Guidance: Pre-Proposal Submissions

Responsible Division: Division of Research and Innovation Partnerships

Responsible Office: Sponsored Programs Administration

Responsible Officer (title only): Assistant Vice President for Research and Sponsored Programs

Contact Person: Dara Little

Purpose

To help expedite the pre-proposal submission process and provide guidance to faculty and staff regarding the submission of pre-proposals (aka Letters of Intent, White Papers, Concept Papers, and Pre-Applications) to sponsoring agencies.

Reason for Guidance

Sponsors may require that applicants submit a pre-proposal (aka, Letters of Intent, White Papers, Concept Papers, and Pre-Applications) for review prior to a full proposal. The pre- proposal typically includes a brief summary of the project, list of personnel, and budget amount. If selected, the Principal Investigator would then submit a more formal or full proposal.

NIU is committed to the pursuit of increasing the research, scholarship and artistry enterprise. One way this occurs is through the submission of pre-proposals to external funding agencies. SPA process allows faculty to submit pre-proposals as expeditiously as possible to solicit interest in their respective programs. This guidance identifies when pre-proposals require review and approval by Sponsored Programs Administration.

Guidance

When a sponsor requires the submission of a pre-proposal, the Principal Investigator (PI) may need to submit the pre-proposal through the Sponsored Programs Administration (SPA) proposal routing system for review and approval. InfoEd is SPA’s proposal routing system.

**Pre-Proposals Routed for Review and Approval through SPA**

1. Pre-proposals must be submitted to the SPA proposal routing system for review and approval when either of the following are required:

a. The pre-proposal includes a detailed line-item budget that cannot be altered when submitting the full proposal, or

b. The pre-proposal includes NIU cost-sharing/matching and requires a firm commitment be included in the pre-proposal.

These Pre-proposals will follow normal SPA proposal deadline requirements.

**Pre-Proposals Submitted to Sponsor without Submission through SPA**

1. Pre-proposals that do not require any of the items listed under number 1 above, may be submitted to the sponsor without going through SPA’s proposal routing system or institutional review. When submitting the pre-proposal to the sponsor via e-mail, the PI should copy the appropriate SPA Proposal Coordinator. If submission is not through email, a copy of the pre-proposal should be emailed to the Coordinator, after it has been submitted to the sponsor.

For the pre-proposals submitted without Sponsored Programs review and approval, it is recommended that the PI check with their department/unit to verify their process prior to submitting the pre-proposal to the sponsor.

2. F&A (Indirect Costs)

It is the PI’s responsibility to ensure that the pre-proposal budget includes proper F&A. PI’s must include the NIU Federally Negotiated Rate in pre-proposals unless the solicitation states differently. Any deviation from charging the appropriate rate must have prior approval of the Assistant Vice President for Research and Sponsored Programs.

If the appropriate F&A rate is not included in the pre-proposal budget (including preliminary cost share budgets), Sponsored Programs Administration will include the F&A at full proposal submission, even if it affects and lowers the total direct costs for the project.

Only the Vice President for Research and Innovation Partnerships or designee are authorized to negotiate the F&A rate. Any negotiations done by the PI or anyone besides those authorized will not be honored and may result in the full proposal not being submitted to the sponsor.

**Limited Number of Pre-Proposals**

If the Program Announcement (PA) or Request for Proposal (RFP) limits the number of pre- proposal submissions from an institution, the PI is required to contact [kdyslin@niu.edu](mailto:kdyslin@niu.edu) to indicate their interest.

RIPS will review the guidelines and arrange an appropriate internal review process, as applicable. This selection process could take several weeks or more. Submit early and allow ample time for this process.