

## **Submitting National Science Foundation (NSF) Letters of Intent and Preliminary Proposals to the Office of Research**

### **Letters of Intent**

Some NSF program solicitations require or request submission of a letter of intent (LOI) in advance of submission of a full proposal. The predominant reason for its use is to help NSF program staff to gauge the size and range of the competition, enabling earlier selection and better management of reviewers and panelists. In addition, the information contained in a LOI is used to help avoid potential conflicts of interest in the review process.

A LOI normally contains the PI's and co-PI's names, a proposed title, a list of possible participating organizations (if applicable), and a synopsis that describes the work in sufficient detail to permit an appropriate selection of reviewers. A LOI is not externally evaluated or used to decide on funding. The requirement to submit a LOI will be identified in the program solicitation, and such letters are submitted electronically via the NSF FastLane System.

### **Preliminary Proposal**

Some NSF program solicitations require or request submission of a preliminary proposal in advance of submission of a full proposal. The two predominant reasons for requiring submission of a preliminary proposal are to:

- reduce the proposers' unnecessary effort in proposal preparation when the chance of success is very small. This is particularly true of exploratory initiatives where the community senses that a major new direction is being identified, or competitions that will result in a small number of actual awards; and
- increase the overall quality of the full submission.

The NSF program solicitation will specify content and submission requirements when preliminary proposals are to be utilized. Preliminary proposals are prepared by the PI using the Proposal Preparation Module in FastLane. On the Cover Sheet, the PI clicks on the "Preliminary Proposal" check box. The PI completes only the sections appropriate to the preliminary proposal.

When the department releases the file to the FastLane system an email is sent automatically to the Office of Research.

The department will then need to forward the following hardcopy documents to the Office of Research:

1. A mandatory cover sheet
2. A copy of the guidelines or an electronic link to the guidelines
3. A signed stock 136 form with Zero (0) entered for the budget
4. A copy of the Letter of Intent or the Pre-proposal

Once received the Office of Research will review the request and submit via the FastLane system.

*Please note that no action will be taken until the Office of Research receives both the electronic notification for submission and the hardcopy documents for review.*