

NSF Project Description Template

# Project Description Requirements

The Project Description is one of the main aspects of the proposal where you will describe the activities, objectives, and work that will be done during the funding period of your proposed project. When preparing the Project Description, it is important to reference both the National Science Foundation [Proposal & Awards Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG)](https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=pappg) and the program solicitation that is specific to your project. **Any requirements in the solicitation such as page limitations, section headings, and other information will override requirements listed in the PAPPG.**

## Formatting

The proposal must conform to the following requirements (Chapter II.B.):

a. Use one of the following fonts identified below:

* Arial7 (not Arial Narrow), Courier New, or Palatino Linotype at a font size of 10 points or larger;
* Times New Roman at a font size of 11 points or larger; or
* Computer Modern family of fonts at a font size of 11 points or larger.

A font size of less than 10 points may be used for mathematical formulas or equations, figures, tables, or diagram captions and when using a Symbol font to insert Greek letters or special characters. Other fonts not specified above, such as Cambria Math, may be used for mathematical formulas, equations, or when inserting Greek letters or special characters. PIs are cautioned, however, that the text must still be readable.

b. No more than six lines of text within a vertical space of one inch.

c. Margins, in all directions, must be at least an inch. No proposer-supplied information may appear in the margins.

d. Paper size must be no larger than standard letter paper size (8 ½ by 11”).

These requirements apply to all uploaded sections of a proposal, including supplementary documentation.

e. Proposers are strongly encouraged to use only a standard, single-column format for the text.

Most Project Descriptions (including Results from Prior NSF Support) **must not exceed 15 pages**. Exceptions are made when the program solicitation has a different requirement that overrides PAPPG page limitations.

Other types of proposals (RAPID, EAGER, RAISE, etc.) have additional requirements; Chapter II.E of the PAPPG has more information on specific requirements for these types of proposals.

Proposers are advised that FastLane does not automatically paginate a proposal. Each section of the proposal that is uploaded as a file must be individually paginated prior to being uploaded to FastLane.

For proposals submitted via Research.gov, the system will automatically paginate a proposal. Each section of the proposal that is uploaded as a file should leave out page numbering unless otherwise directed within Research.gov (Chapter II.B.).

## Broader Impacts

A separate section labeled “Broader Impacts” must be included in the Project Description. The Broader Impacts section should discuss the Broader Impacts of the project and its proposed activities. The PAPPG describes Broader Impacts as:

Broader impacts may be accomplished through the research itself, through the activities that are directly related to specific research projects, or through activities that are supported by, but are complementary to the project. NSF values the advancement of scientific knowledge and activities that contribute to the achievement of societally relevant outcomes. Such outcomes include, but are not limited to: full participation of women, persons with disabilities, and underrepresented minorities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); improved STEM education and educator development at any level; increased public scientific literacy and public engagement with science and technology; improved well-being of individuals in society; development of a diverse, globally competitive STEM workforce; increased partnerships between academia, industry, and others; improved national security; increased economic competitiveness of the U.S.; use of science and technology to inform public policy; and enhanced infrastructure for research and education. These examples of societally relevant outcomes should not be considered either comprehensive or prescriptive. Proposers may include appropriate outcomes not covered by these examples (Chapter II.2.d.iii).

## Results from Prior NSF Support

Any PI or Co-PI that has previously received NSF support must include a description of their work in a section labeled “Results from Prior NSF Support”. Results should include:

* an award with an end date in the past five years; or
* any current funding, including any no cost extensions

Results from prior NSF support must include projects whether they are related to the proposal or not. In cases where the PI or any co-PI has received more than one award (excluding amendments to existing awards), they need only report on the one award that is most closely related to the proposal. Support means salary support, as well as any other funding awarded by NSF, including research, Graduate Research Fellowship, Major Research Instrumentation, conference, equipment, travel, and center awards, etc. (Chapter II.2.d.iii).

Requirements for this section are as follows (Chapter II.2.d.iii):

1. the NSF award number, amount and period of support;
2. the title of the project;
3. a summary of the results of the completed work, including accomplishments, supported by the award. The results must be separately described under two distinct headings: Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts;
4. a listing of the publications resulting from the NSF award (a complete bibliographic citation for each publication must be provided either in this section or in the References Cited section of the proposal); if none, state “No publications were produced under this award.”
5. 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; and
6. if the proposal is for renewed support, a description of the relation of the completed work to the proposed work.

If the project was recently awarded and therefore no new results exist, describe the major goals and broader impacts of the project. Note that the proposal may contain up to five pages to describe the results. Results may be summarized in fewer than five pages, which would give the balance of the 15 pages for the Project Description.

Note: Some solicitations have requirements regarding Results from Prior NSF Support that differ from the PAPPG. Check the solicitation for any overriding requirements.

## References Cited

Reference information is required to be submitted. Each reference must include (Chapter II.2.e):

* Names of all authors (in the same sequence in which they appear in the publication)
* Article and journal title
* Book title
* Volume number
* Page numbers
* Year of publication

The names of authors must be listed in full; do not replace author names with “et al.” in any reference cited. The inclusion of a website address (URL) is optional under NSF PAPPG guidelines.

If you have any questions or would like assistance with your project description, please contact researchdevelopment@tamucc.edu.

*The following template is only intended to be used as an example. Not all headings and materials will apply to your individual proposal.* ***Please consult the program solicitation for specific requirements including page limitations, headings/sections, etc.***

*If you are interested in proposal development services or have questions about this template,* ***please contact*** ***researchdevelopment@tamucc.edu****.*

# NSF Project Description Example

## Overview

Give an overview of your proposed projects with your goals and objectives.

What do you want to accomplish? What will you be researching? How is this project unique to others? How does the University play a role in your project?

## Background

Provide any research background and ongoing research activities relevant to your project.

What is the research area of focus? What activities are currently being implemented for research? What research collaborations already exist? What research activities serve as a background for the REU project?

## Research Activities

Describe the research and research activities that will take place during the project.

What research will be conducted during the project? What kind of data will be collected and analyzed? What activities/tasks will be done to collect and analyze research data? How do these activities fit into the research area(s)? Who will be directing each research activity? Will anyone else be involved in these activities (collaborators, students, other personnel, etc.)?

## Project Timeline

Outline the proposed schedule of your project.

When will activities/tasks take place? How long will your project be? How long will tasks take to be completed? If you project requires planning and preparation during the funding period, how long will this take and when will it happen? When can the funder expect results or deliverables?

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| **TIMELINE →**  **TASKS ↓**  | **Year 1** **Quarter**  | **Year 2** **Quarter**  | **Year 3** **Quarter**  | **Year 4** **Quarter**  |
| **1**  | **2**  | **3**  | **4**  | **1**  | **2**  | **3**  | **4**  | **1**  | **2**  | **3**  | **4**  | **1**  | **2**  | **3**  | **4**  |
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| * Subtask1
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| * Subtask 2
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## Evaluation Plan

Describe how your project will be evaluated.

Will your project be internally or externally evaluated (or both)? What best practices and methods will be used during the evaluation(s)? What kind of data will be collected? Who will be involved?

## Broader Impacts

Discuss the Broader Impacts of your proposed project.

How will this project advance scientific knowledge? Will this project provide opportunities for women, people with disabilities, and underrepresented minorities to fully participate in STEM? Will this improve STEM education and/or public engagement? What other socially relevant outcomes will be produced through your project and the proposed activities?

## Results from Prior NSF Support

**PI Name. Award Number.** Project Title, MM/DD/YYY-MM/DD/YYY. Award Amount. Intellectual Merit: (Description). Broader Impacts: (Description). Projects and Data Management Plan: (Description).