



Resources for potential ATE grantees classified by NSF as “New Performers”

Overview

The first time NSF makes a grant award to an institution, they are considered “New Performers.” NSF defines a new performer as an institution that: (1) has never received an NSF award, (2) has not received an NSF award in the past five years, or (3) the total of all NSF funding with any new recommended award would exceed \$500,000. New Performers must demonstrate that they have accounting and related systems in place to help ensure compliance with Federal and NSF guidelines should the college receive an award and serve as fiscal agent for the grant.

The NSF Division of Grants and Agreements (DGA) is responsible for determining if the college has systems in place that will ensure that grant funds are administered correctly by the institution. The college will need to undergo a financial review to confirm that the institution has the appropriate accounting systems and processes to manage an NSF project. It is very important that each question in the New Performer Package be answered to DGA satisfaction.

DGA will send a packet of information to the designated Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) at your college who will be asked to complete and return the requested information by a specified date (often in as little as two weeks). A prompt reply will be expected. While the AOR may be able to complete some parts of the packet, the institution’s business/financial accounting office will need to provide information to the AOR to send to NSF.

IMPORTANT: The packet will be sent via email and may go into a spam folder if the spam filter at the institution is especially sensitive. Alert your AOR of this possibility.

After DGA receives the college’s completed New Performer Package, it may be sent to NSF Cost Analysis and Audit Resolution (CAAR) personnel for additional review. If so, you may be asked for some of the same or additional information.

The Mentor-Connect project team isn’t an authority on this approval process, and we are not accountants; however, we have assembled some resources to help you. It is important to avoid pitfalls that may result in a proposal being declined rather than funded. **DGA is highly unlikely**



to provide a potential grantee institution a second chance to get it right. Be very careful and thoughtful in responding to this NSF request.

Review the NSF prospective New Awardee Guide (accessible via URL below). Specifically, read Section A, 1. Overview, and 2. Federal Requirements; and Section B, Sections 1-6.
www.nsf.gov/pubs/2018/nsf18033/nsf18033.pdf

Resources

PowerPoint from NSF DGA (dated October 2013 and 2015) – Valuable information related to being approved as a New Performer.

New Performer Package – Probably the same package as you received from NSF DGA.

Sample Completed New Performer Package to serve as an example. The sample provided is being shared from an institution that completed the New Performer application process prior to receiving NSF ATE grant awards in a previous, but recent, year. This institution graciously provided their package for us to share. Please note that Mentor-Connect cannot verify that everything in these completed packages is “perfect” or would satisfy DGA today. What we know is that this information was submitted to DGA, and an award to the institution followed.

IMPORTANT: Make sure your business office is able to answer “yes” to all questions in the New Performer package questionnaire. “No” responses are likely to create points of concern for DGA in processing your proposal for an award.

Time and Effort Reporting Procedures – It is important to have written procedures in place for time and effort reporting for NSF grants. A sample procedure is provided Mentor-Connect Library. The samples may be modified to meet local needs; however, including all of the information indicated on the sample forms will help ensure that NSF expectations are being met. A very clear accounting of time a person spent working on grant-funded project and accounting for 100% of a person’s time who is receiving grant funds or release time provided by grant funds is essential.

How to find resources:

- Go to Mentor-Connect.org
- Click on **Find a Resource**
- Click on **Library**
- In search in upper right corner type “Time and Effort” – use quotation marks

Sample Time and Effort Reporting Forms – Examples are provided in the Mentor-Connect Library and include separate forms for hourly reporting and % reporting for use by salaried individuals. If hourly, the total must be for 100% of each day (e.g., 8 hours). If percent, the total must be 100% for each day. These samples provided include multiple NSF awards in progress simultaneously. For first-time grantees, it is more common to have a single grant award listed for which individuals are devoting time and effort. For full-time employees and



permanent faculty, all time must be reported. Time and effort reports should verify that individuals receiving financial support or release time from the grant are devoting the right amount of time to the grant. It is important to demonstrate that no one working on the grant is in an “overload” situation with more than 100% time commitment unless the plan to do this was included in the proposal budget justification with appropriate reference to the college policy regarding payment for faculty overload.

Your institution may not have a time and effort reporting system in place for grants that will satisfy NSF. The time and effort reporting for grantees must tie to the institution’s payroll records (time working on the grant work must align with grant-funded pay for the same time period). Be aware of time away from work. Note holidays, jury duty, sick leave, and vacation time as appropriate. It is the total time allocated that is important. It is normal for time spent working on a grant to vary by day, week, or month over the life of the project.

Examples of those for whom time and effort reports are required:

- Someone working on the grant for whom a percent of his or her salary and fringe benefits are being paid from grant funds.
- Faculty member who is provided with “release” time; i.e., a faculty member teaches a reduced course load with the remainder of the person’s full-time load being time devoted to working on the grant.
- An adjunct or other faculty member who is being paid from grant funds to teach classes that would otherwise have been taught by grant personnel being provided with release time.



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