

NASA Proposal Guidance

From NASA Grant and Cooperative Agreement Manual (GCAM) dated March 21, 2025

The *NASA Grant and Cooperative Agreement Manual* (GCAM) provides policy guidance to Federal financial assistance applicants and recipients

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is an independent Federal agency of the United States. NASA has five Mission Directorates, each assigned responsibility for implementing NASA's vision, mission, and values

The Mission Directorates are listed below:

- Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate (ARMD)
- Exploration Systems Development Mission Directorate (ESDMD)
- Science Mission Directorate (SMD)
- Space Operations Mission Directorate (SOMD)
- Space Technology Mission Directorate (STMD)

NSPIRES is the NASA Solicitation and Proposal Integrated Review and Evaluation System. This web-based system supports NASA research from the release of solicitation announcements through the peer review and selection processes.

NASA releases competitive funding opportunities through NOFOs posted in NSPIRES and publishes synopses of these opportunities in Grants.gov

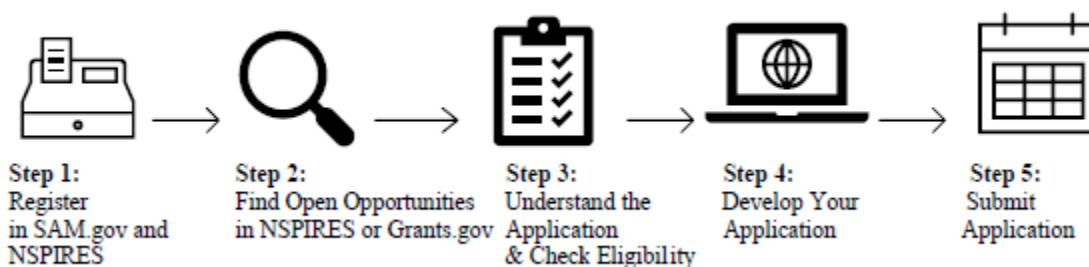
NASA Research Announcement (NRA) is used to announce research interests in support of NASA's programs. After peer or scientific review, based on factors in the NRA, proposals are selected for funding. Unlike an RFP containing a statement of work or specification to which offerors are to respond, an NRA provides for the submission of competitive project ideas, conceived by the offerors, in one or more program areas of interest. NRAs may result in grants, contracts or cooperative agreements.

Omnibus NOFOs set forth general requirements for a group of funding opportunities known as Appendices. Omnibus NOFOs provide the general rules and overall process for

applicants to apply for grant or cooperative agreement funding through NASA Mission Directorates or offices. Examples are the Research Opportunities in Space and Earth Sciences (ROSES).

An appendix, also known as a program element, falls under an omnibus NOFO and is a distinct element within the omnibus NOFO with its own application requirements, eligibility, and submission timeframes.

9.0 Overview of Steps to Apply for NASA Grants



NASA strongly encourages the submission of proposals through NSPIRES, and encourages potential proposers to access the site well in advance of the proposal due date(s) to familiarize themselves with its structure and enter the requested identifier information.

NSPIRES will promptly notify the AOR and PI via email upon successful proposal submission by the AOR. Proposers can also verify that their proposals were submitted by logging into NSPIRES and verifying that the proposal record appears in the “Submitted Proposals” (versus “Unsubmitted Proposals”) section of their accounts.

NSPIRES Registration

Applicants, PIs, and proposed team members are required to register in NSPIRES prior to the application due date.

Every individual named on the proposal’s electronic proposal cover page form or in the Grants.gov forms as a proposing team member in any role, including Co-Investigators (Co-Is) and Collaborators, shall be registered in NSPIRES. Such individuals shall perform this registration themselves;

Submitting Proposals Through Grants.gov

Proposers may have the option to use Grants.gov to prepare and submit proposals. All proposals submitted through Grants.gov will be transferred to NSPIRES and transcribed for evaluation by NASA. All individuals and organizations named in the proposal shall register in NSPIRES to enable the transfer.

Table 1 – Required Proposal Elements

Required Parts of a Proposal (In Order of Assembly)	Page Limit
Proposal Cover Page (NSPIRES web forms or Grants.gov forms) including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proposal Summary – limit to 4,000 characters (including spaces)• NSPIRES cover page budget• Proposal team members• Other required elements	Constrained by NSPIRES and Grants.gov
Table of Contents	As needed
Scientific/Technical/Management (S/T/M) Plan	15 ⁴
References and Citations	As needed
Biographical Sketches for covered individuals	As needed
Current and Pending (Other) Support for covered individuals	As needed
Statements of Commitment and Letters of Support	As needed
Proposal Budget (budget) – both the budget narrative and budget details ⁵	As needed
Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources	As needed
Table of Personnel and Work Effort	As needed
Data Management Plan	As prescribed in the NOFO.

⁴ This page limit includes all illustrations, tables, and figures, where each "n-page" fold-out counts as n-pages and each side of a sheet containing text or an illustration counts as a page. This page limit may be superseded by instructions in the NOFO.

⁵ NOFOs may require more information in a separate section.

10.1 Proposal Cover Page

Proposers submitting proposals through NSPIRES are required to submit required information generated by the system. The NSPIRES web interface will prompt the proposer for basic information at the time of proposal creation, such as proposal title and

organizational affiliation of the PI, and it will permit the PI to choose team members, assign their roles and access, and enter budget information. NSPIRES will then generate the cover page based on information that the applicant enters into NSPIRES. One or more (per the NOFO) PDF files shall be uploaded to complete the proposal assembly. Once the PI completes the assembly, the AOR shall access the proposal in NSPIRES and submit it electronically.

Proposers applying to a NOFO and submitting through Grants.gov shall complete the required Grants.gov forms, including the SF 424 (R&R) Application for Federal Assistance, R&R Other Project Information, R&R Senior/Key Person Profile, and R&R Budget. Additionally, proposers shall complete the required NASA-specific forms: NASA-Other Project Information, NASA-PI and Authorized Representative Supplemental Data Sheet, and the Program Specific Data and Proposal Summary PDF forms. These

10.1.1 Proposal Summary/Abstract

The proposal summary or abstract, an element of the cover page, requires proposers to provide a proposal summary of up to 4,000 characters. This proposal summary or abstract will be publicly accessible if the proposal is selected, so it shall not contain any proprietary data or information that should not be publicly released.

10.8.1 Proposal Budget

The proposal budget consists of two parts: 1) the budget narrative, and 2) the budget details. Each proposal shall provide a proposed budget for each year of the proposed effort supported by an appropriate budget narrative and specifics.

- **Direct Labor (salaries, wages, and fringe benefits):** A list of the names and titles of personnel, level of effort for each position, and rates of pay. The annual salary shall be clearly noted for each position. Labor shall clearly be broken out from fringe benefits.
- **Fringe rates:**
- **Subawards:** Detail the work to be sub-awarded, estimated amount, and the recipient (if known). Itemized budgets are required for all subawards, regardless of dollar value.
- **Consultants:** Identify consultants to be used and provide the amount of time they will spend on the project and rates of pay to include annual salary, and overhead.

- **Equipment:** List all equipment items separately. See
- **Travel:** Provide a detailed breakout of costs for any proposed travel.
- **Cost Sharing:** Neither NSPIRES nor Grants.gov allows for notating cost-sharing on the standardized budget form. Cost-sharing is only required if stated in the NOFO. However, NASA may accept cost-sharing from any organization if it is voluntarily offered

11.0 Submitting an Application

Proposals shall be submitted by the AOR at the PI's organization. The AOR's submission of the proposal serves as the required original signature by an authorized official of the proposing organization. There are three different ways that NASA may require a proposal be submitted by an entity. These are:

- **A Notice of Intent (NOI)** is required, and then a full proposal. While the NOI may be submitted without an AOR's signature, the full proposal must be submitted by the AOR.

In some cases, NASA requests or requires submission of a NOI to propose prior to the submission of a complete proposal. In the case of required NOIs, a proposer's failure to submit the NOI by the specified time may result in non-acceptance of the NOI and any subsequent proposal. The material in a NOI is confidential and will be used for NASA planning purposes only. NOIs shall be submitted via NSPIRES.

- **Step 1 Proposal:** A complete full application, also known as a One-Step Proposal. A One-Step Proposal is a proposal that requires only a full application by the due date of specified in the NOFO

- **-Step 2 Proposal**

NASA NOFOs sometimes require or request submission of a preliminary proposal in advance of submission of a full proposal, in order to reduce administrative burden on applicants. Rather than requiring a complete and final proposal up front, NASA may require an abbreviated submission as a first step and then provide further instructions on how to submit a full and final proposal.

Step-2 Proposal Process

1. NASA evaluates the submitted Step-1 proposal and communicates with the applicant either:
 - a) They are encouraged/invited to submit a Step-2 proposal.

b) They are not encouraged/invited to submit a Step-2 proposal.

2. NASA may also offer feedback after evaluating the Step-1 proposal.

3. PI prepares the final Step-2 proposal following the additional requirements guidance in NASA NOFOs and incorporating feedback, if permitted. NOFOs will outline what changes to the proposal are permitted between the Step-1 and Step-2 submissions.

4. The AOR submits the full Step-2 proposal by the required due date.

Unsolicited Proposals

On very rare occasions, NASA may choose to fund an unsolicited proposal, which is a proposal that is submitted not in response to a NOFO but rather to support an idea, method, or approach to carry out a project that is not being solicited under a competitive funding opportunity. An unsolicited proposal may be funded when the project is particularly unique and innovative, special resources are available for the work, and the proposed project is especially meritorious. Unsolicited proposals may be submitted in response to the unsolicited proposal response structure in NSPIRES.

Certification that is Unique to NASA

Assurance and Representation on China Restrictions Set Forth in Section 526 of PL 117- 103, and All Applicable Subsequent Appropriations Acts.

By submission of its proposal, the proposer represents that the proposer is not China or a Chinese-owned company, and that the proposer will not participate, collaborate, or coordinate bilaterally with China or any Chinese-owned company, at the prime recipient level or at any subrecipient level, whether the bilateral involvement is funded or performed under a no-exchange-of-funds basis, except to the extent NASA has notified the grant proposer that NASA has sought a waiver for such activities pursuant to Pub. L. 118-42 Sec. 526.