

National Science Foundation

Guidance on Financial Assistance (GFA)

Summary of Changes

The key changes to the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) financial assistance policies and procedures from the [PAPPG 24-1](#) can be found below.

Overall Document Changes

The *NSF Guidance on Financial Assistance* (GFA) replaces the *NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide* (PAPPG) (version 24-1). The GFA enhances use for proposers and recipients of NSF grants and cooperative agreements by:

- Aligning NSF policy with applicable Executive Orders, including EO 14222, *Implementing the President's "Department of Government Efficiency" Cost Efficiency Initiative*; EO 14332, *Improving Oversight of Federal Grantmaking*; and EO 14303, *Restoring Gold Standard Science*.
- Streamlining financial assistance policies and procedures to reduce administrative burden and eliminate duplicative content.
- Distinguishing policies from procedures to improve clarity and usability.
- Organizing content by topic rather than by chapter to improve access to information.
- Using plain language to improve readability and accessibility.
- Distinguishing responsibilities for different users (e.g., Principal Investigators, Authorized Organizational Representatives, and Sponsored Project Offices).

Guide-Specific Changes

All guides include financial assistance policy updates issued during Fiscal Year 2026 to the 24-1 version of the PAPPG via Policy Notices, NSF 26-200, Supplement 1 and NSF 26-202, Supplement 2 as appropriate.

Guide 1: Introduction to NSF and Financial Assistance Concepts

- Replaces directorate and office descriptions with links to NSF webpages to provide more current organizational structures and allow for more timely updates.
- Incorporates the Privacy Act Statement and the public burden estimates in the front section with revised estimates providing a range based on complexity of proposal types.

Guide 2: Getting Ready to Apply for NSF Funding

- Adds the terms Broad Program Solicitation and Targeted Solicitation and retires the terms Program Description and Program Announcement.
- Adds the definition of Small Business Innovation Research/Small Business Technology Transfer (SBIR/STTR) Project Pitch.
- Expands the definition of Senior/Key Personnel and adds a definition for Faculty Associates to support research security requirements.
- Replaces the term Tribal Nations with Indian Tribes and revises the definition to align with the current 2 CFR 200.
- Clarifies that institutions of higher education with a Confucius Institute agreement are ineligible for NSF funding, consistent with the CHIPS and Science Act.

Guide 3: Preparing Your Proposal – Formatting and Disclosures

- Removes the restriction that prohibited duplicate submissions to the Biological Sciences Directorate and another federal agency for simultaneous consideration.
- Updates the certification for the former Dual Use Research of Concern to align with *the United States Government Policy for Stopping High-Risk Life Sciences Research*.

Guide 4: Preparing Your Proposal – Budgets

- Adds coverage of the American Security Drone Act of 2023, which prohibits the use of NSF funds for certain covered drones and services beginning December 22, 2025.

Guide 5: Preparing Your Proposal – Facilities, Equipment, Personnel, Data Management, and Other Supporting Documents

- Updates Individual Development Plan requirements for postdoctoral scholars and graduate students by adding a definition of "substantial support."
- Clarifies that proposers must include a mentoring plan when requesting salary or stipend support for postdoctoral scholars or graduate students.
- Further implements public access requirements through revisions to Data Management and Sharing Plan requirements that align with NSF's Gold Standard Science Implementation Plan.

Guide 6: Preparing Your Proposal – Special Processing and Compliance Topics

- Replaces NSF's implementation of the U.S. Government Policy for Oversight of Dual Use Research of Concern and Pathogens with Enhanced Pandemic Potential with requirements for Dangerous Gain of Function set forth in Executive Order 14292, *Improving the Safety and Security of Biological Research and the United States Government Policy for Stopping High-Risk Life Sciences Research*.
- Updates the policy for foreign performance sites of vertebrate animal work to align with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare policy.
- Adds a requirement for a "Vertebrate Animals Plan" to be uploaded to Research.gov.

Guide 7: Preparing Your Proposal – Other Proposal and Supplemental Funding Types

- Increases funding thresholds for selected proposal types:
 - o Planning Proposals: up to \$200,000.
 - o RAPID Proposals: up to \$300,000.
 - o EAGER Proposals: up to \$400,000.

Guide 8: Proposal Processing and Merit Review

- Clarifies that NSF leadership official includes Section Chiefs, Deputy Directorate/ Office Heads, and Directorate/ Office Heads who can commit program funds. This position was formerly known as the "Division Director."

Guide 9: Proposal Withdrawals and Declinations

- Removes the rationale to return a proposal without review solely because it presents a potential research security concern based on credible national security information. It pilots the Trusted Research Using Safeguards and Transparency (TRUST) framework as an alternative risk mitigation approach.

Guide 11: Monitoring Project Performance and Changes in Project Direction

- Removes Special Creativity Extensions with requests allowed for no-cost extensions and supplements when appropriate.

Guide 12: Cost Principles and Allowability

- Updates the Prior Approval Matrix to align with NSF's implementation of 2 CFR 200.
- Updates Build America, Buy America and Made in America requirements to align with 2 CFR 184.
- Revises the de minimis indirect cost rate to 15% consistent with 2 CFR 200.

Guide 13: Conflicts of Interest, Responsible Conduct of Research, and Scientific Integrity

- Expands Responsible Conduct of Research training requirements to include research security awareness, export controls, disclosure obligations, and federal reporting requirements, and preventing and reporting research misconduct.

Guide 14: Research Security

- Clarifies disclosure, reporting, and documentation requirements.
- Codifies NSF's research security training and risk assessment authorities.
- Updates restrictions related to Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Programs.
- Incorporate foreign financial disclosure requirements involving foreign countries of concern.
- Prohibits collaboration, within the context of an NSF award, with entities on U.S. restricted-party lists and restricts senior/key personnel from holding appointments and positions with or receiving research support from those entities.
- Clarifies permissibility of funding life sciences research that involve either countries or entities of concern, or other high risk international research involving entities of concern.

Guide 15: Property Management

- Revises property management requirements to align with changes to equipment title provisions in current 2 CFR 200.313.
- Updates requirements for Excess Government Personal Property to reflect current federal requirements.

Guide 16: Financial Management and Payments

- Eliminates references to paper checks to align with Executive Order 14247, *Modernizing Payments To and From America's Bank Account*.

Guide 17: Renewal and Supplemental Funding Support

- Removes accomplishment-based renewals and refocuses recipients to request renewal funding through existing renewal processes.

Guide 18: Award Reporting and Closeout

- Revises Foreign Financial Disclosure Report requirements based on implementation experience, including the addition of new definitions to improve clarity, updates reporting requirements related to tuition, and alignment with reporting dates to the federal fiscal year.

Guide 19: Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and Assault

- Removes references and requirements to revoked executive orders, including certain non-discrimination, limited English proficiency, and environmental justice requirements.
- Removes references to U.S. Department of Education requirements for institutions of higher education to maintain Section 504 coordinators, Title IX coordinators, and age discrimination evaluations. These policies and legal requirements are implemented by other federal agencies and independently applicable without discussion in the GFA.

Removal of GFA discussion does not affect their applicability to recipients or implementation by other agencies.

Guide 20: Research Safety and Protection of Living Organisms

- Replaces references to and policies covering Potential Life Sciences Dual Use Research of Concern with USG Policy for Stopping High-Risk Life Sciences Research.
- Adds a requirement for Principal Investigators to attest before proposal submission of Life Sciences research that the proposed research meets the definition for Dangerous Gain of Function (DGOF) or potential DGOF.

Guide 21: Intellectual Property

- Streamlines intellectual property requirements and refers readers to implementing regulations, where appropriate.
- Updates public access requirements by removing the 12-month publication delay for peer-reviewed journal articles and conference proceedings.
- Requires data underlying publications to be made publicly available by the time of publication and subsequently indexed in the Public Access Repository (PAR).

Guide 22: International Activities

- Removes references to charter flights.
- Streamlines international travel requirements by referring recipients to applicable GSA travel regulations.

Guide 23: Publication of Award Materials and Handling of Information

- Incorporates NSF Brand Standards and the NSF Brand Standards Manual.
- Removes requirements to separately send copies of publications and other materials to NSF as it duplicates requirements set forth in project reporting and Data Management and Sharing Plan submissions.

Guide 24: Other Administrative and Operational Provisions

- Removes references to intergovernmental review requirements and tax status.
- Streamlines Davis-Bacon Act and bonding requirements and refer readers to the NSF *Research Infrastructure Guide* where appropriate.

Guide 25: Suspensions, Terminations, and Research Misconduct

- Clarifies research misconduct requirements by including reference to super intelligence (formerly known as artificial intelligence) tools.

Guide 26: Appeals

- Consolidates proposal financial and administrative decline appeals with post-award appeals involving suspensions, terminations, and other award disputes into a single guide.
- Streamlines appeal procedures and places related requirements in one location.