Research Grant Resources & Information for New Investigators

FEDERAL RESEARCH FUNDING

2018-2019

University of Nevada, Reno
College of Engineering
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Federal Funding Agencies

During Fiscal Year 2017, the University of Nevada, Reno was awarded research funding from a spectrum of federal agencies. Those agencies include the following:

- Corporation for National & Community Service
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Commerce
- Department of Defense
- Department of Education
- Department of Energy
- Department of Health & Human Services
- Department of Homeland Security
- Department of Interior
- Department of Justice
- Department of Transportation
- Environmental Protection Agency
- National Aeronautics & Space Administration
- National Endowment of the Humanities
- National Science Foundation
- Nuclear Regulatory Commission
- Small Business Administration
- US Agency for International Development

**QUICK TIP**

*When creating an InfoEd proposal file, please select the sponsoring agency/division as shown on the solicitation document...because an agency may sometimes have multiple divisions within it.*

**BEFORE YOU BEGIN:** All new investigators should review the following elements required to be able to successfully process and submit a proposal to a funding agency:

- **InfoEd Training** – New faculty must attend an InfoEd training session hosted by UNR Sponsored Projects prior to getting access to create a proposal file in the InfoEd system. Sponsored Projects conducts training sessions throughout the year. For a training schedule, access this link: [InfoEd Training Class Schedules](#).

- **Conflict of Interest Disclosure** – All faculty must complete an annual conflict of interest disclosure. This can be accomplished via the InfoEd system by selecting ‘External Interests’ and following the instructions within.

- **Individual Registrations** – A few federal submission systems require an individual registration prior to the submission of any proposal. The most common agencies and types of registration needed are shown below:
  - Grants.gov – Workspace – [Registration](#)
  - National Science Foundation – [NSF registration](#)
  - National Institutes of Health (NIH) – ASSIST – [eRA Commons Registration](#)
  - Dept. of Energy - PAMS – [PAMS registration](#)
  - NASA NSPIRES – [NSPIRES registration](#)

For other submission systems, please verify within the solicitation announcements about any individual registration or profiles required to successfully respond to a solicitation.
There are six steps to the research grant cycle which allow the investigator to find funding opportunities, understand the solicitation, develop the proposal, locate common information and resources, process the proposal for internal review, and submit the proposal to the sponsoring agency. Each of these steps consist of certain provisions that will assist investigators in developing a competitive and compliant research funding request.
Step 1: Find Funding Opportunities

There are multiple locations online to search for the availability of federal research dollars. Naturally, each federal agency hosts information about available funding opportunities on their respective websites; however, there are also other websites and subscriptions that provide an array of federal funding announcements. The most common sites include the following:

- **Featured Funding Opportunities** — The College maintains a listing of featured research opportunities which is updated on a monthly basis. It can be located on the CoEN’s webpage by accessing the Featured Funding Opportunities link.

- **Research Notes** — The Vice President of Research & Innovation’s office routinely sends out a listing highlighting available funding opportunities from various federal agencies. Be sure to subscribe to receive these notifications at researchnotes-request@lists.unr.edu.

- **Grants.gov** — This is an E-Government initiative that provides a centralized location for grant seekers to find and apply for research funding offered by a variety of government agencies. (https://www.grants.gov).

- **FedConnect** — This is a web portal that provides information on grant opportunities from government agencies. It provides greater detail on funding opportunities to assist the investigator in doing business with the government. (https://www.fedconnect.net).

- **InfoEd SPIN** — This system is available through the University’s InfoEd proposal processing system and is the world’s largest database of funding opportunities that delivers specific information based on criteria and research focus areas. (https://unrprod.infoedglobal.com/).

**QUICK TIP**

Be sure to subscribe to the online listservs provided by most federal agencies. This will allow you to receive direct notifications regarding upcoming funding opportunities and solicitation updates from the sponsoring agency. Most federal agencies have information on how to join a listserv located at each of their respective websites.
Step 2: Understand the Request for Proposal (RFP) or Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)

As you review a Request for Proposal (RFP) or Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA), pay close attention to the following sections to determine the suitability of submitting a grant application:

• **Eligibility.** This section will explain the type of entities eligible to submit a proposal, the limitations on the number of submissions (if any), and the eligibility requirements of the Principal Investigator and any Co-Investigators. Carefully review the eligibility requirements for the institution, as well as the Principal Investigator. In some cases, solicitations may limit the number of proposals that can be submitted on behalf of an institution. In this case, special permission is required from the VPRI’s office and/or an internal competition may be conducted by the VPRI’s office to determine which project will be approved for development and submission to the Sponsor.

• **Funding Availability.** This section will indicate the amount of funding available for the project. In many cases, there may be a minimal limit, as well as a maximum limit. Review carefully for any specific annual budget limitations too (i.e., maximum per year is $150K).

• **Cost Share Requirements.** In some cases, a sponsor may require cost share to be included within the project. Be certain to review and verify the specific cost share requirements because cost share calculations are very diverse among federal agencies and may be based on a percentage of total project value, total funding awarded or some other predetermined method. Cost share included within any project will require the completion of an internal Cost Share Form.

**QUICK TIP**

If cost share is included as part of a proposal, then a Cost Share Form must be provided. If the Cost Share Form is completed and uploaded to your InfoEd file prior to routing, then electronic signatures from all parties are collected as the file is processed... and manual signatures are not required on the form.

• **Indirect Cost Limitations.** In some instances, a sponsor may prohibit or limit indirect charges allowed within a proposal. If the prohibition or limitation is stated within the solicitation document, then the University will honor that request and there is no need for the PI to seek an exception to the F&A rate utilized. In cases where there is a limited F&A rate provided which is lower than the published University rate, then the allowed rate is to be applied to Total Direct Costs. When utilizing the official approved F&A rate of the University, then that rate is to be applied to Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC).
• **Letter of Intent.** Some sponsors may require a Letter of Intent (LOI) as part of the submission process. A letter of intent is usually due to the sponsor 30 or more days prior to the submission deadline for full proposals. In some instances, a LOI may be submitted directly to the sponsor by the PI. Pay close attention to any solicitations requesting a letter of intent so that the proper submission procedures are followed. Failure to do so may jeopardize the submission of a full proposal.

• **Pre-Proposal Requirements.** This section will provide instructions related to any pre-proposal documents required to be submitted. In many cases, a sponsor may require a pre-proposal submission prior to determining if a full proposal is warranted. The individual requirements of a pre-proposal vary from agency to agency. So, it is vital that the PI review any pre-proposal requirements and submit the requested documents as instructed. 

  NOTE: Sometimes a pre-proposal submission may not require the creation of an InfoEd file. If you are uncertain, please contact the Coordinator for instruction.

• **Proposal Requirements.** This section will stipulate the specific elements required of the proposal document. Pay careful attention to the requested format and outline structure of the proposal. Some agencies require very specific conventions for file names, project titles and signature requirements. Any authorized signatures required will be provided by Sponsored Projects.

  NOTE: Principal Investigators do not have authority to enter into any grants or contracts on behalf of the University.

• **Special Conditions.** Any special conditions or requirements will be stipulated within the solicitation document. Please note that an agency’s solicitation document for a specific funding opportunity takes precedent over the agency’s general guidelines. Therefore, it is important to identify any special conditions required of your submission. The PI, if uncertain, should contact the Coordinator for interpretation of any of these special requirements during the development of the proposal.

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**☑ QUICK TIP**

The budget justification document should include the following language for all proposals with personnel costs included: “The University of Nevada, Reno is on an 8-month academic and 4-month summer calendar schedule.” Place this sentence at the top of the page, directly under the ‘Budget Justification’ title.
Step 3: Develop the Proposal

- **Create an InfoEd File.** Every request for federal funding must be entered into the UNR InfoEd processing system. In most cases, the level of detail needed is very minimum and will only require a budget, budget justification and a draft abstract/narrative to be uploaded to the system. This allows for the proposal to be internally approved by the Principal Investigator (and Co-PIs), Departmental Chair and Dean. Please contact the Coordinator for assistance, as needed.

- **Create a Submission File.** If applicable, you may also be required to create a submission file as stipulated by the Sponsor within the solicitation document (i.e., Grants.gov Workspace, Fastlane, etc.). This is the location that all required final proposal documents will be uploaded for “official” submission to the Sponsor.

- **Prepare Proposal Documents.** Most Sponsors include specific instructions about the type of information and documents required to consider a proposal complete and compliant. Although each funding agency may have differing requirements, there are some commonalities between all agencies in the type of information requested on most funding announcements. The elements shown below are the most common requirements to be included within a funding application:
  - Cover Page
  - Table of Contents
  - Project Summary or Abstract
  - Project Narrative or Description
  - Biographical Sketch
  - Current and Pending Projects
  - Collaborators
  - Detailed Budget
  - Budget Justification
  - References Cited
  - Facilities, Equipment & Other Resources
  - Supplementary Documents
    - Data Management Plan
    - Letters of Collaboration
    - Letters of Commitment
    - Letters of Support
    - Postdoctoral Mentoring Plan

Links to templates and examples for most of these documents may be found on the CoEN Faculty Resources webpage.
Step 4: Locate Commonly Used Application Information and Other Resources

- **Organizational Information**

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<th>Legal Name</th>
<th>Board of Regents, NSHE, obo University of Nevada, Reno</th>
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<tr>
<td>Authorized Signatory</td>
<td>Mrs. Charlene Hart, Assistant VP, Research Administration</td>
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<td>DUNS Number</td>
<td>14-651-5460</td>
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- **Faculty Resources Webpage**

The College of Engineering maintains a significant amount of grant resources on its [Faculty Resources](#) webpage. Most all information needed to complete a grant application can be found at this location which includes agency-specific forms and links, salary calculator, university rates for tuition, fringe benefits and minimum wage/salary limitations, and other applicable grant information.

- **Coordinator, Research Grants.** ([stephenholloman@unr.edu](mailto:stephenholloman@unr.edu))

This position is available to provide additional services and support to you as you develop your proposal. Services provided include solicitation review and summary, budget development and review, budget justification development and review, InfoEd creation and/or data entries, submission file creation and data entries, facilitation with collaborating institutions, subcontractors and/or consultants, answers to programmatic/administrative questions, and more. These services are time-sensitive and require the PI to request services in a timely manner well in advance of the Sponsor’s submission deadline.

- **Writing and Technical Editor.** ([jtrieger@unr.edu](mailto:jtrieger@unr.edu))

This position is available to provide writing and editing assistance for funding proposal-related documents only. In addition, writing resources are also available on the CoEN’s Faculty Resources page to assist with the technical portions of the proposal document. These services are time-sensitive and require the PI to request services in a timely manner well in advance of the Sponsor’s submission deadline.
Step 5: Process the Proposal for Internal Review

Prior to the submission of any federal application for funding, the proposal must go through a series of reviews and checks in order to be certain that the information is in compliance with the requirements of the Sponsor and the University. This series of reviews and checks assists the investigator in submitting a competitive proposal and increases the probability of a funding award.

All requests for federal funding (regardless of the Sponsor and required submission system) are required to be created and routed for internal approval via the UNR InfoEd processing system. Once the required data is entered into the InfoEd file, then the file is routed to the following steps for preliminary review and approval.

*NOTE: Due to the number of research faculty and the volume of proposals generated, the College of Engineering utilizes an internal timeline for access to services provided through the Dean’s office.*

- **Principal Investigator Review**
  
  At this step, verify the entered data is correct and the transmittal tab includes all relevant information related to recognition of the PI, Co-PIs and any key personnel on the project.

- **College Review**
  
  At this step, the Coordinator will make a preliminary review of information and contact the PI should any data need to be revised or updated. The file is then routed to all key personnel for their electronic approval. Then, it is routed to the department chair and dean for review and electronic approval.

- **Sponsored Projects Review**
  
  The next step includes the routing of the file to Sponsored Projects. Once the file is received and assigned to a pre-award administrator, then someone will contact the PI to verify receipt and to begin review of the proposal file - the InfoEd file, as well as the submission file (if applicable). This is the final step of the InfoEd routing process. 

  *NOTE: Sponsored Projects will always ask the PI for permission to submit the proposal to the sponsor once all reviews are completed and an internal approval for submission has been granted.*

✔️ **QUICK TIP**

  If you make a mistake or have difficulty during the set-up of the InfoEd file, please contact the Coordinator for assistance. **DO NOT CREATE A SECOND FILE. InfoEd files are not able to be deleted from the system and the creation of multiple files for the same proposal will only compound reporting issues.**
Step 6: Submit the Proposal to the Sponsor

There are a variety of submission systems used each day to submit funding proposals to sponsors. The most common submission systems include the following:

- **ASSIST — National Institutes of Health (NIH)**
  This system is exclusive to NIH and is the preferred mechanism for submission of NIH grant applications.

- **Fastlane — National Science Foundation (NSF)**
  This system is exclusive to NSF and is the preferred mechanism for submission of NSF grant applications. Creation of a Fastlane file must be initiated by the PI and final submission to the sponsor is the responsibility of UNR Sponsored Projects.

- **NSPIRES — National Aeronautics & Space Administration (NASA)**
  This system is exclusive to NASA and is the mechanism for submission of NASA grant applications.

**QUICK TIP**

Regardless of the submission system being used to submit a federal funding proposal, faculty must always create an InfoEd file – since it is the University’s internal routing mechanism for proposal processing and recordkeeping.

- **Grants.gov Workspace — Multiple Federal Agencies**
  This online submission system is the preferred mechanism for submission of Grants.gov applications and requires the investigator to register (username/password) in advance of accessing a Workspace file. The creation of a Workspace file for development may be initiated by the PI, Coordinator or Sponsored Projects representative; however, submission of a Grants.gov file to the sponsor is the responsibility of UNR Sponsored Projects.

- **InfoEd System-to-System (S2S)**
  This system may be utilized for Grants.gov applications in lieu of the Grants.gov Workspace system. This will require all information, documents, and detailed budgets to be entered and uploaded directly into the required data fields. The creation of an InfoEd file may be initiated by the PI or the Coordinator.
Other General Information

- **Roles.**
  It is important to know that the services provided through the Dean’s office and the Research Grants team are specific to the College of Engineering and are NOT a part of the support received from UNR Sponsored Projects or UNR VPRI’s office. Faculty should begin their proposal development process by submitting a *Notification of Intent to Submit* to the Coordinator, Research Grants within the Dean’s office. At that point, the roles will be established as to who is responsible for the various elements of the proposal during the development stage.

- **Internal Timeline.**
  To be able to provide a proper and thorough review for compliance, the College of Engineering has an internal timeline to assist the PI in submitting the required documents to Sponsored Projects in a timely manner. Failure to meet the posted internal deadlines will jeopardize the internal review process and some services may not be available to you. Therefore, it is critical that PIs meet the internal timeline dates to optimize the services and resources available.

- **Responsibilities.**
  Please be reminded that regardless of the resources and support staff made available to PIs, it is ultimately the responsibility of the PI to assure all required documents are completed and entered into InfoEd and the respective submission system to allow for review and final submission of the proposal by Sponsored Projects to the sponsoring agency. Under no circumstances should the PI assume someone else is completing tasks on his or her behalf unless communications have been established directly with those individuals. The Dean’s office is glad to provide resources and support to all faculty; however, PIs are required to understand the process for submitting proposals and to understand how to utilize the identified submission systems of various federal agencies.

**QUICK TIP**

*Take advantage of the multiple opportunities for training available via the CoEN’s Hot Topic workshops, agency webinars and Sponsored Projects training sessions. These are made available throughout the academic year for your benefit and utilization.*