NSF PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

This Checklist will remain a part of the permanent file documentation that transfers over in the event of an award. General proposal requirements are contained in the "NSF Grant Proposal Guide."

A **"√"** in the first column indicates the activity has been completed. A **"-"** indicates that this specific activity does not apply to this proposal. Specific programs do not require the exact same activities; some programs require additional activities. **There is no substitute for carefully reading the solicitation!** This Checklist is meant to be a general template of activities that will fit the broadest range of proposal tasks for NSF.

"√" IF APPLIES	ACTIVITY	NOTES
PI Name:		
Proposal Number and Title:		
Specialist and Date:		
	GENERAL	

	1. **Cover Page**
	 a. Awardee & Project Performance Site Primary Location
	 b. Program Announcement/Solicitation Number (drop down list, not numerical)
	 c. NSF Unit of Consideration (NSF Division/Office/Program to which proposal should be directed) *If the PI envisions review by multiple NSF programs, more than one program may be designated on the Cover Sheet.
	 d. Remainder of Cover Sheet:
	     (1) Title of Proposed Project [check RFP if special title rules apply]
	     (2) Budget [generated by your FastLane budget page]
	     (3) Duration of Project (in months)	

	2. **Cover Page – 'other information'** items such as proprietary information, human subjects, lobbying activities, etc. must be indicated. For **preliminary proposals**, the PI clicks on the "Preliminary Proposal" check box. The PI completes only the sections appropriate to the preliminary proposal. Be sure to check "**beginning investigator**" if the PI has not had a previous NSF PI or co-I role). Be sure to check **international activity** if any aspect of the project is conducted outside the U.S.	
	3. **Project Summary** – must have summary suitable for publication and does not exceed 4600 characters (including white spaces between characters). Project summary must include **Overview**, **Intellectual merit**, and **Broader impacts** sections, and must **fit on one page**. There are two ways to enter your Project Summary -- Complete the project summary is to cut and paste into the text box in NSF FastLane. If you have special characters (such as formulas or foreign language content), you can upload as a single page PDF.	**Best Practice:** After you have uploaded to FastLane, print/view your proposal to be sure that the uploaded PDF section adheres to page length and formatting requirements. Be sure to maintain one inch margins and adhere to font requirements (recommend easy to read font such as Times New Roman 12).
	4. **Project Description** – typically includes sections on Expected Outcomes/ Results and Broader impacts. Solicitations often call for special sections in the project description. Read the solicitation carefully. Strictly enforced page limit -- may not exceed 15 pages (unless otherwise noted in the announcement) Must include a separate section labeled **"Broader Impacts of the Proposed Work"** Must include a section on **"Results of Prior NSF Support"** in the past 5 years of ALL Senior Personnel on the project, noting: - NSF award number, amount and period of support - Project title - Summary of results of the completed work under two distinct headings: Intellectual merit, Broader Impacts - Evidence of products and availability as described in Data Management Plan	Failure to include a required section, such as Broader Impacts or prior NSF support if funded in past 5 yrs. can result in the proposal **'Returned Without Review'**. These required sections need to be included in the 15 page limit regardless of number of projects. **Best Practice:** Use references to work published from these projects and include these in reference section.
	5. **Data Management Plan** is a prerequisite and must not exceed 2 pages. Thoughtfully articulated, speaks directly to *this* project. If funded, you will be referencing the evidence of the NSF award's outcomes in future proposals, "Results of Prior NSF Support".	
	6. **References** are required. Typically, well-referenced proposals are funded and reference sections are typically 4-6 pages.	**Best Practice:** Cite-right, keep your peer reviewers in mind.

	7. A **Biographical sketch** is required for each senior project personnel – limited to 2 pages. The format for biosketches is very rigid, e.g. Products not Publications, Rule of 5 Most Relevant Products Significant. See the CAS Office of Research for examples.	
	8. A **Postdoctoral mentoring plan** if a post doc is to be involved in the project. HOWEVER, if the post doc is identified as key personnel in the budget and budget justification, the mentoring plan is NOT REQUIRED. The format for the postdoctoral fellow mentoring plan is rigid. See the CAS Office of Research for examples.	
	9. One postdoctoral mentoring plan is required for collaborative proposals and is to be provided by the Prime.	
	10. **The 5% other category** – work with your research administrator to carefully read and fully understand the requirements of *this* solicitation. Additional requirements can be unique to the solicitation that you are responding to, e.g. Intellectual Property Plan, or Senior Personnel COI Table.	

"√" IF APPLIES	ACTIVITY	NOTES
	BUDGET	
	1. **Budget for each year** of support requested unless program stipulates otherwise	
	2. **No more than 2 months of salary in any one year. *Includes salary received from all NSF-funded grants.** Pre-award Specialist should check on current funding and if PI has current NSF funding then an email should be sent to PI and kept in file advising them of 2 month limitation. Any deviation from 2 months of requested salary must be disclosed in the budget, justified and specifically approved by NSF in the award.	
	3. **Administrative and clerical salaries** - normally not allowed, exceptions may include dedicated administrative support for a large center proposal, or technician required for large equipment grant or to support a vivarium.	
	4. **Equipment** – Exceeds $5,000 and can include modifications, attachments and accessories necessary to make property usable. Equipment must be justified & listed by description and estimated cost. See GPG II, C.2.g.iii for specific discussion on typically allowable 'equipment.' **No F&A applied to this category**	
	5. Travel – **domestic travel** is US, its possessions, Puerto Rico, Canada and Mexico	
	6. Travel – **foreign travel** must be described in detail (Fly America rule applies)	
	7. **Participant Support** – costs of transportation, per diem, stipends and other related costs for participants or trainees BUT NOT EMPLOYEES in connection with NSF sponsored conferences, meetings, symposia, training activities and workshops; however some deviation allowed for school district employees. Participant costs typically cover students who will participate in the project or attendees at a workshop that is part of the project. **No F&A applied to category**	
	8. **Materials & Supplies**– allowable but see GPG. A computing device is considered a supply if the acquisition cost is less than $5K. Charging as a direct cost is allowable for devices that are 'essential and allocable' to the project.	
	9. **Publication costs** – allowed to cover costs of documenting, preparing, publishing and otherwise making available the findings and products of the work conducted under this grant (e.g. reports, reprints, page charges).	
	10. **Consultants** – members of particular profession or possess special skill who are not officers or employees of the performing organization. See GPG for additional information. **Cover letter from Consultant** addressing the work to be performed and the hourly or daily rate, as well as all other costs associated must be obtained by the time of proposal submission and will be kept on file.	
	11. **Subawards** – included in the budget and disclosed in the proposal. **F&A applied to first $25K only of each proposed subaward**	
	12. **Budget justification**: Required for each year of the proposal. Not to exceed 3 pages. The budget justification should detail the rates of pay by individual for senior personnel, postdoctoral students, and other professionals. For proposals with subaward(s), each subaward must include a separate budget and justification of no more than 3 pages.	This is a crucial document and must be completed in a systematic way. Contact the CAS Office of Research for examples of budget justifications written for funded projects.

"√" IF APPLIES	ACTIVITY	NOTES
	OTHER	
	1. Cost Sharing – **No voluntary cost sharing is allowed by NSF.**	
	2. Cost Sharing – **Mandatory cost sharing** will be programmatically described and should be shown on Line M of the budget. Cost share must be noted on the USF Internal Form and **pre-approved** by the Dept. Chair and Associate Dean for Research.	
	3. **Unallowable costs –** see list at GPG II, C. 2. G. (e.g. alcoholic beverages, entertainment costs)	
	4. **Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Mentoring Plan** – Required completing a certification that the institution has a plan to provide training and oversight in the responsible and ethical conduct of research to undergrads, grad students, and postdoc researchers who will be supported by NSF to conduct research.	For information on RCR at USF visit http://www.research.usf.edu/dric/nsf-citi-instruct.asp
	5. **Appendices** – not allowed unless a deviation has been authorized by the Program Manager	
	6. **RAPID Proposals** – project description is 2-5 pages; check "RAPID" on NSF Cover Page; up to $200K for one year	
	7. **EAGER Proposals** – project description is 5-8 pages and must be clear why EAGER is being used; check "EAGER" on NSF Cover Page; up to $300K for two years	
	8. **COLLABORATIVE Proposals** – special organization and submission processes. See GPG II.C.2.g.(vi)(e) and j for additional instructions	
	9. **EQUIPMENT Proposals** – follows standard preparation guidelines in GPG; must describe arrangements for acquisition, maintenance and operation	
	10. **HUMANS and ANIMALS** – IRB and IACUC protocols must be approved prior to an award	
	11. **Sub recipient Award Documentation** – completed sub award forms are required in advance of the proposal submission http://www.research.usf.edu/dsr/docs/subrecipient-information-compliance.pdf	
	12. **USF Electronic Proposal Authorization Form** – The USF Internal form must be routed and have all approval signatures in advance of submission http://www.research.usf.edu/dsr/internal-form/announcement.asp	
	13. **Research Compliance requires the Interest Inventory online form** – the Interest Inventory is required for each person listed in Sr. Personnel of your NSF proposal. This must be completed in advance of proposal submission. ARC: https://arc.research.usf.edu/Prod	