



National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22230

NSF 13-054

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for NSF 13-528, High Performance Computing System Acquisition: Building a More Inclusive Computing Environment for Science and Engineering

1. Does the 30 page limit in the solicitation refer to both a single computational resource as well as a combined computational and storage resource?
2. If a proposal is submitted for both a computational and data resource, how do we make a clear separation so should the panel wish to recommend funding for only one of the two, that can be accomplished?
3. When can the institution and PI begin to start charging expenses for the resource(s)?
4. Are High School outreach activities a legitimate part of the proposal?
5. It is unclear when the NSF expects the resources to be deployed. Can this be clarified?
6. How does the latest version of the GPG affect submissions?
7. How do the prohibitions against cost sharing influence what proposers should put in the body of their proposals and in the budgets?
8. Does the NSF have any plans to hold a webinar for prospective PI's in the near future?
9. If a combined compute-storage system is proposed and the panel recommended that only one or the other be funded, would that be entertained by NSF?

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1. **Does the 30 page limit in the solicitation refer to both a single computational resource as well as a combined computational and storage resource?**

Yes.

2. **If a proposal is submitted for both a computational and data resource, how do we make a clear separation so should the panel wish to recommend funding for only one of the two, that can be accomplished?**

The narrative should make the case that if only the computational or data resource were to be funded, that the impact of the separation would be minimal. The budget pages should clearly separate the two resources so that it is easy to see how to proceed.

3. **When can the institution and PI begin to start charging expenses for the resource(s)?**

The award will be made in FY13 and will be a Cooperative Agreement (CA). NSF policy allows for the approval of pre-award costs. See Chapter V.A.2.b of the Award and Administration Guide (AAG) (http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/nsf13001/aag_5.jsp#VA2b) for additional information.

4. **Are High School outreach activities a legitimate part of the proposal?**

Absolutely.

5. It is unclear when the NSF expects the resources to be deployed. Can this be clarified?

The statement in the solicitation reads, "Resources acquired and fully deployed by end of FY15 (3 year award)". The end of FY15 should be interpreted as a not to exceed date. It is certainly perfectly acceptable to begin full deployment earlier, or to begin partial deployment earlier and ramp up. Again, this will be negotiated in the CA as it could well be dependent on the nature of the resource proposed and funded.

6. How does the latest version of the GPG affect submissions?

Please see - http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/nsf13001/gpg_sigchanges.jsp.

The recent changes to the NSF GPG were fairly substantial. Consequently, we strongly recommend that these be looked at before submitting a proposal.

7. How do the prohibitions against cost sharing influence what proposers should put in the body of their proposals and in the budgets?

Prospective PI's should discuss this issue with their sponsored research office. They should be able to provide the necessary guidelines to properly frame the proposal. In addition, PI's may want to reference NSF's guidance on preparing the Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources section of the proposal. That guidance is found in Chapter II.C.2.i of the GPG (http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/nsf13001/gpg_2.jsp#IIC2i).

8. Does the NSF have any plans to hold a webinar for prospective PI's in the near future?

There is an expectation that there will be a webinar sometime in mid February.

9. If a combined compute-storage system is proposed and the panel recommended that only one or the other be funded, would that be entertained by NSF?

Yes, NSF would be prepared to fund one part of a combined proposal if the recommendations from the panel were sufficiently compelling. It is important for PI's to consider how their proposals are constructed to allow the panel to make those decisions in a clear and compelling fashion. In addition, the budgets must be constructed to make the separation easy.