

CEHS Guidance and Timeline for Grant Proposal Development and Submission

Introduction

The College of Education and Human Sciences is committed to building a culture of collaboration and research excellence. We recognize the significance of research programs emanating from CEHS, and the need for resources to have the greatest potential for impact among the children, youth, families, schools and communities with whom we work. Administrative research supports are available to help faculty submit, and then execute, the most competitive, high-quality grants possible. Submitting high quality grants requires all parties -- PIs, co-PIs, co-Is, proposal coordinators, grant specialists, and administrators -- to work in a highly collaborative manner throughout all stages of proposal development and submission.

Effective grantsmanship is a highly planful and intentional process. The best way to approach successful grant writing is to be strategic. Careful and cooperative planning and follow through around proposal development leads to the most successful proposals.

Everyone involved in the development of proposals has an important role and responsibility. To maximize the chance of securing an award, communications between PIs and research support staff are encouraged early and often. The best chance for success occurs when all parties agree to and follow through on personal responsibilities in the most timely, respectful and responsive way possible.

General Guidance

- The guidance provided herein is intended to ensure the highest level of support possible to PIs, and not to add extra burden, hinder progress, or delay the grant writing and submission process. Rather, the guide is meant to minimize hurdles by providing reminders of activities and benchmarks needed to successfully submit an extramural grant.
- Key partners involved in CEHS grant submissions include the PI (and Co-PI if applicable), a team of CEHS administrative research support staff; the Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools (CYFS); UNL's Office of Proposal Development (OPD); UNL's Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP); and IANR's Agricultural Research Division (ARD).
- Grant submissions are a team effort among several individuals with unique but shared responsibilities. Regular, two-way communication between PIs and support staff is essential.
- All proposals (e.g., for research, public service, instruction, travel, dissertations, fellowships, etc.), regardless of funder, must be routed and submitted through University channels.
- Contact CEHS grant support staff (e.g., CEHS grant specialists, CYFS proposal coordinators, NPOD representatives) as soon as a decision is made to prepare and submit a grant proposal. Staff will discuss the most appropriate support services for your needs.
- Consider taking advantage of proposal development coordination supports to obtain hands-on assistance with planning and developing all aspects of the application. Staff in CYFS are available to help PIs successfully complete all steps in the grant submission process. ORED staff are also available to help ensure appropriate steps are followed for a timely submission.

Timeline

- ***Plan ahead!*** Know what needs to be completed and plan time accordingly. Make grant proposal development and submission a priority.
 - Early in the grant-writing process, PIs are encouraged to work with a proposal development coordinator to ***co-develop a timeline*** for writing, reviewing, and submitting all elements of the proposal. Work with support staff to create a plan and timeline that will serve as a guide for developing a competitive proposal.
 - CEHS timelines represent ***best practices*** regarding responsible grant submission. They are presented to help you prepare and submit a successful proposal, and you are encouraged to follow them as closely as possible. It is recognized that on occasion, the decision to submit a grant is made at a time that does not conform to CEHS timelines (i.e., fewer than 10 weeks prior to the submission deadline), or other extenuating circumstances may preclude following the guidelines. In these cases, it is important to ***contact grant support staff as soon as you are able*** to create an agreeable and feasible plan.
 - ***Changes to agreed-upon timelines*** are sometimes necessary and not uncommon. If deviations from timelines are necessary, PIs and support staff should discuss alterations to plans openly and respectfully. Needed modifications to the timeline by either the PI or the support staff should be discussed and agreed upon as soon as they become apparent.
 - Responsiveness to timelines is also important in situations wherein the PI is secondary to another institution serving as primary. In these cases, support staff are available to help with ***subaward documents*** (i.e., budget, justification, scope of work, personnel documents) of the CEHS researchers, typically 4-6 weeks prior to submission.
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10 - 12 Weeks Prior to Proposal Deadline

- Select** funding opportunity & begin planning project.
 - **Review** solicitation (program announcement; request for application), guidelines, and instructions.
 - **Identify** key requirements:
 - Eligibility requirements
 - Due dates (including letter of intent, application package)
 - Page limits
 - Font size, margins, required documents
 - Proposal components, review criteria
 - Cost share, matching funds requirement¹
 - Agency limits to F&A
 - **Read** examples of successful proposals, if available.²
- Discuss** intent to submit grant with department chair.
- Communicate** with grant support staff for consultation, and coordination.
- Notify** grant support staff (e.g., grant specialists, CYFS proposal coordinators, NPOD representative) of intent to submit proposal. Submit solicitation to designated support staff.
- Generate** timelines for proposal completion.
- Prepare** research summary/concept paper/aims page; generate tentative proposal title.

- Send** project summary to agency representative (program officer); **schedule** meeting to discuss fit to agency goals, match to solicitation, and recommendations for successful proposal.
- Identify** collaborators (internal and external, if desired).
- Discuss** proposal with department chair or unit director; talk through effort and release time, cost share/matching funds (if required).¹

6 - 10 Weeks Prior to Proposal Deadline

- Meet** with CYFS research support units or other research staff to discuss needs and opportunities for enhancing project and execution, if applicable.²
- Develop** timeline for proposal development. Include time required for all required proposal elements, including:
 - Project Summary/Abstract, Project Description, References, Budget/Budget Justification, Biosketches, Facilities/Resources, Current and Pending Support, Attachments/Supplemental Materials/Appendices
- Follow up** with collaborators (internal and external), determine proposal assignments and timelines, address potential issues. Monitor assignment completion.
- Write** initial proposal draft(s).

4 - 6 Weeks Prior to Proposal Deadline

- Meet** with designated grant specialist to discuss project and budget
 - Discuss PI, co-PI, co-I (key personnel) roles.
 - Discuss cost share/matching funds, if required.
 - Discuss subawards, if applicable.
- Develop** preliminary budget with help of grant specialist; write budget justification.
- Request** subaward documents (if applicable) with assistance of grant specialist.³
- Secure** commitments for cost share/matching funds, if required.¹
- Continue** writing and reviewing proposal drafts.
- Solicit** proposal reviews.^{2,4}

2 - 4 Weeks Prior to Proposal Deadline

- Revise** proposal drafts based on reviews.
- Develop** personnel documents (biosketches, current and pending support) and additional proposal elements.
- Collect and finalize** subaward documents, if applicable.³
- Refine** budget; **update** budget justification; **review** all drafts carefully.

1 - 2 Weeks Prior to Proposal Deadline

- Finalize** draft of budget, budget justification, narrative, personnel documents, and sponsor forms.
- Work with** designated grant specialist to **submit application materials to OSP:** budget, proposal, biosketches, and all other elements.
- Route** proposal through NUGrant/NURamp, with assistance of grant specialists.

2 – 5 Business Days Prior to Proposal Deadline⁵

- Be available and responsive** to designated grant specialist and OSP as forms are reviewed and revisions requested.
- Finalize** drafts in response to OSP-identified concerns.
- Review** final documents as they are uploaded by OSP into appropriate research portal.

1 Business Day Prior to Proposal Deadline (or before)

- Provide** final approval of grant submission.

Notes:

¹ CEHS has adopted a policy on cost share that must be followed. General guidance on securing cost share can be provided by the Dean's office. PIs must initiate the process for securing required cost share immediately.

² CYFS support staff are available to assist with all grant proposal activities. Core support units include research development and coordination (planning, organizing/coordinating, editing/refining proposals), statistics and methodology support (MAP Academy), communications and media (web, design, dissemination), and database and research technologies (database, digital research platforms). See <https://cyfs.unl.edu/grant/> for details. To discuss a specific proposal, or research needs in general, email CYFS@unl.edu.

³ Subawards that involve an external institution should be discussed with the grant specialist as soon as possible. PIs are responsible for providing contact information for the subaward institution's representative to the grant specialist, who will communicate with them to obtain all needed documents. Documents that will be required when involving subawards in grant proposals include: Scope of work, Budget, Budget justification, Commitment form, Biosketches, and Site documents.

⁴ In some situations, ORED will arrange for reviews of grant proposals. For more information, see <https://research.unl.edu/events/event2.php?eventID=345> or contact Tisha Gilreath-Mullen at tgilreathmullen2@unl.edu).

⁵ See CEHS Research Standard Operating Procedures.