NSF CHECKLIST – CAREER PROPOSALS 2025

See Part I: Proposal Preparation and Submission Guidelines PAPPG for guidance on the required sections of a full research proposal submitted to NSF. Please note that the proposal preparation instructions provided in the program solicitation may deviate from the PAPPG instructions. This checklist highlights, not replaces, the submission guidelines in both the CAREER solicitation and PAPPG. *Please consult the guidelines for complete instructions.*

PORTAL

All CAREER proposals must be submitted through Research.gov.

REQUIRED FORMATTING

- Font: Arial, Courier New or Palatino Linotype @ 10pts or larger; Times New Roman @ 11 pts or larger; Computer Modern family of fonts @ 11 pts or larger (Note: A font size of less than 10 can be used for equations, figures/table captions, special characters, or symbols-- must be readable)
- Margins must be at least one inch in all directions
- No more than six lines of text per one inch of vertical space
- No page numbering – this will be automatically applied by Research.gov

Proposal Element	*Instructions*
Cover Page	- Project Title must begin with *"CAREER:"* - Co-PI's are **not** allowed. *Solicitation #*, division/directorate, title, amount, duration, start date, and compliance indicators such as human subjects, animals, or foreign components. - Start date at least six months from deadline date and must start on the 1st or 15th of the month - Add Other Federal Agency information (as applicable) and check relevant box(es) in the Other Information section. - If International Activities are included, note the applicable country/countries. If the specific location is not known, enter "Worldwide".
Project Summary	- Limited to 1 Page **MUST** include three separate section headers specifically *LABELED*: - Overview - Intellectual Merit - Broader Impacts *To be valid, a heading must be on its own line with no other text on that line.*
Project Description	15-page limit, including Prior NSF Support (Max file size: 10MB) - URLs are not permitted - Description of proposed project including preliminary supporting data where appropriate, specific objectives, methods & procedures to be used, and expected significance of results - Description of proposed educational activities and their intended impact - Description of how research & educational activities are integrated or synergistic **MUST include a separate section *LABELED*, "Broader Impacts"**

	• **MUST include a separate section *LABELED*, "Results from Prior NSF Support"** – 5-page limit (within the overall 15 page limit) – If no prior NSF support has been received, still include the required heading and indicate "None."
	
	     ○ Must be identified if PI has received prior NSF support of an award with an end date in the past five years; or any current funding, including no cost extensions.
	
	        ▪ Includes salary support, Graduate Research Fellowship, Major Research Instrumentation, conference, equipment, travel, and center awards.
	
	    ○ If more than one award has been received, only report on the one award that is most closely related to this proposal.
	
	    ○ The following information must be provided in this section:
	
	        ▪ NSF award number, amount, and period of support;
	        ▪ Title of the project;
	        ▪ Summary of the results of the completed work, including accomplishments, separately described under two distinct headings, related to and *LABELED* Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts and include activities supported by the award;
	        ▪ List of all publications resulting from the NSF award. A complete bibliographic citation for each publication is required either in this section or in References Cited. If no publications, state, "No publications were produced under this award.";
	        ▪ Evidence of research products and their availability, including, but not limited to: data, publications, samples, physical collections, software, and models, as described in any Data Management Plan

References	No page limit – FULL REFERENCES, **"et al" is NOT to be used**
Budget	• Must draft budget using <u>ORA Internal Budget Template</u> • No co-PIs • If equipment is budgeted, specify the type and provide a quote • The CAREER award, including indirect costs, is expected to total a minimum of $400,000 for the 5-year duration, with the following exceptions: Awards for proposals to the Directorate for Biological Sciences (BIO), the Directorate for Engineering (ENG), or the Office of Polar Programs (OPP) are expected to total a minimum of $500,000 for the 5-year duration.
Budget Justification	• No more than 5 pages • Amount of each budget line item requested must be documented and justified. • Do not include unfunded personnel – their role should be described in Facilities, Equipment & Other Resources section along with a Letter of Collaboration • NSF Budget Justification Template is available <u>here</u>
Biographical Sketch of PI	• No page limit • <u>Must</u> be generated using <u>SciENcv</u> • Biosketch should include <u>both</u> research and education activities and accomplishments.

	• Appointments should include any titled academic, professional, or institutional position, whether or not remuneration is received. (Reference the [NSPM-33 Implementation Guidance Pre- and Post-award Disclosures Relating to the Biographical Sketch and Current and Pending (Other) Support](#)) • Synergistic activities are no longer included in the biosketch and will be submitted as a separate document. See section below. • PI's are required to certify the information is current, accurate, and complete in SciENcv. The file downloaded from SciENcv should not be edited after downloading. If changes are needed, the PI must update SciENcv and re-certify.
Current and Pending of PI	• Must be generated using [SciENcv](#) • Proposed and active NSF support should not exceed 2 months in the same fiscal year, NSF policy limits senior personnel to 2 months support. • Must include "this proposal" in the pending section Include all resources available to an individual in support of his/her/their research endeavors (Reference the [NSPM-33 Implementation Guidance Pre- and Post-award Disclosures Relating to the Biographical Sketch and Current and Pending (Other) Support](#)) • Disclose ALL in-kind contributions with an estimated dollar value of $5K or more and that require a commitment of the individual's time. In-kind contributions with an estimated value of less than $5K need not be reported. • FAQs can be found [HERE](#)
Collaborators and Other Affiliations of PI	• Must use the [NSF-approved template](#) which must be saved and uploaded as a .xlsx file • Do not edit the formatting of the template – only add or remove rows as necessary
Synergistic Activities of PI	• 1 page limit • List of up to five **_DISTINCT_** examples – Cannot use categories with multiple examples listed. • Research Ready Video available [here](#) to provide additional guidance. • Examples should demonstrate the broader impact of the individual's professional and scholarly activities that focus on the integration and transfer of knowledge as well as its creation.
Facilities, Equipment & Other Resources	• No page limit • Describe the internal and external resources (both physical and personnel) that the organization and its collaborators will provide to the project, should it be funded. • Include only resources directly applicable to the proposal. • Description of unfunded collaborations. Corresponding Letters of Collaboration must be included in Other Supplementary Documents section.
Data Management Plan	• 2 page limit • Data Management Plan Tool (DMPTool) available [HERE](#) • Data Management and Sharing Requirements and plans specific to the Directorate, Office, Division, Program, or other NSF unit, relevant to a proposal are available on the NSF website. • A valid Data Management Plan may include only the statement that no detailed plan is needed with a clear justification

Mentoring Plan	• 1 page limit – Required if budgeting a post-doc or graduate students

Departmental Letter (*Other Supplementary Documents*)	• If PI has more than 1 department choose the one in which tenure will be granted – if tenure is joint decision, must be signed by both department heads
	• 2-page limit
	• Must contain a statement that the PI is eligible for the CAREER program
	   o For non-tenure-track faculty, the Departmental Letter must affirm the investigator's appointment is at an early-career level equivalent to pre-tenure status.
	   o Further, for non-tenure-track faculty, the departmental letter must clearly and convincingly demonstrate how the faculty member satisfies all the requirements of tenure-track equivalency as defined in the eligibility criteria specified in this solicitation.
	• Indicate that the PI's CAREER research & education activities are supported by and integrated into the educational & research goals of the department and organization, and the department is committed to the support and professional development of the PI;
	• Describe:
	   o The relationship among the CAREER project, the PI's career goals, and job responsibilities and goals of department/organization; and
	   o The ways in which the Dept. head will ensure the appropriate mentoring of PI in the context of career development and the PI's efforts to integrate research and education throughout the period of award and beyond
	• Include the department head's name and title below the signature.
	• *A proposal submitted without this Letter will be returned without review.*

Letters of Collaboration (*Other Supplementary Documents*)	• If applicable, letters should <u>only state the following</u>: "If the proposal submitted by Dr. (Insert full name of the PI) entitled (Insert the proposal title) is selected for funding by the NSF, it is my intent to collaborate and/or commit resources as detailed in the Project Description or the Facilities, Equipment or Other Resources section of the proposal." • **Departure from this format may result in the proposal being returned without review*
PECASE Eligibility (*Single Copy Document*)	If applicable, upload a statement stating, "I wish to be considered for the PECASE honorary award." By providing this statement, you are confirming that you meet the eligibility requirements for a PECASE award.
Appendices	• *Not permitted*
List of Suggested Reviewers (*optional*)	• May include a list of suggested reviewers (including email address and organizational affiliation) • May designate persons they would prefer not to review the proposal

NSF CAREER Webinar Materials and Frequently Asked Questions:
https://new.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/faculty-early-career-development-program-career

OFFICE OF SPONSORED PROGRAMS

OSP Internal Deadlines for NSF Career Proposals

*Please note that NSF Career is a very heavy deadline. Proposals will be reviewed in the order they are received. We recommend PI's submit all documents earlier than these deadlines and noncompliance with these deadlines will result in your proposal receiving a limited review and could affect submission.

- 07/07/2025 – Draft budget and justification uploaded in RES and budget review notification sent to GCA
- 07/16/2025 – RES submitted and fully approved and final non-technical documents uploaded into Research.gov
- 07/21/2025 – Final technical documents uploaded into Research.gov