

Research Resources: Writing a Grant Application

6. Submit Your Application

The RFP for your grant application will very explicitly state the only acceptable way(s) to submit the application. Read those directions very carefully and jot down the important submission criteria or mark them with a stick-on flag so you don't have to 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 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 mailed 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 are required to submit; for example, a grant sponsor might require a signed original plus four copies.
 - How many partial copies of your application you are required to submit; for example, a grant sponsor might require five additional copies of the project summary and the budget narrative.
 - How the pages of each copy should be fastened. Two common options are stapled (which corner?) or clipped
 - The order the copies should be placed in -- for example: complete sets first with the original on top and then the partial copies
 - The correct delivery address. 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 like Fed Ex to a third address. Sending your application to the wrong address is likely to mean it will be officially considered "lost."
- **US Mail delivery**
 - Allow extra time for disruptions in service due to things like weather, 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, holiday delivery 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 label is filled out clearly and completing and is firmly attached to the package.
 - Jot down the package tracking number so you can use it to confirm your application's status and receipt by the grant agency.
 - If you miss the campus pick-up time for express service, the nearest Fed Ex drop off locations are: Town and Country Bank at Harbin and Washington (4:00), Sanders Tractor on Harbin between Washington and 377 (4:30), and the Pack and Ship store on Washington across from WalMart(4:45).

Applications entered into an electronic application system

Some Federal grant sponsors are standardizing on using the www.Grants.gov electronic application system. The National Science Foundation (NSF) uses its own FastLane system. *To submit to NSF using*

grants.gov, be very careful to follow both agencies' submission requirements, especially as they relate to .pdf formats. Most electronic application systems follow approximately the same procedures.

1. Read the RFP requirements for electronic application very carefully to identify:

- Which electronic application system you are expected to use
- Which fonts are acceptable
- Whether information can be submitted in .pdf format and/or from Microsoft Word documents
- Whether you will be working online in the grant system or offline on your own computer when you are entering data. If you are working offline, you must remember where you file your electronic rough draft before submitting it
- What information (for example, DUNS number) will be required for you to register on the electronic application system
- If appropriate, how to submit 3.2n application if you don't have a Windows operating system.

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

To submit a grant application on NSF's Fastlane, the principal investigator/project director, all co-principal investigators 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, unregistered project team members should email the Office of Sponsored Projects (little@tarleton.edu or pawlak@tarleton.edu) requesting access. The information required to authorize access is 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 providing your social security number, Fastlane assigns a system-generated ID number. You will receive email confirmation of registration as soon as it is complete.

For other electronic submission 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. 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 all 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. Usually you will have to 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.
- Narrative. Usually you're asked to either append a .pdf version of the narrative or copy a Microsoft version of it into the electronic application.
- Budget Detail. Budget detail very often is specified as a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. However, you may need to convert the spreadsheet to .pdf form to append it 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.

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

5. Submit your electronic application. Your application must have successfully completed Tarleton's internal approval process before you can submit it. Once you have approval, log onto the

electronic system and select the "Submit Grant Application" option. For NSF Fastlane, you will receive electronic notification that your grant has been submitted.

6. Complete final approval of your electronic application. This approval formalizes the internal Tarleton approval process described earlier.

Your NSF application will not be formally accepted by the electronic system until Dr. Bert Little, Office of Sponsored Projects, approves it as Tarleton's authorized representative. He receives electronic notification that a grant is awaiting his approval and does the final authorization.

For grants.gov, Tarleton's organizational representative -- Ann Pawlak (x. 9588; pawlak@tarleton.edu) -- must be at your computer to complete the final authorization when you indicate you are ready to submit your proposal.

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 deadline is specified for the paper documentation.

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