Only individuals with an organization-approved Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) role can submit proposals to the National Science Foundation (NSF). In addition, some program solicitations require that letters of intent be submitted by an AOR. See the last page of this guide for information about adding the AOR role.

The Principal Investigator (PI)/co-PI must share edit access including proposal submission permission with the AOR, so the letter of intent or proposal can be submitted by the AOR. Once this access is shared with the AOR, all AORs affiliated with the PI’s organization will receive a system-generated email confirming AOR access and will be granted access to submit the letter of intent or proposal.

Select the Work with In Progress drop-down located in the In Progress tile on the proposal preparation landing page to access the letter of intent, preliminary proposal, or full or renewal proposal being submitted.

Locate the in progress letter of intent, preliminary proposal, or full or renewal proposal for submission under the appropriate submission type tab. Click on the Temporary ID Number to open the main page for the selected letter of intent or proposal.

If you do not see an expected letter of intent or proposal for submission on your In Progress list:
- You may not be an AOR affiliated to the same organization as the PI. Check your affiliation by accessing My Profile at the top of the screen.
- Confirm with the PI/co-PI that edit access with submission has been shared.
- Ensure that the letter of intent or proposal was created in Research.gov and not in FastLane.
- Letters of intent and proposals prepared in FastLane can only be accessed and submitted in FastLane. To search for proposals in FastLane, go to your My Desktop page and then click the Research Administration link in the Administration tile.
How to Submit Letters of Intent and Proposals (cont’d)

Select the Initiate Proposal Submission button on the proposal main page to start the three-step submission process.

Submit Access Not Shared: If the Initiate Proposal Submission button appears but is grayed out, this may mean the PI/co-PI has shared view or edit access with the AOR but not submit access. Contact the PI/co-PI to obtain submit access if needed. PI/co-PI names are shown on the Manage Personnel and Subaward Organizations page and can be accessed by clicking on the Manage Personnel and Subaward Organizations button. Individuals with Other Authorized User (OAU), Sponsored Projects Office (SPO), and AOR roles cannot change the proposal access settings.

Due Date Has Passed (Applies to new submissions only): The Initiate Proposal Submission button will also appear but is grayed out in instances when the due date is in the past. The proposing organization must update the due date on any in progress letter of intent or proposal for the specified funding opportunity. If the due date is not manually updated to reflect the correct due date, the system will not allow submission. Due dates can be updated in the top right section of the proposal main page by clicking the Due Date.
After clicking the Initiate Proposal Submission button, the system will run the current Research.gov automated proposal compliance checks.

- Error messages must be resolved before the proposal can be submitted.
- Warning messages should be reviewed but do not stop proposal submission.
- Click the Back to Proposal button to return to the proposal and fix any errors.
- Proposals without compliance errors will proceed to submission wizard Step 1 on page 4.

The proposal main page displays the identified compliance error and warning statuses in the Compliance Status column. The AOR can click the Return to PI button so the PI can make proposal updates; however, doing so will result in immediate loss of SPO/AOR access to the proposal until the PI/co-PI shares access again with the SPO/AOR. The Return to PI feature does not send a system-generated email message to the PI/co-PI regarding the return. You will want to contact the PI/co-PI regarding the reason for the return.
How to Submit Letters of Intent and Proposals (cont’d)

Three-step Submission
Submission of a letter of intent or proposal includes a series of steps for the submitter to review, certify, and then sign and submit to NSF. The top indicator on the page shows the submission wizard workflow from left to right. The same three-step wizard is used for submission of letters of intent and proposals.

A user with the PI, SPO, or AOR role can initiate and submit a letter of intent in Research.gov. For a funding opportunity that requires AOR submission, the PI or SPO must share edit access including submission permission for the letter of intent with the AOR.

Step 1. Review Proposal Information: Verify the letter of intent or proposal information and then click Next to continue.

Access the full proposal PDF

Click Next to continue
Step 2. Review Certifications:
- Scroll down to review the certifications.
- Check the box to agree with the certifications.
- Click Next to continue.

Step 3. Sign and Submit: Click the Sign and Submit button to sign and submit the letter of intent or proposal to NSF.
Verify the letter of intent or proposal has been submitted. The letter of intent or proposal will close after submission, and the Submitted list will display. Research.gov records the date and time of the submitter signature for deadline compliance purposes.

- The submitted proposal will show the current date.
- “Pending” displays in the Proposal Number column while the system processes the new submission.
- Refresh the screen to display the new proposal number when processing is complete.
- For a separately submitted collaborative proposal, each proposal submitted in the collaboration will continue to display as “Pending” until all proposals in the collaboration have been submitted. Allow 30 minutes after all proposals in the collaboration have been submitted for the proposal number to update.

After NSF processes the proposal, you should receive a confirmation email in 30 minutes with a proposal number that will also display in the Proposal Number column. If “Pending” continues to display in the Proposal Number column for more than 30 minutes, please contact the NSF Help Desk at 1-800-381-1532 (7:00 AM - 9:00 PM ET; Monday - Friday except federal holidays) to follow up.

After a proposal number is generated, the following system-generated email notifications are sent:

- For a letter of intent, a notification email will be sent to the PI and to all SPOs and AORs affiliated with the PI’s organization.
- For a proposal, a notification email will be sent to the PI, co-PIs, OAU, and AOR. For a collaborative proposal, the notification email is sent to the PI, co-PIs, OAU, and AOR of each participating organization.
Submitted Proposal Statuses

A list of submitted proposal statuses can be accessed from the Research.gov About Proposal Preparation and Submission page left navigation menu.

Access the list of submitted proposal statuses
Helpful Resources

• Help within the Proposal System
  Inline help features such as tooltips and links to relevant Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide sections are included throughout the Research.gov Proposal Submission System.

• Research.gov About Proposal Preparation and Submission Page
  Bookmark https://www.research.gov/research-web/content/aboutpsm to quickly access Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), video tutorials, and how-to guides.

• Research.gov Proposal Preparation Demo Site
  All demo site users are automatically given the PI role for demo site purposes, in order to perform the proposal preparation functions that a PI can do in the actual system. Proposal submission is not enabled in the demo site. See the demo site FAQs on the Research.gov About Proposal Preparation and Submission page left navigation menu for information on demo site access and features.

• Proposal Preparation FAQs
  FAQs organized by topic are available on the Research.gov About Proposal Preparation and Submission page left navigation menu.

• Video Tutorials
  Videos demonstrating key proposal preparation steps are available on the Research.gov About Proposal Preparation and Submission page Video Tutorials section.

• Automated Proposal Compliance Checks
  Automated proposal compliance checks triggering an error message will stop proposal submission to NSF, whereas checks triggering a warning message will still allow proposal submission. Expanded compliance checking in Research.gov helps to reduce administrative burden for the research community and NSF staff, as well as minimizes return without review proposals. Refer to the Automated Compliance Checking of NSF Proposals page for the current automated Research.gov proposal checks.

• Adding and Managing User Roles
  Only the organization’s AOR can submit the proposal to NSF. In addition, some letters of intent are required to be submitted by an AOR. The AOR role must be requested and is not assigned to any person by default. To request the AOR role, please see the Add a New Role job aid. After the AOR role is requested, the organization’s Administrator will receive the request electronically to approve or disapprove it. Additional information about adding and managing user roles can be found on the Research.gov About Account Management page.

• NSF Help Desk
  IT system-related and technical questions may be directed to the NSF Help Desk at 1-800-381-1532 (7:00 AM - 9:00 PM ET; Monday - Friday except federal holidays) or via rgov@nsf.gov.