

The NSF One-Pager: Description, Suggestions, and Example Template

Purpose: Most NSF Program Directors ask principal investigators for a one-page project summary or concept outline to help determine if the proposed research is a good fit to the scope of their program. These one-pagers help PIs organize their thoughts and help Program Directors prepare to give useful feedback. One-pagers are often discussed within and across programs, so NSF can provide general feedback to the research team and/or request additional information. Feedback can include an evaluation of the fit to the NSF program, suggestions of other programs to consider, and/or reminders to focus on developing testable hypotheses and a feasible research design to answer the overarching biological question.

What should be included in a one-pager?: The document should mirror the format of the NSF [Project Summary](#) of an NSF proposal. This means it includes a brief overview, a statement of the intellectual merit of the proposed research activity, and a statement on the broader impacts of the proposed activity. Good one-pagers include:

- Your overarching biological question
- The big picture of your research area and knowledge gaps you are addressing
- The hypotheses you will use to address this question
- Briefly describe the specific aims and what you are planning to do
- Any key preliminary data

Don't forget & things to consider:

- One-pagers should be specific to the program. Read the solicitation thoroughly and be sure that your project aligns with the scope of the program. If you aren't sure if it is a fit, point this out when you write to the Program Director and note any other programs you might be considering.
- Use your one page strategically to tell us what you are proposing to do! You can do this by keeping background information to a minimum, briefly describing why the research is important and how it advances current knowledge. Use most of the page to explain your hypotheses and your approach(es) to addressing them.
- Solicitation specific criteria should be addressed in the one-pager. In addition to the two merit review criteria (Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts), many programs evaluate proposals using additional solicitation specific review criteria described in the program solicitation. To be competitive, this additional information must be addressed in your proposal.
- Don't forget the Broader Impacts in your 1-pager. They are part of the review criteria, so address them in your one-pager without providing extensive details.
- Responses to one-pager queries typically take a week because they may need to be discussed in weekly program meetings and/or sent to Program Directors in other programs. If you do not hear back within two weeks, then please send a gentle reminder—we all get busy and we don't want things to fall through the cracks!
- After you hear back about your one-pager, you may want to consider scheduling a meeting with a Program Director. This meeting can provide an opportunity to ask specific clarifying questions about the solicitation, (including solicitation specific criteria); about your proposal ideas and preparation; and about other NSF funding opportunities that may be appropriate for your project. Please note: Program Directors are here to help you figure out the best “home” for your ideas at NSF, but they will not provide the type of detailed feedback on your proposal that you would expect from a mentor or colleague.

NSF One-Pager Example Template

First Name, Last Name, Organization Name, Email

Target Program, Potential Secondary Program(s)

Proposal Type

This may vary depending on the program but common proposal types include: Research, Rapid Response Research (RAPID), Early-concept Grants for Exploratory Research (EAGER), Research Advanced by Interdisciplinary Science and Engineering (RAISE), Grant Opportunities for Academic Liaison with Industry (GOALI), Conference, Center/Research Infrastructure (see relevant funding opportunity) or Fellowship (see relevant funding opportunity). Additionally, several career point specific proposals exist including [Faculty Early Career Development Program](#) (CAREER) and [Mid Career Advancement](#) (MCA) proposals. Further information on these opportunities can be found in the PROPOSAL & AWARD POLICIES AND PROCEDURES GUIDE ([PAPPG](#)) and program solicitations.

Relevance to Program

1-2 sentences about how your research fits the program goals

Brief Submission Running Title

Key Terms

up to 6 key words or phrases

Concept Outline

This section should be one page in length, usually 2-3 paragraphs that include a brief overview, a statement of the intellectual merit of the proposed research activity, and a statement on the broader impacts of the proposed activity. Keep in mind the suggestions from the previous page and be sure to address your overarching biological question, the big picture of your research area and knowledge gaps you are addressing, the hypotheses you will use to address this question and briefly the specific aims and what you are planning to do, and any key preliminary data.