



U.S. NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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NSF 25-028

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for ExLENT - Experiential Learning for Emerging and Novel Technologies Program ([NSF 25-511](#))

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A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Where can I find information about proposal preparation and submission?

Detailed proposal preparation instructions specific to the ExLENT Program (including deviations from the NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide ([PAPPG](#))), can be found in the current solicitation ([NSF 25-511](#)). Proposals submitted to NSF must be submitted via Research.gov or Grants.gov. Further information on each system is available in NSF PAPPG.

2. What support is available for prospective Principal Investigators (PIs)?

The ExLENT Program supports potential PIs in a variety of ways including providing FAQs, discussing one-pagers, offering webinars, and hosting office hours for PIs as submission dates approach. Please check the NSF [ExLENT Program website](#) for webinar and office hour dates and times, and well as other materials with information about the program.

3. Can I send you a one-page description of my idea?

Yes. ExLENT staff are happy to provide answers or ask questions (via phone or Zoom) about your idea. Sharing a “one-pager” that outlines the core issues you would address in your proposal is a good way to initiate a conversation with an ExLENT Program Officer.

B. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

4. How do I know if my organization is eligible to submit a proposal to one of the ExLENT Program’s Tracks?

Please refer to section IV of the current solicitation ([NSF 25-511](#)) for the types of organizations we accept proposals from.

5. Does my organization need to be registered in SAM.gov to submit a proposal?

Yes, active registration in the Federal-wide System for Award Management (SAM) is required to submit a proposal to NSF. Please remember that the registration of a new entity in [SAM.gov](#) can take many weeks.

6. Our state has a central EPSCoR Office that coordinates activities. Is this entity eligible to submit the proposal?

All state agencies, offices (including EPSCoR offices) or divisions that are specifically dedicated to innovation, economic, and/or workforce development are eligible to submit proposals.

7. Can an organization be the lead organization for more than one proposal?

Yes.

8. My organization/institution is submitting a proposal to another NSF program. Can we also submit a proposal to the ExLENT Program?

Yes, but they cannot be the same proposal. In accordance with the NSF PAPPG, the submission of duplicate or substantially similar proposals concurrently for review by more than one program without prior NSF approval will result in the return of the redundant proposals.

C. PARTNERSHIPS

9. **Are proposals without partnerships possible?**

No. The ExLENT program requires cross-sector partnerships between appropriate stakeholders committed to an integrated, collaborative network to best support participants. Multi-sector partnerships that leverage a range of perspectives and varied expertise are encouraged.

10. **Is there a limit to the number of partners that can be on a proposal?**

No, there is no limit to the number of partners. The number and type of partners should be appropriate for the scope of the project.

11. **Can a non-profit be the lead organization and have partners in the private sector?**

Yes. An ExLENT project can be led by a non-profit organization. Partner organizations may include private sector partners. Partner organizations may also include industry, government, academic, and/or other non-profit entities.

12. **Is a partnership between two organizations of the same type (i.e., two IHE or two non-profits) possible?**

No. ExLENT requires that the project involve cross-sector partnerships. Proposers may have more than one partner within the same sector but must also include other partners in different sectors. It is up to the proposer to determine which partners are best suited to carry out the activities of the project.

13. **Should partners submit collaborative proposals or a single proposal with subawards?**

Because the ExLENT program expects that projects will involve at least two cross-sector partners, proposers will be submitting a collaborative proposal. Collaborative proposals are those in which individuals from two or more organizations collaborate on a project. They may be submitted to NSF in one of two methods: as a single proposal, in which a single award is being requested (with subawards administered by the lead organization); or by simultaneous submission of proposals from different organizations, with each organization requesting a separate award (lead institution links the separate awards in Research.gov). Potential PIs should refer to NSF PAPPG for more information on these two options.

14. **My organization is not an academic institution. Can we be the lead organization on a proposal?**

Yes. Please refer to section IV of the current solicitation ([NSF 25-511](#)) for the types of organizations we accept proposals from.

15. Does an ExLENT project have to include all the following as partners – academic institutions, for-profits, non-profit, and state/local/tribal governments?

No. Your project should only include the cross-sector partners that are needed to help you achieve your project's goals.

D. PROPOSAL PREPARATION

16. What are the required elements of a proposal?

The current NSF PAPPG provides general instructions on all required sections of any NSF proposal. The ExLENT program solicitation contains instructions that supplement the standard PAPPG proposal preparation guidelines and also specifies additional supplementary documentation that must be included with your proposal, such as a Two-Page Mentoring Plan for ExLENT Participants. Please refer to Section V.A of the current solicitation ([NSF 25-511](#)) for more information about solicitation specific instructions and requirements.

17. What are the sections of the Project Description?

See Section V.A.4 of the ExLENT program solicitation ([NSF 25-511](#)) for information about the required sections of the Project Description.

18. Who should provide letters of collaboration?

Letters of collaboration are required from each partner, indicating the partner's commitment and role in the proposed activities. All letters of collaboration should follow current NSF PAPPG guidelines. Regardless of track, letters of support that merely endorse the project or offer nonspecific support for the project activities should not be included as their inclusion may cause the proposal to be returned without review.

Letters of collaboration, however, are not allowed from organizations that are funding partners with NSF on the ExLENT program. In this case, letters of collaboration are not allowed from Micron or Micron Foundation. Proposals submitted with letters of collaboration provided by Micron or Micron Foundation will be returned without review.

19. Are you expecting a proposal to address all of the tracks of the ExLENT program?

No. The ExLENT program provides three tracks to best support the broad range of learners: 1) Pivots, 2) Beginnings and 3) Explorations. While a proposal may address one or more of these tracks, we anticipate projects will likely target just one track.

Regardless of track, proposals should identify the type(s) of participants they seek to support and provide the age and developmentally appropriate training, support, and mentorship activities.

E. BUDGET

20. Where can I find information about preparing a budget for a proposal?

Instructions for proposal preparation may be found in the current solicitation ([NSF 25-511](#)) and in the NSF PAPPG.

21. What if my organization/institution does not have a negotiated indirect cost rate?

Proposers that do not have an active negotiated indirect cost rate agreement should consult the current NSF PAPPG.

F. PROJECT EVALUATION

22. Can NSF recommend an evaluator, behavioral or social scientist, or a STEM education researcher to bring into our team? How do I find this expertise?

No. A web search will provide links to associations and other organizations that provide evaluation services.

23. Will we need Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval of the evaluation activities and instruments described in our proposal?

While a proposal can be reviewed without IRB approval, projects involving human subjects cannot be recommended for funding until this certification or its equivalent is submitted. More information about this issue can be found in the current NSF PAPPG. The official NSF version of Code of Federal Regulations 45 CFR 690.101-124 is available at <http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/docs/45cfr690.pdf>.