



Understanding the Role of Your College's Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR)

Your college's **Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR)** plays a critical role in the submission of your ATE proposal. An NSF proposal must be submitted by an institution's AOR for it to be accepted and reviewed for funding consideration.

Because of the emphasis on this critical submission step in the funding process, it can be easy to assume that an AOR's responsibilities end there. However, the AOR has several additional responsibilities throughout the life of the grant. This overview outlines key functions typically performed by the AOR at NSF ATE recipient institutions. While not comprehensive, the information below highlights the most common responsibilities that extend beyond proposal submission.

Who Is the AOR?

The AOR is a designated individual at the institution who is entrusted with the authority to submit proposals and commit the college to grant-related obligations. As part of the team supporting proposal development and submission, the AOR ensures compliance with NSF and institutional requirements. The AOR handles official correspondence on behalf of the institution, however, Program Officers communicate directly with the PI regarding the project's scope and progress.

According to the **NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG)**, the AOR is:

"...the administrative official who, on behalf of the proposing organization, is empowered to make certifications and representations and can commit the organization to the conduct of a project that NSF is being asked to support, as well as adhere to various NSF policies and award requirements."

It is important to remember that NSF awards grants to institutions, not individuals. Therefore, the organization—through the AOR—must certify that the institution agrees to comply with the terms and conditions of the award.

In PAPPG 24-1, the term AOR appears 62 times reflecting the importance of this role.

Proposal Stage

- ☐ Certify and submit proposals via Research.gov or Grants.gov.
- ☐ Ensure that all required institutional certifications and approvals have been addressed.
- ☐ Confirm that the proposal is compliant with the NSF PAPPG and current, applicable ATE program solicitation.
- ☐ Withdraw the proposal — for example, if a Program Officer identifies a significant issue and recommends withdrawal and resubmission, or if you discover a critical error that requires correction before resubmitting. (NOTE: This can only happen if you submit early.)



Award Acceptance

- ☐ Review and formally accept NSF award terms and conditions.
- ☐ Confirm that the institution is prepared to meet all obligations of the award.

Post-Award Stage

- ☐ Oversee compliant use of grant funds according to 2 CFR 200 and NSF GC-1.
- ☐ Confirm submission of Annual and Final Project Reports.

While the **PI and Co-PIs** receive NSF notifications about and are responsible for writing and submitting these reports, the AOR plays a monitoring and accountability role by communicating with the PI to confirm that the reports are submitted on time.

- ☐ Submit or approve requests to NSF for:
 - ☐ Budget revisions.
 - ☐ No-Cost Extensions. Per the PAPPG: “All grantee-approved extension notifications must be signed and submitted by the AOR via use of NSF’s electronic systems.”
 - ☐ Changes to personnel, such as PI/Co-PI changes, changes in person-months that Senior Personnel dedicate to a project, or withdrawal of key personnel.
 - ☐ Scope changes or subaward modifications. Per the PAPPG: “The objectives or scope of the project may not be changed without prior NSF approval. Such change requests must be signed and submitted by the AOR via use of NSF’s electronic systems.”
 - ☐ Supplemental funding requests.

Final Note

The AOR serves a vital compliance, oversight, and communication role throughout the lifecycle of an NSF ATE grant. Understanding the AOR’s responsibilities ensures smoother collaboration and helps maintain institutional eligibility and good standing with the NSF.

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Instructions

For many activities the PI will initiate the change, which will then be sent to the AOR for approval. The instructions below show how the PI can initiate the changes.

NOTE: No changes should be made without prior communication (email) with your Program Officer.

Log in under **Awards and Reporting** select **Notifications and Requests**. Then click on **Prepare New**.

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Prepare New". It contains two main sections: "Step 1: Select type of change" and "Step 2: Select notification / request".

Step 1: Select type of change

- ☐ All
- ☐ Budget Activities
- ☐ No-Cost Extensions
- ☐ Changes in Objectives, Scope, or Methodology and other Significant Changes
- ☐ Changes in PI/PD, co-PI/co-PD or Person-Months Devoted to the Project at the Initiation of the Awardee Organization (Including PI Transfer)
- ☐ Post-award Disclosure of Current Support and In-Kind Contribution Information
- ☐ Other

Step 2: Select notification / request

*The "Other Request" option must only be used to submit requests for prior approval specified in PAPPG Chapter X.A.3. that do not already have a specific request type. In addition, it may when specified in the applicable terms and conditions. Any request submitted that does not meet these criteria will be rejected.

At the bottom of Step 2, there is a dropdown menu labeled "Select Type of Change First" and a blue "Go" button.

Step 1: You will see a list of the Type of Changes.

Step 2: After selecting the type of change, select the appropriate drop down option.

Click the **Go** button. You will be asked to enter your award number (DUE). Click **Prepare New**.

On the next screen you will provide additional information relating to the type of change you are making.

If you make a change that requires AOR approval, you will see the buttons below. If you only click on **SAVE**, nothing will happen related to approval. If you click on **Save and Forward to AOR**, these changes will go to your AOR for approval and submission to NSF.

A horizontal row of three buttons: "Save", "Save & Forward to AOR", and "Cancel".