

The Referee PAC

GUIDE FOR BOND PROPOSING ORGANIZATIONS

1. Table of Contents

Proposers should include a one-page *Table of Contents* that provides a guide to the organization and contents of the proposal. This item may also incorporate customized formats of the Proposer's own choosing, e.g., identification of the submitting organization through use of letterhead stationery, project logos, etc. The electronic system chosen may provide some assistance in preparing the Table of Contents, but Proposers are responsible for the accuracy of proposals submitted.

2. Technical/Management Section

As the main body of the proposal, this section must cover the following topics all within the specified page limit.

- The **objectives and expected significance** of the proposed bond, especially as related to the objectives given on the ballot;
- The **technical approach and methodology** to be employed in conducting the proposed work, including a description of any hardware proposed to be built in order to carry out the work, as well as any special facilities of the proposing organization(s) and/or capabilities of the Proposer(s) that would be used for carrying out the work;
- The **perceived impact** of the proposed work to the state of the community affected and how the proposed work is expected to build on and otherwise extend previous accomplishments;
- The **relevance** of the proposed work to past, present, and/or future programs and interests or to the specific objectives given on the ballot;
- A **general plan of work**, including *anticipated key milestones* for accomplishments, the *management structure* for the proposal personnel, any *substantial collaboration(s) and/or use of consultant(s)* that is(are) proposed to complete the investigation; and a description of the expected contribution to the proposed effort by the Project Manager (PM) and each person participating in the proposed work, regardless of whether or not they derive support from the proposed budget.
- To facilitate accounting for externalities (reducing community costs or increasing benefits to the community beyond the direct impact) where appropriate, as part of their technical proposal, the Proposer shall provide an **externality plan** and shall provide evidence (if any) of any past applicable practices.

The Technical/Management Section may contain illustrations and figures that amplify and demonstrate key points of the proposal (including milestone schedules, as appropriate). However, they must be of an easily viewed size and have self-contained captions that do not contain critical information not provided elsewhere in the proposal.

3. References and Citations

All references and citations given in the Technical/Management Section must be provided using easily understood, standard abbreviations for journals and complete names for books. It is highly preferred but not required that these references include the full title of the cited paper or report.

4. Biographical Sketch(s)

The PM (and Co-PM) must include a biographical sketch that includes his/her professional experiences and positions and a bibliography of recent publications, especially those relevant to the proposed investigation. A one-page sketch for each Co-Project Manager must also be included. The biographical sketch must include a description of technical and management performance on relevant prior efforts. Those participants who will play critical management or technical roles in the proposed work should demonstrate that their qualifications, capabilities, and experience are appropriate to provide confidence that the proposed objectives will be achieved.

5. Statements of Commitment and Letters of Support

Every Co-PM, and Collaborator identified as a participant on the proposal's cover page and/or in the proposal's Technical/Management Section must acknowledge his/her intended participation in the proposed effort.

Signed statements of commitment must be included within the proposal. In the case of more than one Co-PM or Collaborator at the same institution, a single statement signed by all participants may be submitted. In any case, each statement must be addressed to the PM, may be a facsimile of an original statement or the copy of an email (the latter must have sufficient information to unambiguously identify the sender), and is required even if the Co-PM or Collaborator is from the proposing organization. An example of such a statement follows:

"I (we) acknowledge that I (we) am (are) identified by name as Co-Project Manager(s) [and/or Collaborator(s)] to the investigation, entitled <name of proposal>, that is submitted by <name of Project Manager> to the <Ballot initiative>, and that I (we) intend to carry out all responsibilities identified for me (us) in this proposal. I (we) understand that the extent and justification of my (our) participation as stated in this proposal will be considered during peer review in determining in part the merits of this proposal. I (we) have read the entire proposal, including the management plan and budget, and I (we) agree that the proposal correctly describes my (our) commitment to the proposed work. For the purposes of conducting work for this project, my (our) participating organization is <<insert name of organization>>."

In addition, a letter of support is required from the owner of any facility or resource that is not under the PM's direct control, acknowledging that the facility or resource is available for the proposed use during the proposed period. For Government facilities, the availability of the facility to users is often stated in the facilities documentation or web page. Where the availability is not publicly stated, or where the proposed use goes beyond the publicly stated availability, a

statement, signed by the appropriate institutional official at the facility verifying that it will be available for the required effort, is sufficient.

Letters of support do not include “letters of affirmation” (i.e., letters that endorse the value or merit of a proposal). The value of a proposal is determined by peer review.

6. **Budget Justification: Narrative and Details**

Each proposal shall provide a budget justification for each year of the proposed effort and shall be supported by appropriate narrative material and budget details in compliance with the following instructions.

Failure to adequately provide detailed cost data will result in the proposal being dismissed without review. All Proposers are required to submit a thoroughly detailed cost breakdown. Procurement personnel must be able to determine that all proposed costs are allowable, allocable, and reasonable. A detailed budget will be provided to demonstrate this cost analysis.

1. *Required Budget Narrative (Including Personnel and Work Effort and Facilities and Equipment)*

The Budget Narrative must describe the basis of estimate and rationale for each proposed component of cost, including direct labor, subcontracts/subawards, consultants, other direct costs (including travel), and facilities and equipment. The Proposer must provide adequate budget detail to support estimates. The Proposer must state the source of cost estimates (e.g., based on quote, on previous purchases for same or similar item(s), cost data obtained from internet research, etc.) including the company name and/or URL and date if known, but need not include the actual price quote or screen captures from the web. The Proposer must describe in detail the purpose of any proposed travel in relation to the award and provide the basis of estimate, including information or assumptions on destination, number of travelers, number of days, fees, air fare, per diem, miscellaneous expenses, etc. If destinations are not known, the Proposer should, for estimating purposes, make reasonable assumptions about the potential destination and use historical cost data based on previous trips taken.

A *required* element of the Budget Narrative is a table of **Personnel and Work Effort**, summarizing the work effort required to perform the proposed work. The table must have the names and/or titles of all personnel necessary to perform the proposed effort, regardless of whether those individuals require funding. For each individual, list the planned work commitment to be funded, per period in fractions of a work year. In addition, include planned work commitment not funded, if applicable. Where names are not known, include the position, such as technician or consultant.

The final element of the Budget Narrative is a description of any required **facilities and equipment**. This section should describe any existing facilities and equipment that are required for the proposed investigation. It must explain the need for these items and describe the basis for the estimated cost (i.e., competitive quotes were obtained, proposed cost based on previous purchases for same or similar item(s), cost data obtained from internet research, etc.). Proposed costs for purchased facilities, tooling, or equipment must be entered in the *Proposal Cover Page* and included in the *Budget Details*.

There should be **direct and obvious** correlation between the items described in the Budget Narrative, those given in the Budget Details, and the figures entered in the *Proposal Cover Page*.

2. *Required Budget Details*

In addition to the Budget Narrative, Proposers are required to include detailed budgets, including detailed subcontract/subaward budgets, in a format of their own choosing. Regardless of format chosen, the following information must be included in the Budget Details.

1. Direct Labor (salaries, wages, and fringe benefits): List the number and titles of personnel, amounts of time to be devoted to the project (level of effort for each position), and rates of pay. The annual salary should be clearly noted for each position. Labor should be clearly broken out from fringe benefits. The fringe benefit rate/percent should be clearly noted on the budget for each labor category for ease of review.
2. Other Direct Costs:
 1. Subcontracts/Subawards: Attachments shall describe the work to be subcontracted/subawarded, estimated amount, recipient (if known), and the reason for subcontracting (e.g., uniquely qualified co-project manager is located at another institution from the proposing institution). Itemized budgets are required for all subcontracts/subawards, regardless of dollar value.
 2. Consultants: Identify consultants to be used and provide the amount of time they will spend on the project and rates of pay to include annual salary, overhead, etc.
 3. Equipment: List all facilities and equipment items separately. General-purpose equipment (i.e., personal computers and/or commercial software) valued at or above \$5,000 is not allowable as a direct cost unless specifically approved by the chief financial officer. Any requested general-purpose equipment purchase valued at or above \$5,000 to be made as a direct charge under this award must include the equipment description, an explanation of how it will be used in the conduct of the work proposed, and a written certification that the equipment will be used exclusively for the proposed activities and not for general business or administrative purposes.
 4. Supplies: Provide general categories of needed supplies, the method of acquisition, and the estimated cost.
 5. Travel: Provide a detailed breakout of costs for any proposed travel. Detailed budget data shall include the following:
 - Number of people and number of days
 - Departure/Arrival cities
 - Airfare
 - Per diem
 - Car rental

- Fees (if applicable)
- Miscellaneous Costs (i.e., car rental fuel, airport parking, tolls, etc.).

Note: Every effort should be made to accurately estimate and detail travel costs. Under Federal procurement regulations, missing or minimum data is not acceptable for budget evaluation purposes. If destinations are not known at time of proposal preparation, then reasonable assumptions about the potential destination and historical data for previous trips may be used but the preparer is still required to include the same amount of detail listed above. That is, use reasonable assumptions and historical data for destinations and length of stay, however, use current pricing for the applicable categories listed above. If adequate budget detail is not submitted with the proposal then this will eliminate the proposal from consideration.

6. Other: List and enter the total of direct costs not covered by previous sections
 1. Facilities and Administrative (F&A) Costs: Identify F&A cost rate(s) and base(s) as approved by the cognizant government agency, including the effective period of the rate. Provide the name, address, and telephone number of the government official having cognizance. **If approved audited rates are not available, provide the computational basis for the indirect expense pool and the corresponding allocation base for each proposed rate.**

Note: All budgets shall be prepared using the most current “approved” indirect rates for estimating purposes. Proposers shall not use unapproved “future” rates. Failure to do so will be flagged for voters. Proposers may charge less than the approved current rates but shall not propose more in anticipation of the rates changing in the future.
 2. Other Applicable Costs: Enter total explaining the need for each item and itemized lists detailing expenses within major budget categories. Also enter here the required funding for any Co-PMs who cannot be funded through the PM award (e.g. because the PM is at a non-Government organization and a Co-PM is at a U.S. Government organization).

1. **Descriptions of Technical/Management Sections:**

1. Abstract. Include a concise (200-300 words) abstract describing the objective(s) and the method(s) of approach.
2. Project Description.
 1. The main body of the proposal shall be a detailed statement of the work to be undertaken and should include objectives and expected significance; relation to the present state of the community; and relation to previous work done on the project and to related work in progress elsewhere. The statement should outline the plan of work, including the broad design of specific work to be undertaken and a description of methods and procedures. The project description should address the

evaluation factors in these instructions and any specific factors on the ballot. Any substantial collaboration with individuals not referred to in the budget or use of consultants should be described. Subcontracting significant portions of a project is discouraged.

2. The anticipated timeline of the proposed work should be described and be correlated with the proposed work effort.
3. Management Approach. For large or complex efforts involving interactions among numerous individuals or other organizations, plans for distribution of responsibilities and arrangements for ensuring a coordinated effort should be described.
4. Personnel. The project manager is responsible for supervision of the work and participates in the conduct of the work regardless of whether or not compensated under the contract. A short biographical sketch of the project manager, a list of principal projects and any exceptional qualifications should be included. Omit social security number and other personal items which do not merit consideration in evaluation of the proposal. Give similar biographical information on other senior professional personnel who will be directly associated with the project. Give the names and titles of any other consulting and technical personnel associated substantially with the project in an advisory capacity.
5. Facilities and Equipment.
 1. Describe available facilities and major items of equipment especially adapted or suited to the proposed project, and any additional major equipment that will be required. Identify any Government-owned facilities, industrial plant equipment, or special tooling that is proposed for use. Include evidence of its availability and the cognizant Government points of contact.
 2. Before requesting a major item of capital equipment, the Proposer should determine if sharing or loan of equipment already within the organization is a feasible alternative. Where such arrangements cannot be made, the proposal should so state. The need for items that typically can be used for project and non-project purposes should be explained.
6. Proposed Costs.
 1. Proposals should contain cost and technical parts in one volume: do not use separate "confidential" salary pages. As applicable, include separate cost estimates for salaries and wages; fringe benefits; equipment; expendable materials and supplies; services; domestic and foreign travel; publication or page charges; consultants; subcontracts; other miscellaneous identifiable direct costs; and indirect costs. List salaries and wages in appropriate organizational categories (e.g., project manager, other professionals, assistants, and technicians and other non-professional personnel). Estimate all staffing data in terms of staff-months or fractions of full-time.
 2. Explanatory notes should accompany the cost proposal to provide identification and estimated cost of major capital equipment items to be acquired; purpose and

estimated number and lengths of trips planned; basis for indirect cost computation (including date of most recent negotiation and cognizant agency); and clarification of other items in the cost proposal that are not self-evident. List estimated expenses as yearly requirements by major work phases.

7. Security. Proposals should not contain security classified material. If the work requires access to or may generate security classified information, the submitter will be required to comply with Government security regulations.
8. Current Support. For other current projects being conducted by the project manager, provide title of project, funding organization, and ending date.
9. Special Matters.
 1. Include any required statements of environmental impact of the work, human subject or animal care provisions, conflict of interest, or on such other topics as may be required by the nature of the effort and current statutes, executive orders, or other current Government-wide guidelines.
 2. Identify and discuss risk factors and issues throughout the proposal where they are relevant, and your approach to managing these risks.
 3. Proposers should include a brief description of the organization, its facilities, and previous work experience in the scope of the proposal. Identify the cognizant Government audit agency, inspection agency, and administrative contracting officer, when applicable.
10. To facilitate documenting externalities where appropriate, as part of their technical proposal, the Proposer shall provide a externality plan and shall provide evidence (if any) of any past applicable practices.

This document has been adapted from the NASA Guidebook for Proposers by P. Craig and E.A. Jensen (2015). All questions/clarifications should be sent by email to: info@refpac.org