OFFICE OF SPONSORED PROGRAMS
PRE-AWARD

DECODING FEDERAL FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENTS

AGENDA

Introduction

What’s in an RFP

NSF RFPs

NIH RFPS

Other Federal RFPs

Takeaways

SOLICITATIONS, RFPS, INSTRUCTIONS

Sponsor provided announcement that includes the purpose of the funding opportunity along with specific direction on submission requirements.

WHAT IS IN AN RFP?

- Deadlines
- Webinar Announcements
- FAQs
- Eligibility
- Application Process
- Required Documents
- Allowable, Allocable, and Reasonable Costs
- Award Notification Information

REVIEWING STANDARD FEDERAL RFPs

NSF STANDARD RFPs

Main Instructions

PAPPG

Submission System

Research.gov

- Deadlines
- Webinar Announcements
- Eligibility
- Application Process
- Required Documents
- Award Notification Information

Important Changes

Common Project Documents

- Project Summary
- Project Description
- References
- Senior/Key Personnel Docs
- Detailed Budget
- Budget Justification
- Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources
- Mentoring Plan (if applicable)
- Data Management and Sharing Plan

NSF INSTRUCTIONS

NSF Main Instructions

- PAPPG

RFP Instructions (See also Program Page)

- Specific to this announcement
- Deviations from the Main Instructions

Submission System

- Research.gov



NIH STANDARD RFPs

Main Instructions
Application Guide

Submission System
ASSIST

- Deadlines
- Webinar Announcements
- Eligibility
- Application Process
- Required Documents
- Award Notification Information

Common Project Documents

- Project Summary
- Project Narrative
- References
- Senior/Key Personnel Docs
- Detailed Budget
- Budget Justification
- Facilities and Other Resources
- Specific Aims
- Resource Sharing Plan
- Data Management and Sharing Plan
- Human, Clinical, Animal, and Select Agent Research

NIH INSTRUCTIONS

NIH Main Instructions

- Application Guide

RFP Instructions

- Specific to this announcement
- Deviations from the Main Instructions

Submission System

- ASSIST



OTHER FEDERAL RFPs – DEPT. OF EDUCATION

Main Instructions
EDGAR

Submission System
Grants.gov

- Deadlines
- Webinar Announcements
- Eligibility
- Application Process
- Required Documents
- Award Notification Information

Common Project Documents

- Project Abstract
- Project Narrative
- References
- Project Personnel & CVs
- Detailed Budget
- Budget Justification
- Evaluation Plan
- Logic Model
- Letters of Support
- Additional Documents as required

Example RFP

REVIEW OF PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

- Consolidates relevant proposal information in one quick-reference document
- Links to guidance documents and source pages
- Clear communication and deadlines

TOP: Details on the sponsor, program, deadline, submission method, links to relevant guidance, and link to SPIRIT

SPONSOR/FUNDING AGENCY: NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION (NSF) (NSF GOLD STANDARD SCIENCE)
PROGRAM: ENGINEERING RESEARCH INITIATION (ERI)
DEADLINE: OCTOBER 9, 2026 BY 5:00PM CST (VIA RESEARCH.GOV)
GUIDELINES: NSF PAPPG // SUPP 1 // SUPP 2 // RFP // SENIOR PERSONNEL DOCS
SPIRIT # 27-0063

Formatting (PAPPG II-4)

- 1 inch margins, single or double spaced
- Font: Arial (not narrow), Courier New, or Palatino Linotype at size 10 points or larger; Times New Roman or Computer Modern family fonts at size 11 points or larger (smaller font allowed in equations, figures, tables)

Important Information

- Budget maximum is $200,000 for projects up to 2 years.
- Co-PIs and Collaborative Submission are not allowed. Project Title must begin with "ERI:…"
- The PI must have an NSF ID that is affiliated with WKU (UEI: U5GMACGETKJ1). The PI will generate the proposal in Research.gov and allow SPO/AOR edit/submit access.
- Other than the PI starting the proposal, completing the DMSP and Data Form (if applicable), the PI does not need to complete other elements of research.gov. OSP will complete and upload all reviewed documents.
- Salary for Senior Personnel is limited to no more than 2 months of regular yearly salary; include the university's definition of "year" related to the 2-month salary limit. Specific justification is needed for including more effort.

Draft Version Due to OSP	Final Version Due to OSP	Description	Guidelines Reference
N/A	09/23/2026	Research Security Training (Combined) is required for all Key/Senior Personnel. Must be provided to OSP prior to submission. Project personnel cannot be party to an MFTRP.	NOTICE NO. 149
09/16/2026	09/23/2026	Budget (please work with OSP)	PAPPG II-14 RFP 7
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Budget Justification – 5 Pages Max	PAPPG II-14
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Project Summary – 1 Page Max	PAPPG II-11
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Project Description – 10 Pages Max –Required Section Headers	PAPPG II-11 RFP 6
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	References Cited – (list all authors as they appear in the publication, do not use "et al.") – No Page Limit	PAPPG II-13
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Facilities, Equipment, & Other Resources	PAPPG II-23
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Data Management & Sharing Plan – PI must complete via tool in Research.gov (should align with NSF Gold Standard Science)	PAPPG II-33 SUPP 2
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Researcher Mentoring Plan (if applicable – now includes graduate students as well as postdocs) – 1 Page	PAPPG II-32
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Department Chair/Dean's Letter – See RFP for required content	RFP 7
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Biographical Sketch – No Page Limit (PI, Co-PI, & S. Personnel)	PAPPG II-23
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Current & Pending – No Page Limit (PI, Co-PI, & S. Personnel)	PAPPG II-27
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Collaborators & Other Affiliations (PI, Co-PI, & S. Personnel)	PAPPG II-31
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Synergistic Activities – 1 Page Max (PI, Co-PI, & S. Personnel)	PAPPG II-32

FORMATTING: Details on required formatting such as font type, font size, margins, file naming and saving, etc.

SPONSOR/FUNDING AGENCY: NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION (NSF) (NSF GOLD STANDARD SCIENCE)
PROGRAM: ENGINEERING RESEARCH INITIATION (ERI)
DEADLINE: OCTOBER 9, 2026 BY 5:00PM CST (VIA RESEARCH.GOV)
GUIDELINES: NSF PAPPG // SUPP 1 // SUPP 2 // RFP // SENIOR PERSONNEL DOCS
SPIRIT # 27-0063

Formatting (PAPPG II-4)

- 1 inch margins, single or double spaced
- Font: Arial (not narrow), Courier New, or Palatino Linotype at size 10 points or larger; Times New Roman or Computer Modern family fonts at size 11 points or larger (smaller font allowed in equations, figures, tables)

Important Information

- Budget maximum is $200,000 for projects up to 2 years.
- Co-PIs and Collaborative Submission are not allowed. Project Title must begin with "ERI:…"
- The PI must have an NSF ID that is affiliated with WKU (UEI: U5GMACGETKJ1). The PI will generate the proposal in Research.gov and allow SPO/AOR edit/submit access.
- Other than the PI starting the proposal, completing the DMSP and Data Form (if applicable), the PI does not need to complete other elements of research.gov. OSP will complete and upload all reviewed documents.
- Salary for Senior Personnel is limited to no more than 2 months of regular yearly salary; include the university's definition of "year" related to the 2-month salary limit. Specific justification is needed for including more effort.

Draft Version Due to OSP	Final Version Due to OSP	Description	Guidelines Reference
N/A	09/23/2026	Research Security Training (Combined) is required for all Key/Senior Personnel. Must be provided to OSP prior to submission. Project personnel cannot be party to an MFTRP.	NOTICE NO. 149
09/16/2026	09/23/2026	Budget (please work with OSP)	PAPPG II-14 RFP 7
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Budget Justification – 5 Pages Max	PAPPG II-14
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Project Summary – 1 Page Max	PAPPG II-11
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Project Description – 10 Pages Max –Required Section Headers	PAPPG II-11 RFP 6
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	References Cited – (list all authors as they appear in the publication, do not use "et al.") – No Page Limit	PAPPG II-13
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Facilities, Equipment, & Other Resources	PAPPG II-23
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Data Management & Sharing Plan – PI must complete via tool in Research.gov (should align with NSF Gold Standard Science)	PAPPG II-33 SUPP 2
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Researcher Mentoring Plan (if applicable – now includes graduate students as well as postdocs) – 1 Page	PAPPG II-32
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Department Chair/Dean's Letter – See RFP for required content	RFP 7
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Biographical Sketch – No Page Limit (PI, Co-PI, & S. Personnel)	PAPPG II-23
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Current & Pending – No Page Limit (PI, Co-PI, & S. Personnel)	PAPPG II-27
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Collaborators & Other Affiliations (PI, Co-PI, & S. Personnel)	PAPPG II-31
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Synergistic Activities – 1 Page Max (PI, Co-PI, & S. Personnel)	PAPPG II-32

IMPORTANT INFORMATION: Details related to processing, budget limits, period of performance, limitations and other important requirements

SPONSOR/FUNDING AGENCY: NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION (NSF) (NSF GOLD STANDARD SCIENCE)
PROGRAM: ENGINEERING RESEARCH INITIATION (ERI)
DEADLINE: OCTOBER 9, 2026 BY 5:00PM CST (VIA RESEARCH.GOV)
GUIDELINES: NSF PAPPG // SUPP 1 // SUPP 2 // RFP // SENIOR PERSONNEL DOCS
SPIRIT # 27-0063

Formatting (PAPPG II-4)

- 1 inch margins, single or double spaced
- Font: Arial (not narrow), Courier New, or Palatino Linotype at size 10 points or larger; Times New Roman or Computer Modern family fonts at size 11 points or larger (smaller font allowed in equations, figures, tables)

Important Information

- Budget maximum is $200,000 for projects up to 2 years.
- Co-PIs and Collaborative Submission are not allowed. Project Title must begin with "ERI:…"
- The PI must have an NSF ID that is affiliated with WKU (UEI: U5GMACGETKJ1). The PI will generate the proposal in Research.gov and allow SPO/AOR edit/submit access.
- Other than the PI starting the proposal, completing the DMSP and Data Form (if applicable), the PI does not need to complete other elements of research.gov. OSP will complete and upload all reviewed documents.
- Salary for Senior Personnel is limited to no more than 2 months of regular yearly salary; include the university's definition of "year" related to the 2-month salary limit. Specific justification is needed for including more effort.

Draft Version Due to OSP	Final Version Due to OSP	Description	Guidelines Reference
N/A	09/23/2026	Research Security Training (Combined) is required for all Key/Senior Personnel. Must be provided to OSP prior to submission. Project personnel cannot be party to an MFTRP.	NOTICE NO. 149
09/16/2026	09/23/2026	Budget (please work with OSP)	PAPPG II-14 RFP 7
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Budget Justification – 5 Pages Max	PAPPG II-14
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Project Summary – 1 Page Max	PAPPG II-11
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Project Description – 10 Pages Max –Required Section Headers	PAPPG II-11 RFP 6
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	References Cited – (list all authors as they appear in the publication, do not use "et al.") – No Page Limit	PAPPG II-13
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Facilities, Equipment, & Other Resources	PAPPG II-23
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Data Management & Sharing Plan – PI must complete via tool in Research.gov (should align with NSF Gold Standard Science)	PAPPG II-33 SUPP 2
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Researcher Mentoring Plan (if applicable – now includes graduate students as well as postdocs) – 1 Page	PAPPG II-32
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Department Chair/Dean's Letter – See RFP for required content	RFP 7
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Biographical Sketch – No Page Limit (PI, Co-PI, & S. Personnel)	PAPPG II-23
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Current & Pending – No Page Limit (PI, Co-PI, & S. Personnel)	PAPPG II-27
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Collaborators & Other Affiliations (PI, Co-PI, & S. Personnel)	PAPPG II-31
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Synergistic Activities – 1 Page Max (PI, Co-PI, & S. Personnel)	PAPPG II-32

BOTTOM: List of all required proposal components & documents.

Quick reference details, and reference to full guidelines.

Due dates for drafts and final document versions.

SPONSOR/FUNDING AGENCY: NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION (NSF) (NSF GOLD STANDARD SCIENCE)
PROGRAM: ENGINEERING RESEARCH INITIATION (ERI)
DEADLINE: OCTOBER 9, 2026 BY 5:00PM CST (VIA RESEARCH.GOV)
GUIDELINES: NSF PAPPG // SUPP 1 // SUPP 2 // RFP // SENIOR PERSONNEL DOCS
SPIRIT # 27-0063

Formatting (PAPPG II-4)

- 1 inch margins, single or double spaced
- Font: Arial (not narrow), Courier New, or Palatino Linotype at size 10 points or larger; Times New Roman or Computer Modern family fonts at size 11 points or larger (smaller font allowed in equations, figures, tables)

Important Information

- Budget maximum is $200,000 for projects up to 2 years.
- Co-PIs and Collaborative Submission are not allowed. Project Title must begin with "ERI:…"
- The PI must have an NSF ID that is affiliated with WKU (UEI: U5GMACGETKJ1). The PI will generate the proposal in Research.gov and allow SPO/AOR edit/submit access.
- Other than the PI starting the proposal, completing the DMSP and Data Form (if applicable), the PI does not need to complete other elements of research.gov. OSP will complete and upload all reviewed documents.
- Salary for Senior Personnel is limited to no more than 2 months of regular yearly salary; include the university's definition of "year" related to the 2-month salary limit. Specific justification is needed for including more effort.

Draft Version Due to OSP	Final Version Due to OSP	Description	Guidelines Reference
N/A	09/23/2026	Research Security Training (Combined) is required for all Key/Senior Personnel. Must be provided to OSP prior to submission. Project personnel cannot be party to an MFTRP.	NOTICE NO. 149
09/16/2026	09/23/2026	Budget (please work with OSP)	PAPPG II-14 RFP 7
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Budget Justification – 5 Pages Max	PAPPG II-14
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Project Summary – 1 Page Max	PAPPG II-11
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Project Description – 10 Pages Max –Required Section Headers	PAPPG II-11 RFP 6
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	References Cited – (list all authors as they appear in the publication, do not use "et al.") – No Page Limit	PAPPG II-13
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Facilities, Equipment, & Other Resources	PAPPG II-23
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Data Management & Sharing Plan – PI must complete via tool in Research.gov (should align with NSF Gold Standard Science)	PAPPG II-33 SUPP 2
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Researcher Mentoring Plan (if applicable – now includes graduate students as well as postdocs) – 1 Page	PAPPG II-32
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Department Chair/Dean's Letter – See RFP for required content	RFP 7
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Biographical Sketch – No Page Limit (PI, Co-PI, & S. Personnel)	PAPPG II-23
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Current & Pending – No Page Limit (PI, Co-PI, & S. Personnel)	PAPPG II-27
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Collaborators & Other Affiliations (PI, Co-PI, & S. Personnel)	PAPPG II-31
09/24/2026	09/30/2026	Synergistic Activities – 1 Page Max (PI, Co-PI, & S. Personnel)	PAPPG II-32

GREY AREAS & TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICES

Terminology is not always the same between funders.

Quick turn around proposals.

Scientific content/methodology should demonstrate your expertise but should not assume reviewers have the same level of expertise (define acronyms and be mindful of specific jargon).

When working with a research team, consider expertise, funded history, and the sponsor's mission/purpose when identifying a PI.

Do: Contact OSP when interested in submitting a proposal

Do: Contact a PO about relevance/science

Do: Contact a funded PI to ask for a specific example