

Submit Your Application

The RFP for your grant application will very explicitly state the only acceptable way(s) to submit the application. Read these directions very carefully and jot down the important submission criteria or mark them with a stick-on flag so you don't struggle to find them in the RFP at the last minute.

Applications generally are submitted either 1) in hard copy sent by express delivery or US Mail to a designated street address or 2) electronically using a system like the National Science Foundation's Fastlane or www.grants.gov. Some sponsors request that the proposal be submitted both electronically and in hard copy so they have original approval signatures.

Applications sent by express delivery service or US Mail

- **Read the RFP requirements very carefully to identify:**
 - How many complete sets of your application you must submit. For example, a grant sponsor might require one original with signatures and four copies.
 - How many partial copies of your application you must submit. For example, a grant sponsor might require the original proposal plus five copies of just the project summary, the budget, and the budget narrative.
 - How the pages of each copy should be fastened. Tom common options are stapled in a specific corner or clipped.
 - The order the copies should be placed in – for example: complete sets (originals plus copies) on top and then partial copies.
 - The correct delivery address(es). The RFP might direct you to send written questions about the RFP to one mailing address, application packages being delivered by US Mail to another address, and application packages being delivered by an express service to a special street address.
- **US Mail delivery**
 - Allow extra time for disruptions in service due to things like weather, holidays, holiday mail volume, and the natural tendency for things to go wrong at the last minute.
 - Use sturdy packaging and make sure your address labels are large, easy to read, and firmly stuck to the package.
 - Don't guess at the postage. Have the package officially weighed and the appropriate postage applied.
 - Send your application by "Certified Return Receipt Requested" mail so you have proof of when it was mailed and confirmation of when it was received.
- **Express service (Fed Ex, UPS, etc.) delivery**
 - Allow extra time for disruptions in service due to things like weather, holidays, holiday mail volume, and the natural tendency for things to go wrong at the last minute.
 - Use packaging provided by the express service vendor and make sure the shipping waybill is filled out clearly and completely and correctly attached to the packet.
 - Keep the customer copy of the waybill or jot down the package tracking number so you can use it to confirm your application's status and receipt by the grant agency.
 - Nearby Fed Ex drop off locations are Town and Country Back at Harbin and Washington (4:00) and the Pack and Ship store on Washington across from Walmart (4:45).

Applications entered into an electronic application system

Many Federal grant sponsors use the www.grants.gov electronic application system. The National Science Foundation (NSF) uses its own Fastlane system. *Although it is possible to submit to NSF using grants.gov, be very careful to follow both agencies submission requirements, especially as they relate to .pdf formats for attached documents.* Most electronic application systems follow approximately the same procedure.

1. **Read the RFP requirements for electronic application very carefully to identify:**
 - Which electronic application system you are expected to use.
 - Which fonts are allowed.

- Whether information can be submitted in .pdf format and/or directly as a Microsoft® Word document. For a grants.gov submission, confirm which versions of Adobe Reader or Acrobat may be used to create .pdf files and install an appropriate version if you don't have one.
- Whether you will be working online in the grant system or offline on your own computer when you are entering your information. If you are working offline, remember where you file your electronic rough draft before submitting it. If the offline packet has a "Save" function, always remember to use it so you don't lose all your work.
- How to submit an application if you don't have a Windows operating system.

2. Register on the site as a grant applicant or principal administrator.

To submit a grant application on NSF's Fastlane, the principal investigator/project director, all co-principal investigators/directors and other senior personnel on the project team who have not previously registered on Fastlane must request access.

- As soon as you decide to apply for a grant, email the Office of Sponsored Projects (little@tarleton.edu and pawlak@tarleton.edu) and request access for all project team members.
- The information required to authorize access for someone is the person's first name, last name, Tarleton email address, Tarleton phone number, Tarleton fax number, academic department, highest degree, and the year in which that degree was received.
- In lieu of a social security number, Fastlane assigns a system-generated ID number.
- Each person receives email confirmation of his/her registration as soon as it is complete.

For other electronic web sites, as soon as you decide to apply for the grant, log onto the web site following instructions provided in your RFP and register as a grant applicant. Typically, the system will give you an applicant name and registration number that you must use to submit your application. Write them down.

3. Make sure you have both hard copy and electronic versions of the standard forms, narrative and budget information required by the RFP. The information should be organized in the order specified in the RFP.

4. The electronic system will walk you through the steps required to enter your grant into the system.

Standard forms. Standard forms typically are used, for example, for cover sheets, certifications and budgets. Usually you will type information from paper copies of the standard forms into electronic versions of the forms. Sometimes the information may be on different places on the electronic and paper forms, so pay attention to the data field names.

Project Narrative/Description. Usually you're asked to either upload a .pdf version of the narrative or a Microsoft® Word version of it into the electronic application. Fastlane converts Microsoft® Word documents into a .pdf version that is acceptable to NSF.

Budget Justification/Narrative. Usually you're asked to upload a .pdf version as an attachment to the standard budget form.

Personal Descriptions/CVs. Usually you're asked to upload .pdf or Microsoft® Word versions to the electronic application.

Saving Your Data. At the end of each step in the submission process, you will be given the option to save your data. Always remember to save. If you discover you've "lost" part of your application, you probably forgot to save.

Start entering your grant application well in advance of the grant application deadline. The closer you get to the deadline, the more likely it is that the electronic system will be clogged with applicants and you won't be able to log on to complete your application.

5. Submit your electronic application.

Your application must successfully complete Tarleton's internal approval process before you can officially submit it.

When you have approval, log onto the electronic system, review your application one more time, and then select the "Submit Grant Application" option.

6. Complete the final approval stage. This approval formalizes Tarleton's internal approval process.

NSF applications are formally accepted by Fastlane when Dr. Bert Little, Office of Sponsored Projects, approves them as Tarleton's authorized representative (AOR). He receives electronic notification that a grant is awaiting approval and does the final authorization.

For grants.gov applications, Tarleton's authorized representative – Ann Pawlak, x. 9588, pawlak@tarleton.edu – must be at your computer when you submit to complete the final authorization.

Combined online and paper submissions

Some grant sponsors may require you to submit your application online and then follow it up with delivery of, for example, standard application forms requiring original signatures, attachments that cannot be entered into an electronic system (for example, recordings of musical repertoire or samples of previous exhibition catalogs), and/or a complete hard copy of the application to be used to verify the electronic submission. Usually one deadline is specified for the electronic submission and then a second, somewhat later one for the paper documentation.

The procedures for combined submissions are the same as those described above for individual submissions.