Fall 2018 ERA Forum Webinar – Questions & Answers

September 2018

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
Collaborative Proposals/Subawards/co-PIs/PIs	
1. Have you made it possible to prepare and submit separately-submitted collaborative proposals in Research.gov yet?	No. The separately-submitted Collaborative Proposal functionality is currently being developed and will be included in a future release.
2. Will the upcoming functionality to prepare and submit collaborative submissions in Research.gov only for collaborative submissions with subawards or will the release include separately submitted collaborative proposals?	The Collaborative Proposal with Subawards functionality is being developed and is not yet available. Separately-submitted Collaborative Proposal functionality will be developed after collaborative proposals with subawards is released.
3. Can a Collaborating Institution use Fastlane to submit a proposal if the Lead Institution is using Research.gov for submission?	No, the lead proposal and its linked, non-lead proposals must all use the same system. A proposal created in Research.gov cannot be linked to a proposal created in FastLane.
4. What are the major differences of submitting collaborative proposals through Research.gov compared to Fastlane?	Collaborative proposal development is not currently available on Research.gov. The functionality is under development for collaborative proposals with subawards with separately submitted collaborative proposals being developed at a later date. However, differences between Research.gov and FastLane include: • Research.gov has integrated compliance checks for fonts, margins, and line spacing. • Research.gov has specific checks on the budget screens and for Collaborators and Other Affiliations (COA) uploads, which is designed to make it easier to recognize what required documents are in the system. • Research.gov provides real time compliance feedback and alerts. • Research.gov only takes a few seconds to upload documents, whereas FastLane can take 30-90 seconds.

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
	Compared to FastLane, Research.gov is much easier to use and provides the user with less upload time and the ability to quickly create and update documents.
5. What training and how-to resources are available for proposal preparation and submission in Research.gov?	Video job aids are embedded on the various screens in the user interface as well as the system's "About" page on the Research.gov site at the bottom of the page, that are worth looking at. To get to the videos: Navigate to Research.gov>About>Research.gov Proposal Preparation and Submission, where you will be able to view the various videos without having to login.
6. Will there be an easier way to see what our collaborators submit to the proposal? Currently, the only way to see what our collaborators submit is to use the print all button.	The separately-submitted Collaborative Proposal functionality is being developed. The ability for collaborators on a proposal to have view-only access to each linked proposal on a per-section basis is being considered for future development.
7. Do we enter the subaward budget or do we give the subawardee access, so they can enter the budget information themselves?	No, that functionality has not yet been developed. Currently, for a single proposal with subawards only the PI, co-PI, OAU, SPO and AOR roles has access to enter budget information. A subawardee will have to be in one of the roles mentioned above to access and edit a proposal. The concept of a budget template (in Excel) that can be uploaded is under consideration for future development.
8. Is there a limit on the number of co-PIs that can be added? Current NSF Fastlane cover page only allows for 5 (lead plus 4 co-PIs).	The limit in Research.gov will continue to be the same as it is in FastLane.
9. Is there a way to switch the roles of PI and co-PI in research.gov? Currently this is completed in Fastlane.	Yes, this can be done during proposal preparation. If the PI is deleted during proposal preparation in Research.gov, the user is required to assign a co-PI as the new PI. The delete function is not enabled unless at least one co-PI exists.
10. Can administrators initiate proposals unlike previously in Fastlane where the PI had to?	No. Currently, PI is the only role that can initiate a proposal in Research.gov. NSF is reviewing to what user roles may have the ability to initiate proposals in the future.
11. If you add personnel to the subaward institution and identify as co-PI, does that make them co-PI on the entire proposal?	No.

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
12. If you have a person who will be the PI of a subaward and a project co-PI, how would you enter them?	NSF is in the process of finalizing the concept for personnel data entry for collaborative proposals with subawards and will be using your survey feedback to help guide future enhancements.
13. Can someone besides the PI check the box saying its ready for submission by the AOR? (e.g., can a co-PI or a proposal editor do that?)	Yes, The PI, co-PI, and OAU roles have the ability to check the box to indicate that the proposal is ready for submission.
14. What do we do if a subaward organization or personnel do not populate when you search for them?	Ensure that the organization is registered and has been assigned a DUNS number. Ensure personnel are also registered in Research.gov.
15. Does the PI still have to allow Sponsored Research Office (SRO) access to the proposal, as in the current Fastlane?	Yes.
16. Does NSF have a preference whether proposals are submitted via Fastlane vs. Research.gov?	NSF proposals can be prepared and submitted in FastLane, Research.gov, or Grants.gov as equal options. All proposals show in NSF's system exactly the same, and Program Officers do not see a difference when reviewing proposals from any of the three proposal systems.
17. We have a PI who is 50% at our organization and 50% time at a university but submits proposals from both organizations under one NSF ID. In the future, will there be an option for the PI to choose which organization he would like to submit a proposal from?	Yes, when initiating a proposal in Research.gov, a PI associated with multiple organizations is required to select one organization for the proposal being prepared and submitted.
Award Notice	
1. Is the FAIN (Federal Award ID Number) the same thing as the permanent NSF number assigned to a submitted proposal?	The FAIN is also referred to as the Award ID. In most cases it is the same number that is assigned to the proposal once it is submitted to NSF. In cases of a supplemental funding request, it is the "original;" award ID that is used for the supplement.
2. Can recipient grant offices be CC'd for new Award Notices?	The "official" grants contact email address that may be maintained in FastLane is used currently and in the new system will be used to cc the SRO at the Grantee organization.
3. Will the new Award Notices give more details about the budget, or will the information it contains be similar to the current notices?	It will be compatible with the submitted FastLane or Research.gov budget. If there are specific details that you would like to see in the budget that are not currently there, please email rgov@nsf.gov.

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
4. Why is the proposal number shown as N/A on the notice of award?	Not every action has a proposal. A no cost extension can be given for an award and affects an award, not a proposal. The Proposal ID follows a proposal, and if funded, is replaced by the Award ID. A Proposal ID gets linked to Award ID if there is a supplement. When submitting a supplement request via FastLane the Proposal ID displays and does not get awarded in same way as an award.
5. Will all Award Notice emails and action required emails be sent to the Institution's Sponsored Programs Office?	The current award notices go to the SPO, the awardee organization, PIs, and Co-PIs. (CC'd on the email). FastLane account management has the place to enter/update the email addresses. New notices will go to the email provided by the awardee organization and PI/co-PIs active on the award.
6. Where will the new Award Notices be available (i.e., in Research.gov or FastLane or both)?	For now, Award Notices will only be available in FastLane as they are currently. It is planned that they will eventually be available in both systems eventually.
7. Is it possible to have the PI name on the No-Cost Extension (NCE) amendments?	This should now be available. An enhancement to the new Notice was released November 30 that adds the PI information.
8. How do you initiate a No Cost Extension (NCE) or budget modification? Do you contact the Program Officer first?	You may always contact the Program Officer or Grants Officer assigned to your award. However, both no cost extensions and re-budgeting post-award are covered in the Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide (PAPPG). No cost extensions may be requested using functionality in Research.gov. See PAPPG Chapter VI.D.3. for more information on no cost extensions. NSF provides broad re-budgeting authority via the PAPPG Chapter X.A.3. There are only a few items that require our prior approval such as moving participant support costs out of that category. The required requests would be prepared and submitted via Research.gov

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
9. What are creativity extensions and funded increments?	Creativity extensions and increments are both types of funding actions that may be approved for an award. Creativity extensions act as a supplement to an award and add additional funds and possibly additional time to an award. The objective of such extensions is to offer the most creative investigators an extended opportunity to attack adventurous, "high-risk" opportunities in the same general research area, but not necessarily covered by the original/current award. NSF Program Officers may initiate creativity extensions for standard and continuing grants. Incremental funding also adds funding to an award. They are pre-planned and are approved as part of the original award and funding schedule. Incremental funding may be provided under a continuing grant, cooperative agreement or certain fellowships.
Functionality – PSM (Fonts, Delete Role Request, Printing, etc.)	
1. In the Award Notice the Personnel effort is listed by Calendar, Summer, Academic; but in Research.gov the effort is just Months. Will the FastLane designation change to match?	FastLane is not being updated in the modernization and development of Research.gov. Designating in months makes technical development easier in the Research.gov proposal preparation system.
2. Can PIs now use any kind of font type, or should they still follow the guidelines in the PAPPG?	Continue to follow the PAPPG.
3. Has the "Additional Single Copy Document" feature been enabled for Proposals submitted via Research.gov?	Not yet. Future development will accommodate additional single copy documents.
4. Will functionality be added for a PI to delete a role request to an organization?	Part of the October 2018 release included the ability to remove a person from a proposal.
5. Why do we need to logout completely to be able to replace uploaded documents?	You do not need to logout to replace uploaded documents. You can replace uploaded documents by first deleting the unwanted document and uploading the new document.
6. Will Research.gov have more validation messages than Fastlane (other than font warnings)?	Yes, there are approximately 100 compliance checks in Research.gov versus 46 in FastLane.
7. Any sense of timing for when the various types of no cost extension notices may all be aligned to the new format?	This has not yet been prioritized, so no timeframe exists.

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
8. Will there be a print-friendly version of the new Cooperative Agreement modifications?	The new version of the Award Notice should be print-friendly.
9. Will the font warning show where exactly the specific problem is?	Research.gov currently indicates only that the error exists in an uploaded PDF. Enhanced warnings that indicate where a problem exists with a file is being considered for development.
10. What enhancements/improvements will be made to Research.gov's proposal compliance validation checks (e.g., I've had issues with the compliance checks spitting out errors for required headers, such as "Broader Impacts")?	NSF continues to enhance and improve Research.gov. The instructions of a given upload section include instructions on what is required for that section, and links to the related PAPPG section. If error or warning messages are unclear, please contact rgov@nsf.gov
11. What is the timeline for Research.gov to allow proposal deletion if the proposal was created in error or was not submitted?	The ability to delete a proposal is in our backlog and will be developed. No date has been determined for that functionality development.
12. If a proposal will be rejected for using the wrong font size, then why will an unsupported font size or font type only show up as a Warning rather than an Error? Some PIs will only address errors (not warnings), and that would be detrimental.	Continue to follow PAPPG guidelines and screen instructions, which currently take precedence until future policy changes in the PAPPG on fonts are made. Font type and usage in proposal preparation and submission has generated a great deal of discussion at NSF. The reality is that numerous fonts are used in FastLane and getting to the state where researchers and administrators found this unusable. As a result, Warning(s) appear in multiple formats and stages of the preparation and submission process. For example, a Warning(s) will appear for the AOR prior to submission. Warning(s) will appear when access is granted to SPO/AOR. A PFU can be done too.
13. Will Research.gov include a place to add miscellaneous single copy documents?	Future development will accommodate additional single copy documents.
14. From what we found, you must exit and login again to find the submitted proposal. Is there an easier way to find proposals once they are submitted?	A lag of several minutes may occur between when a proposal is submitted and the update of other systems. Allow some time and refresh the Submitted Proposals screen.
Miscellaneous	
1. How can I learn more about system to system (S2S) integration for application submission? Is there a person who I can be put in touch with at NSF who can answer some questions I have?	Call or email the NSF Help Desk. (1-800-381-1532 or help@nsf.gov)

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
2. How do you remove people (AOR or PI) no longer affiliated with the institution who haven't linked their Fastlane ID in research.gov? When going to My Organization, it only gives you the option to invite them to update their profile.	Here are the steps to remove a no-longer-affiliated or unmigrated user from the organization: • Open Research.gov; • Click "Sign In" located at the top right of the screen; • Enter your NSF ID and password and click "Sign In;" • Click "My Profile" located at the top right of the screen; • Click "View My Users" from the left navigation bar; • Identify a user who has not migrated to the new account management system by locating both the "Invite to Update Profile" link and the "Remove User" link in the Action column; and • Click the "Remove User" link in the Action column for the specified user to remove that individual from the organization and View My Users Administrator Dashboard.
3. Can we still make changes to budget line items (move money) without informing the program officer?	Please continue to follow PAPPG guidelines. Post-award, funds that less than $25K may be moved around, except for participant support costs. Participant support costs or those above $25k need prior approval from the cognizant program officer. For the most part, per the PAPPG, an awardee can move money around to different budget line items.
4. How long will Fastlane be available for submissions? Is there a target date when we will no longer be able to use Fastlane for proposal submittals?	Once all features and functionalities are available in Research.gov, NSF will decommission FastLane. No retirement date has been set.
5. Once FastLane is decommissioned, what will happen to the archive of proposals previously submitted through Fastlane?	NSF complies with all federal record retention policies. The process for transitioning the previously submitted proposal archive from FastLane will be planned at a future date to comply with federal record retention policies.
6. Will future proposal compliance validation check enhancements include level of error to alert applicants to the absence of 1 or more COAs for senior personnel?	Research.gov requires that each person identified as senior personnel must have a COA prior to proposal submission. Lack of a required COA produces an error message when forwarding to SPO/AOR and when the AOR begins the submission steps.

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
7. When there is an error in a funding opportunity for Research.gov, to whom do we report it and how much time is needed to correct it, if it can be corrected?	Contact the NSF Help Desk or the Program Officer.
8. Are there going to be templates that conform with the 1" margins like the current and pending documents?	Modernization plans do not include additional document templates, with the possible exception of a budget upload template (Excel file).
9. A PI trying to use Research.gov for his CAREER submission is receiving errors due to imbedded fonts that happened during the conversion to PDF. Since it's only a warning and still allows submission, will that be considered, or will it still be returned?	If the submission adheres to the font and format guidance in the PAPPG, there should be no cause for concern. Contact the Help Desk for assistance in resolving unexpected errors or warning.
10. Can a proposal have a 4-year budget with a 5-yr award confirmation, or do they need to be in alignment?	Budget proposals and award confirmations should be in alignment. A budget must be included for each year.