goals			■							
Identify proposal win themes/discriminators			■							
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Contact PO	initial		■							
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More detailed outline, if needed				■						
Identify graphics needed				■						
Partnerships										
Recruit collaborative partners		■	■							
Produce "talking points" brochure or website			■	■						
Recruit industry affiliates				■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Recruit advisory board members					■	■	■	■	■	■
Collect letters of commitment								■	■	■
Management and Personnel										
Identify basic management structure			■	■						
Collect biosketches			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Proposal Writing and Editing										
Assign writing			■							
Write section components				■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Compile 1 st draft						■	■	■	■	■
Project team 1 st edit							■	■	■	■
Any outside review input/edit									■	■
Editing iterations									■	■
Write summary or abstract										■

Red Text: Important to have agreement (and explicit text for problem overview) prior to proposal writing

- storyline provides the “north star”
- helps you not to be overly ambitious

Building the Storyline

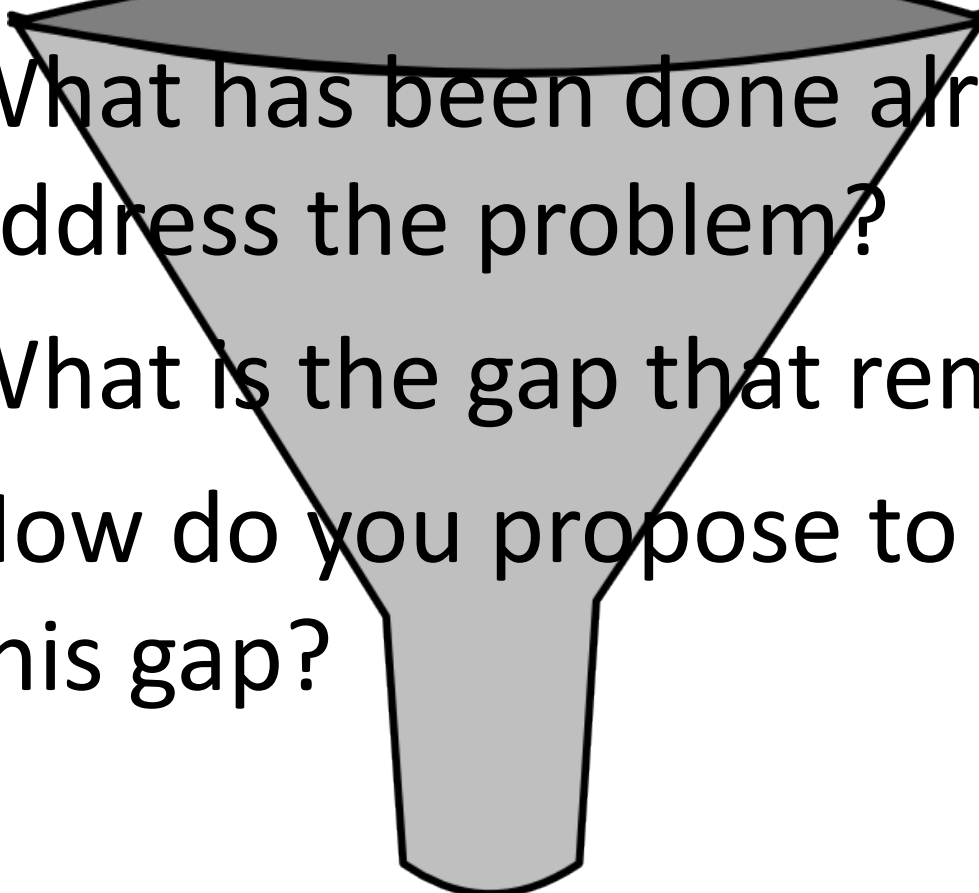
Four helpful questions

- What is the problem?
- What has been done already to address the problem?
- What is the gap that remains?
- How do you propose to address this gap?

Building the Storyline

Logic flow goes from broad to narrower

- What is the problem?
- What has been done already to address the problem?
- What is the gap that remains?
- How do you propose to address this gap?



Building the Storyline

Example narrative...in op-ed language

What is the problem?

What has been done already to address problem?

What is the gap that remains?

How do we propose to address this gap?

EXAMPLE 2

NSF IGERT: Solar Economy IGERT (SEIGERT)

PI: Rakesh Agrawal

2. Vision, Goals, and Thematic Basis

Currently, fossil fuel resources of coal, natural gas and petroleum supply nearly 85% of the total energy needs of the US economy. The flow of energy from fossil fuels to end-uses: 1) electricity, 2) heating, 3) chemicals, and 4) transportation is a complex system dictated by resource availability, processing capacity, government policy, world affairs, and market forces. However, recent volatility of petroleum prices, uncertainty of future carbon taxes, and the potential impact of greenhouse gasses on the environment has led to renewed efforts to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels.

Recently, 25 U.S. state legislatures passed legislation that establishes minimum percentages of the state's electricity supply that must come from renewables by a certain date. These so-called Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) are shown in Figure 1. The states with RPS account for over half the nation's electricity. The implementation of RPS presents the U.S. with great opportunities and challenges. Currently, the total primary power used in the U.S. by all four major end-uses is 3.3 TW (PCAST, 2006). When averaged over day, night, seasons, and cloud cover, over 1800 TW of sunlight falls on U.S. land. Clearly, economic collection and transformation of solar energy can provide a long-term solution for all the energy needs of the United States.

For decades, the U.S. enjoyed global leadership in solar energy innovation and market share. By 2005, however, the U.S. share of the world production capacity of solar cell modules dropped to 8% while shipments from Europe and Japan increased to 26% and 48%, respectively (EIA, 2007). The economic effect of the decreasing U.S. market share is exacerbated by a rapidly increasing need for solar cell manufacturing. The U.S. Photovoltaic Industry Roadmap foresees a 30% growth of the world solar industry over the next decade and a U.S. solar industry that needs to employ 250,000 people by 2030 (DOE, 2001). However, at a time when U.S. states and industry need a significant increase of highly skilled labor with solar energy expertise, the supply of Ph.D.s in this area is limited. Further, of all the research articles published on solar energy, the fraction published by U.S. authors has dropped significantly in the last 30 years, from 49% to 18%. More importantly, of all the journal citations for articles on solar energy, the fraction of citations that U.S. authors receive is down from 61% to 24% in that same time period (Hillhouse, 2007). The output and impact of U.S. research on solar energy is diminishing. These trends clearly define a challenge of national importance. *It is imperative that the U.S. strategy include effective education and training programs to develop the human resources and intellectual capital that will allow us to compete in this emerging world market for Sun-to-Electricity.* Our *vision* is to prepare for a fossil fuel-deprived world where nearly all energy demands are met sustainably by solar energy resources.

Building the Storyline

Create a one-page brief

One-page project description sent to program officer that includes:

- concise storyline
- vision/goals
- team
- methodology/approach
- impact

Build the Storyline

One-page...taste of your entire grant in a single, bite-sized piece

It forces you to distill all aspects down to their essences and to find a way of piecing things together that is economical, coherent, logical, and compelling [...] is totally unforgiving, revealing problems in the clarity of your thinking and presentation, weaknesses in the logic of your research, vagueness in your methods, and failures in the all-important 'so what?' realm. Given the luxury of length, additional verbiage has a way of camouflaging weaknesses (at least from the writer but not so often from the reviewer).

—Robert Levenson, UC-Berkeley

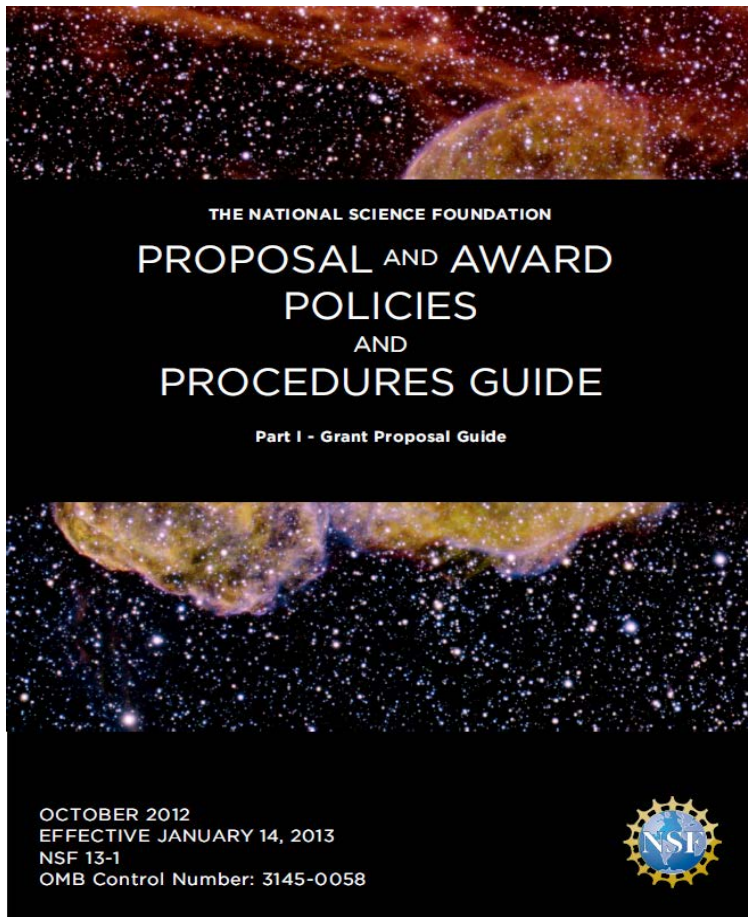
Why Purdue?

You, your team, your institution

- researcher expertise
- equipment and facilities
- Purdue experience and campus environment
- strength or uniqueness of academic programs
- prior work

Responding to Solicitation

Follow all instructions! Know the agency guidelines as well as solicitation



Research on Education and Learning (REAL)

PROGRAM SOLICITATION

NSF 13-604

REPLACES DOCUMENT(S):

NSF 10-516, NSF 12-542, NSF 12-552



National Science Foundation

Directorate for Education & Human Resources
Research on Learning in Formal and Informal Settings

Letter of Intent Due Date(s) (*optional*) (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time):

October 25, 2013

Full Proposal Deadline(s) (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time):

January 10, 2014

IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND REVISION NOTES

A revised version of the *NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG)*, [NSF 13-1](#), was issued on October 4, 2012 and is effective for proposals submitted, or due, on or after January 14, 2013. Please be advised that the guidelines contained in [NSF 13-1](#) apply to proposals submitted in response to this funding opportunity.

Please be aware that significant changes have been made to the PAPPG to implement revised merit review criteria based on the National Science Board (NSB) report, *National Science Foundation's Merit Review Criteria: Review and Revisions*. While the two merit review criteria remain unchanged (Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts), guidance has been provided to clarify and improve the function of the criteria. Changes will affect the project summary and project description sections of proposals. Annual and final reports also will be affected.

A by-chapter summary of this and other significant changes is provided at the beginning of both the *Grant Proposal Guide* and the *Award & Administration Guide*.

Please note that this program solicitation may contain supplemental proposal preparation guidance and/or guidance that deviates from the guidelines established in the *Grant Proposal Guide*.

Revision Summary

This solicitation has been revised to incorporate into the Other Information section a newly issued publication jointly developed by the National Science Foundation and the Institute of Education Sciences in the U.S. Department of Education entitled, *Common Guidelines for Education Research and Development*. The *Guidelines* describe six types of research studies that can generate evidence about how to increase student learning. Research types include those that generate the most fundamental understandings related to education and learning; examinations of associations between variables; iterative design and testing of strategies or interventions; and assessments of the impact of a fully-developed intervention on an education outcome. For each research type, there is a description of the purpose and the expected empirical and/or theoretical justifications, types of project outcomes, and quality of evidence.

The *Guidelines* publication can be found on the NSF website with the number NSF 13-126 (<http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2013/nsf13126/nsf13126.pdf>). A set of FAQs regarding the *Guidelines* are

Responding to Solicitation

Outline before you write

Example of NSF-style proposal outline

1. Rationale [2.5 pages]

- Storyline
 - What is the problem?
 - What has been done already?
 - What is the gap that still remains?
 - What do you propose to do to address this gap?
- Goals/Objectives
- Team expertise
- Targeted teacher and/or community college faculty participants
- Institutional commitment

Broader Impacts

- curriculum accessed by underrepresented students through targeted teacher recruitment
- community-based research activities
- integrating research activities into computing-related courses in local high schools
- role models from HCBU partner on HUBzero webinars
- presentation to parent-teacher organizations to include assessment results from DLRC-collected metrics
- presentations at both technology education conferences as well as K-12 STEM learning

2. Nature of Teacher Activities [3.5 pages]

- Need clearly articulated research projects and activities
 - Map to goals/objectives
- Teachers must be involved in research project for at least 6 weeks
- Must have orientation session at beginning of the program for the teachers to acquaint them with laboratory methods, safety procedures, analytical methods, etc
- Address approach to research training being undertaken

Research Project

- Provide detailed descriptions of examples of research projects
- Present plans that will ensure the development of RET participant-faculty interaction and communication
- How will you facilitate development of collegial relationships and interactions as teachers work closely in teams with university faculty and students?

Project Timetable

- Need Gantt-style chart such as this.
- Overview sentence

Program Initiatives	Year one	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four	Year Five
CICAWEST Administration					
Advisory Board Meeting					
D&I Team and COD meeting					
Mentoring Academy					
Training of coaches chairs					
Mentoring pairs					

Departmental Transformation					
Diversity Forums					
Chairs Dept Heads @ PU					
All Three Institutions					
Transformational Team Visits					
NCWIT Visiting Committees					
Promotion and Tenure Review					
Building Networks					
Summit					
Invited Lectures					
Evaluation and Assessment					
STEM Climate Assessment					
Space Resource Inventory					
Coaching Measures					
Mentor Mentee pmtcp self-adv prod					
Attitudinal Surveys					
Deans and Heads					
Faculty					
Network Analysis					
External Project Analysis					
Dissemination					
Website					
CIC Women in Academia					
Summit Attendee Meetings					
Publications					
National Presentations					

3. The Research Environment [2.5 pages]

- Describe the experience and record of involvement with K-12/community college education and research of the PI
- Describe faculty who may serve as research mentors. Consider table such as:

Mentor Name	Dept/School	Expertise

- Describe institution
 - Include emphasis on cross-disciplinary partnership and past record of success in cross-disciplinary collaborations
- Include information on the record of faculty/mentors in publishing work and providing professional development opportunities for K-12 STEM teachers and/or community college faculty
 - Mention Prof. Jones most cited article
- Describe facilities, equipment, and other resources available to support the proposed research experiences in relation to those activities

4. Participant Recruitment and Selection [1.75 page]

- Describe types and/or names of institutions where participants will be recruited
 - Drawing on strong network of partners through DLRC
 - Recommended that at least two STEM teachers per school
 - Should participate for two consecutive year

5. Results from Prior Support [2 pages]

- Use sample format

Knowing Your Audience

How is your reviewer reading your draft? How can you help?

- sleepless, busy, rushed
- stack of 25 proposals to review
- reading proposal on plane or late at night
- perhaps not an expert in your exact field

Internal Review

New eyes on your draft before submission

General 10-week project timeline:

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Contact PO	initial	■								
Team debrief on meeting			■							
Refine initial analysis/planning				■						
Proposed Outline										
Discuss/refine outline structure				■						
More detailed outline, if needed				■						
Identify graphics needed			■	■						
Partnerships										
Recruit collaborative partners		■	■							
Produce "talking points" brochure or website				■						
Recruit industry affiliates					■					
Recruit advisory board members						■				
Collect letters of commitment								■	■	
Management and Personnel										
Identify basic management structure			■							
Collect biosketches				■	■	■	■	■		
Proposal Writing and Editing										
Assign writing			■							
Write section components				■	■					
Compile 1 st draft						■				
Project team 1 st edit							■			
Any outside review input/edit								■	■	■
Editing iterations									■	■
Write summary or abstract										■

Red Text: Important to have agreement (and explicit text for problem overview) prior to proposal writing

- at least two weeks prior to submission
- requires intentional planning from project beginning
- formal or informal

Internal Review

Because sometimes what is obvious to you is not obvious to others





Questions?