

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for Human and Social Dynamics (HSD) (NSF 06- 509)

Collaboration

- What type(s) of inter-organizational collaborations is NSF encouraging?
- If multiple organizations are cooperating in the proposed project, what are the mechanisms for submitting a proposal?
- One of the organizations involved in our project is in an EPSCoR state. How do we get EPSCoR certification?
- My question is not in this list and is not answered in the solicitation. What should I do?

Eligibility Requirements

- How many proposals can an investigator submit this year to the HSD solicitation?
- In submitting to HSD, does the university department of the PI matter?
- Can international organizations apply to HSD?
- Are government laboratories or for-profit organizations allowed to submit HSD proposals?
- Are graduate students or unaffiliated researchers eligible to apply to HSD?
- My question is not on this list and is not answered in the solicitation. What should I do?

Financial/Budget

- How will the HSD funds be divided across the NSF directorates and different subject areas of the solicitation?
- May faculty request academic year salary in addition to or instead of summer salary?
- What kinds of administrative costs may be included in the budget?
- May HSD proposal budgets include equipment?
- How might the requested budget affect chances of success? Are there budgets that would be inappropriate because they are too large or too small?
- My question is not in this list and is not answered in the solicitation. What should I do?

Proposal Preparation

- What needs to be included in the Project Summary?
- Will you enforce the page limits on proposals?
- Do citations and references count against the project description page limit?
- May I submit the same proposal to HSD and to another NSF program?
- Can I request an extension of time to submit a proposal?
- What if FastLane or my university computer is unavailable on a submission deadline?
- What if there is an earthquake, fire or other disaster?
- Should proposals from non-profit research organizations address the broader impacts criterion and the integration of research and education?
- What if listing my five most recent relevant papers would take more than two pages because these papers have several hundred authors each?
- How do we submit supplementary documents?
- Can I be a reviewer for HSD this year?

- Why is the Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences the only one to appear on the FastLane Cover Sheet? I normally apply to Geosciences and my proposal deals primarily with Geosciences?
- Why does NSF only allow 4 co-PIs to be listed on the cover sheet of the Full Proposal? I would like for our project to have five (or more) co-PIs.
- My question is not in this list and is not answered in the solicitation. What should I do?

Collaboration

Question: What type(s) of inter-organizational collaborations is NSF encouraging?

Answer: The HSD Program expects that proposers will put together the best team possible to carry out the project. Simultaneously, HSD encourages research-intensive and extensive universities to partner with other types of colleges and universities, especially ones serving underrepresented minority populations. Large research universities have an opportunity to expand and enrich research and education in Human and Social Dynamics beyond their organizations.

[Back to Top](#)

Question: If multiple organizations are cooperating in the proposed project, what are the mechanisms for submitting a proposal?

Answer: NSF has two mechanisms for submission of proposals from multiple organizations: 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. In either case, the lead organization's proposal must contain all of the requisite sections as a single package to be provided to reviewers (that will happen automatically when procedures below are followed.) All collaborative proposals must clearly describe the roles to be played by the other organizations, specify the managerial arrangements, and explain the advantages of the multi-organizational effort within the project description.

These collaborative proposals are described more fully in the Grant Proposal Guide (GPG)

<http://www.nsf.gov/pubsys/ods/getpub.cfm?gpg>. The GPG also includes instructions for submission of these types of proposals.

[Back to Top](#)

Question: One of the organizations involved in our project is in an EPSCoR state. How do we get EPSCoR certification?

Answer: The NSF EPSCoR Office no longer requires certification by the relevant jurisdiction EPSCoR Office as part of the co-funding process. Therefore, participants from EPSCoR-based organizations that are involved in the proposed cooperative project may submit a collaborative proposal according to the corresponding submission instructions provided in the NSF Grant Proposal Guide (<http://nsf.gov/pubsys/ods/getpub.cfm?gpg>).

[Back to Top](#)

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Answer: Send an email to <mailto:hsd@nsf.gov>.

[Back to Top](#)

Eligibility Requirements

Question: How many proposals can an investigator submit this year to the HSD solicitation?

Answer: No person may be a PI, Co-PI, or senior personnel on more than one proposal submitted to this solicitation. This restriction applies to all individuals on subawards who fall into the category of senior personnel. For the purposes of this solicitation, senior personnel include the Principal Investigator (PI), any co-PIs, and any other researchers actively involved in the scientific or technical management of the project. It does not include students, postdocs, or consultants who provide specific expertise on a limited portion of the project.

[Back to Top](#)

In submitting to HSD, does the university department of the PI matter?

Answer: No. PI affiliation within a university or non-profit research organization does not matter. The subject of the research does matter; the HSD competition stresses multidisciplinary so HSD proposals from many different university or organizational units are anticipated.

[Back to Top](#)

Question: Can international organizations apply to HSD?

Answer: The HSD Program encourages international collaborations. HSD understands that topics of interest will cross national boundaries and that U.S. investigators will and already do communicate and collaborate with colleagues throughout the world to accomplish their research and educational goals. The typical expectation is that all investigators on a project team will receive funding from their own countries' funding agencies, especially if the international collaboration is with researchers in developed countries (e.g., Europe, Britain, Japan) that have substantial resources of their own. The eligibility rules for submission to HSD do allow for researchers outside of the U.S. to apply indirectly to the HSD Program — either as consultants on a lead proposal or as subawards. In both cases, justification is required of the unique capabilities offered or the specific research needs that will be accomplished. No indirect costs by international organizations are allowed. In addition, it is expected that the international budget will be small, relative to the overall size of the project budget.

[Back to Top](#)

Question: Are government labs or for-profit organizations allowed to submit HSD proposals?

Answer: Only US universities and colleges, and nonprofit organizations in the US, may submit proposals to this competition.

[Back to Top](#)

Question: Are graduate students or unaffiliated researchers eligible to apply to HSD?

Answer: Graduate students and unaffiliated researchers may be included on HSD proposals. Graduate students should not be included as PI, Co-PI, or senior personnel. Unaffiliated researchers need to go through an eligible organization to be involved in this HSD competition. (See the answer to the previous question.)

[Back to Top](#)

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[Back to Top](#)

Financial/Budget

Question: How will the HSD funds be divided across the NSF directorates and different subject areas of the solicitation?

Answer: We do not make a priori funding decisions across the areas even though each Directorate knows (once we get our budget from Congress) how much it is likely to spend on new HSD awards this year. HSD is an interdisciplinary, Foundation-wide activity and many awards receive funds from several Directorates. Decisions about funding are made after the proposals are reviewed, and after all Directorates have a chance to determine which proposals are the most interesting and promising to them. If the proposals in some particular area are of unusually high quality, that area may attract more money than expected in advance.

[Back to Top](#)

Question: May faculty request academic year salary in addition to or instead of summer salary?

Answer: NSF typically allows summer salary on its grants. (As stated in the Grant Proposal Guide, summer salary for faculty members on academic-year appointments is limited to no more than two-ninths of their regular academic-

year salary.) However, in some cases academic year salary is allowed, either in addition to or instead of summer salary. Requests for academic year salary need to be justified in the proposal.

[Back to Top](#)

Question: What kinds of administrative costs may be included in the budget?

Answer: Many universities and colleges consider certain kinds of administrative costs, such as lab space and secretary salary, to be included in the indirect cost portion of the budget. Thus, they typically cannot be included as direct costs. If you have a question about what is allowable at your university or college, please check with your Sponsored Research Office. It is best situated to answer this question.

[Back to Top](#)

Question: May HSD proposal budgets include equipment?

Answer: Yes. Equipment that is necessary to carry out the proposed project may be requested and should be justified in the budget justification.

[Back to Top](#)

Question: How might the requested budget affect chances of success? Are there budgets that would be inappropriate because they are too large or too small?

Answer: HSD is an interdisciplinary, Foundation-wide activity. A high-quality, innovative proposal that addresses the substance of the HSD solicitation and has high societal value or impact has the best chance of being funded. Proposers should request the funding amounts necessary to carry out the work. Since there are maximum award amounts, investigators should take care to construct a project that is feasible within those budgetary limits. Please refer to “Section IV. Award Information” of the solicitation, which provides information about maximum total awards based on type of project activity. **NOTE: Proposals that exceed the maximum for their type will be returned without review.**

[Back to Top](#)

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[Back to Top](#)

Proposal Preparation

Question: What needs to be included in the Project Summary?

Answer: The Grant Proposal Guide (GPG) (available at http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=gpg) specifies that the Project Summary must clearly address, in separate statements within the one-page limit, both the broader impacts and the intellectual merit. Proposals that do not address both merit review criteria in separate statements in the project summary will be returned without review. The GPG also states that the broader impacts must be addressed in the Project Description and described as an integral part of the narrative.

[Back to Top](#)

Question: Will you enforce the page limits on proposals?

Answer: Yes. See the HSD solicitation, section V.A "Full Proposal Instructions."

[Back to Top](#)

Question: Do citations and references count against the project description page limit?

Answer: No. They should be included in the References Cited section of the proposal.

[Back to Top](#)

Question: May I submit the same proposal to HSD and to another NSF program?

Answer: No. A unique proposal can be submitted only once to NSF. If the proposal is a duplicate of or substantially similar to a proposal already under consideration by NSF, it will be returned without review.

[Back to Top](#)

Question: Can I request an extension of time to submit a proposal?

Answer: No.

[Back to Top](#)

Question: What if FastLane or my university computer is unavailable on a submission deadline?

Answer: Please avoid this problem by submitting early. If you choose not to submit until the last minute, it is at your own risk.

[Back to Top](#)

Question: What if there is an earthquake, fire or other disaster?

Answer: Please contact us at hsd@nsf.gov immediately. We will make determinations on a case-by-case basis.

[Back to Top](#)

Question: Should proposals from non-profit research organizations address the broader impacts criterion and the integration of research and education?

Answer: Yes. Every proposal regardless of submitting organization will be evaluated on both NSF merit review criteria - the intellectual merit and the broader impacts of the proposed effort. Proposals that do not explicitly address both criteria will be returned without review. Integrating research and education should be addressed as well. Non-profit research organizations should take special care to explain how their proposals will provide these benefits.

[Back to Top](#)

Question: What if listing my five most recent relevant papers would take more than two pages because these papers have several hundred authors each?

Answer: The two-page limit dominates over the need to include the entire list of authors for your relevant publications. If your publications include large numbers of co-authors and you choose to list all of the co-authors, you likely will be able to list only a few papers. Instead, you may want to list only the first few authors and add text reference to additional authors, such as "Jane Doe, Soo Kim, and 26 other authors, including <Your Name>."

[Back to Top](#)

Question: How do we submit supplementary documents?

Answer: Supplementary documents that are in accordance with the solicitation should be scanned into the Special Information and Supplementary Documentation section of the FastLane proposal.

[Back to Top](#)

Question: Can I be a reviewer for HSD this year?

Answer: The HSD competition is split into two parts this year. The Exploratory Research proposals and the HSD Research Community Development proposals form one part. The Full Research proposals form the second part. If you are on an HSD proposal submitted this year then you cannot be a reviewer for that part of the competition, but you can volunteer to be a reviewer for the other part. If you did not submit an HSD proposal this year in response to the current solicitation, then you can volunteer to be a reviewer for either part. If you want to volunteer, notify the Program Officer in the list of contacts who is closest to your field of research. Include a URL for your biosketch and a brief description of your research expertise in your email. The program officer will contact you if your area of expertise is relevant and we need reviewers in that area. If you don't see anyone in the list of contacts who you feel is appropriate, send the information to hsd@nsf.gov.

[Back to Top](#)

Question: Why is the Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE) the only one to appear as an option on the NSF cover sheet in FastLane? I normally apply to Geosciences and my proposal deals primarily with Geosciences?

Answer: The SBE Directorate is coordinating the management of all proposals submitted to the HSD Priority Area. Program Officers from all Directorates and Divisions will participate in the management of HSD proposals that fall into their areas of expertise. This allows flexibility in assignment of proposals to specific panels.

[Back to Top](#)

Question: Why does NSF only allow 4 co-PIs to be listed on the cover sheet of the Full Proposal? I would like for our project to have five (or more) co-PIs.

Answer: NSF policy limits the number of co-PIs that can be listed on the cover sheet of any Full Proposal to four. However, one should remember that when the Full Proposals are submitted, a collaborative proposal from multiple organizations may be done through simultaneous submission of proposals from the different organizations. In this way, four co-PIs could be listed on the cover sheet of each proposal. Alternatively, one could request a change in senior personnel through FastLane after an award is made if effective management of a project required such a change.

[Back to Top](#)

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[Back to Top](#)