Budget Considerations for ENG CAREER Proposals

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The Basics…

Minimum budget for ENG: $500,000*, for a 5-year project duration; no published maximum

"Maximum" and "acceptable" budget amounts differ by program – review previously funded CAREER grant amounts on the program website and check with a Program Director

Generally speaking, at a minimum funds should be requested for PI support, graduate student support, and travel

Note that with overhead, this can quickly use up $500K!

Proposal-specific considerations

Educational activities – will these be included in PI support or will you request additional funds for the activities you are proposing?

Assessment activities – will you need to include support for external assessment activities?

Equipment – do you have specific, *modest* equipment needs for which you will request support?

Have you included outside senior investigators that will require *modest* budget considerations?

Budget Preparation

(Required)

Each proposal must contain a budget for each year of support requested. The budget justification should be no more than five pages for all years of the project combined.

Proposals containing subawards must include a separate budget justification of no more than five pages for each subaward.

Budget Preparation

Information regarding budgetary guidelines can be found in the PAPPG as well as NSF program solicitations.

Amounts should be:

Realistic and reasonable

Well-justified and should establish need

Consistent with program guidelines

Eligible costs consist of:

Personnel

Equipment

Travel

Participant support

Other direct costs (e.g., subawards, consultant services, computer services, and publications costs)

Budget Preparation

Budget Line F, Participant Support Costs

Know the definition of participant support and only include those allowable costs under this budget line. Be aware of unallowable entertainment and exclusion of indirect costs.

Budget Line G, Other Direct Costs

If project costs do not fall within any other budget line, then use "Other" (G.6) and explicitly explain the costs in the justification to ensure only allowable costs are being requested.

Budget Line I, Indirect Costs

Charge in accordance with the most recent federally negotiated rate agreement.

Budget Justification

A budget justification must accompany the budget. This is the text (narrative) that justifies the budget request you have presented. It is not the "what"; it is the "why".

Your SRO may have standard narratives that explain pay rates, fringe benefits, and overhead costs, but you must explain:

Why are the requested funds needed?

How do these items help support the proposed activities?

How were these amounts estimated?

(Please note: NSF PDs are perfectly capable of translating budget figures into words – we want to know specifically what you are requesting funds for and why they are necessary for the activities you have proposed.)

Allowable costs

The PAPPG (Proposal and Awards Policies and Procedures Guide) spells out what you can and cannot request.

Commonly requested non-allowable costs:

NSF cannot support prizes (financial or otherwise) for competitions (but we can support funds to reimburse study participation).

Other unallowed costs include entertainment, alcohol, recognition awards, and intramural meetings.

… and Finally

Ultimately, if your project is under consideration for funding, budgets are negotiable and can be revised, but this process takes time.

We strongly suggest submitting a proposal within the "range" of award sizes made through your program.

Remember, CAREER grants are for the PI's academic career development; request what is necessary to carry out the activities you have proposed.

PAPPG Sections of Interest

NSF Proposal & Award Policies and Procedures Guide (PAPPG)

Chapter II section D.2 – detailed description of each required proposal contents section

Chapter II section D.2.f – detailed description of each required proposal budget section

Chapter II section D.2.xiii – detailed section of cost allowability

Contacts for More Information…

Questions on **payments, ACM$,** financial policies and reporting – NSF's
Division of Financial Management: www.nsf.gov/bfa/dfm/cmeab.jsp
Tips for assistance with **Research.gov** and **FastLane**:
- ✓ Follow directions and edits
- ✓ Read error messages and make screen shots to include in any emails to
  Help Desk and/or NSF PO
- ✓ call Research.gov Help Desk at 1-800-381-1532
- ✓ call FastLane at 1-800-673-6188

Policy Office (proposal & award policies): **www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy**
DGA (grant-specific inquiries): **www.nsf.gov/bfa/dga**