NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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NSF 15-126

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Partnerships for Innovation: Accelerating Innovation Research - Technology Transfer

1. My lineage NSF award is not necessarily a Research Award, but it is not one of the ones explicitly excluded under lineage requirements. Am I eligible to apply?
2. The prior funding that supported the research upon which my proposal would be based was from a co-sponsored program (NSF and another outside agency). The proposal was submitted through NSF FastLane and was evaluated against all other proposals submitted, using the NSF merit review system, and was selected for an award. Ultimately the funds came through the other agency that was the co-sponsor. May I submit a proposal to PFI: AIR-TT?
3. I already have an AIR-TT award. Can I apply again?
4. If I submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) for the fall window of the solicitation but do not submit a full proposal for the fall window, do I need to submit another Letter of Intent for the spring window?
5. The funding that has supported my initial research came from an NSF-funded center such as an I/UCRC, ERC or STC. However, I am not listed as a PI or co-PI on the NSF center grant although I am considered a faculty member of the Center. Am I eligible to apply to AIR-TT?
6. I was the PI for a subcontract from an NSF Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) or Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) grantee for work on an NSF-funded SBIR/STTR project. Is this acceptable lineage?
7. I have submitted an LOI to the program. Do I need permission from NSF to submit the full proposal? Will NSF contact me to give me feedback on my LOI?
8. We will be proposing a collaboration with an industrial partner, but not a sub-award. Do we still need a Cooperative Research Agreement (CRA)?
9. I understand that some of the effort should be spent on advancing the team's understanding of a business aspect(s) of the project. Is there a guideline as to approximately how much effort should be spent on the business side activities?
10. I am a faculty member with a prior NSF award and I also am part of a small business. Would it be better to submit to the PFI:AIR-TT or SBIR/STTR program? Can I submit to both?

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1. **My lineage NSF award is not necessarily a Research Award, but it is not one of the ones explicitly excluded under lineage requirements. Am I eligible to apply?**

   Yes. We revised the wording on the solicitation (as compared to last year, NSF 14-569) to be more inclusive and to allow the PI to make the case of how the research derived from prior NSF support. In earlier solicitations, we stated that the lineage requirement had to be to an NSF "research award" and we have modified that to just NSF "award." However, the intent is still that the proposed work be derived from NSF-funded research and/or discoveries. It is up to the PI to make the lineage case in the proposal and describe how the proposed work is derived from the prior NSF award.

2. **The prior funding that supported the research upon which my proposal would be based was**

from a co-sponsored program (NSF and another outside agency). The proposal was submitted through NSF FastLane and was evaluated against all other proposals submitted, using the NSF merit review system, and was selected for an award. Ultimately the funds came through the other agency that was the co-sponsor. May I submit a proposal to PFI: AIR-TT?

Yes.

3. **I already have an AIR-TT award. Can I apply again?**

Yes, but this proposal would have to address a separate line of research from the first award; it can't just be a continuation of the original award. The proposal could have lineage to a different NSF award or the same fundamental award as the prior AIR-TT project, but it would have to show a different end product application with a different set of necessary tasks to move toward commercialization.

4. **If I submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) for the fall window of the solicitation but do not submit a full proposal for the fall window, do I need to submit another Letter of Intent for the spring window?**

Yes. You need to submit an LOI for each cycle in which you plan to submit a proposal, even if you have submitted an LOI to a previous cycle.

5. **The funding that has supported my initial research came from an NSF-funded center such as an I/UCRC, ERC or STC. However, I am not listed as a PI or co-PI on the NSF center grant although I am considered a faculty member of the Center. Am I eligible to apply to AIR-TT?**

Yes, but you need to show in the proposal how the proposed AIR-TT research work is derived from the previously accomplished Center-funded research, and that you are a faculty member funded through the Center.

6. **I was the PI for a subcontract from an NSF Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) or Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) grantee for work on an NSF-funded SBIR/STTR project. Is this acceptable lineage?**

No.

7. **I have submitted an LOI to the program. Do I need permission from NSF to submit the full proposal? Will NSF contact me to give me feedback on my LOI?**

No to both questions. The LOI is simply a notification to NSF that you intend to submit a full proposal. It is required that you submit an LOI by the due date in order to be eligible to submit a full proposal, but once you have submitted the LOI, it is entirely up to you whether or not you submit a full proposal.

8. **We will be proposing a collaboration with an industrial partner, but not a sub-award. Do we still need a Cooperative Research Agreement (CRA)?**

Yes, if there is the possibility of joint development of intellectual property during the collaboration. Note that the CRA does not need to be submitted with the proposal, only later if the proposal is recommended for award. There is a sample CRA agreement posted on the PFI:AIR-TT website (http://www.nsf.gov/eng/iip/pfi/air-tt.jsp) under the "How the Program works" tab.

9. **I understand that some of the effort should be spent on advancing the team's understanding**

of a business aspect(s) of the project. Is there a guideline as to approximately how much effort should be spent on the business side activities?

Not explicitly because it varies by technology area and project objectives; the most important thing is to propose what makes sense for the project. A ballpark level of effort of up to 10-20% on the business side is usually reasonable.

10. **I am a faculty member with a prior NSF award and I also am part of a small business. Would it be better to submit to the PFI:AIR-TT or SBIR/STTR program? Can I submit to both?**

There is no prohibition on applying to both programs; starting and growing a small business takes a lot of time (if it is going to be successful), so it may not be a good idea to split efforts between AIR and SBIR. Also, the work proposed in each would need to be distinct (NSF can't fund the same work twice). Upon completion of an AIR award and if there is technology translation demonstrated, it is appropriate to apply for SBIR/STTR programs. Also, please see slide 9 of the PFI:AIR-TT webinar, posted on the PFI:AIR-TT website: http://www.nsf.gov/eng/iip/pfi/air/PFI_AIR_Webinar_Sept2015.pdf.