



6350 Nautilus Drive
Boulder, CO 80301



Community Proposal Preparation and Submission Guidelines

Revised: April 2009

INTRODUCTION

The following guidance is for scientists who are considering submitting a proposal on behalf of the UNAVCO community for a workshop, equipment purchase, or science/education collaboration as a Principal Investigator (PI) or co-PI through UNAVCO. Since its inception, UNAVCO has served its community by submission of proposals for activities and projects that are intended to serve the wider community.

All proposals must be submitted in accordance with current sponsor guidelines.

Throughout the proposal preparation process, the president, program directors, and contracts office are available as resources. After an award is made to UNAVCO, the PI directs the project and grant administration is performed by the UNAVCO Contracts Office, to ensure that grant funds are expended in accordance with NSF policy and Federal rules.

SHOULD I SUBMIT A PROPOSAL THROUGH UNAVCO?

A proposal should be submitted through UNAVCO only if there is a clear benefit in doing so. For example, if the project serves a large constituency within the UNAVCO community (e.g., a workshop proposal), or UNAVCO will support logistics, submission through UNAVCO would be appropriate. PIs are advised to consult with the President to determine the benefits and suitability of submission of a proposal through UNAVCO.

WHO CONTROLS THE SPENDING OF GRANT FUNDS FOR A GRANT ADMINISTERED THROUGH UNAVCO?

The PI controls grant spending consistent with the terms of the NSF award and UNAVCO policies and procedures. Spending on grants must comply with specific funding agency rules, so the PI must coordinate closely with the Finance Office in the expenditure of funds.

DO I NEED PERMISSION FROM MY EMPLOYING ORGANIZATION TO BE A PI OR CO-PI ON A UNAVCO PROPOSAL?

The answer depends on the PI's institutional requirements. If you have a question about this, you should inquire within your organization. In the event a transfer of funds occurs between UNAVCO and your organization (e.g., if salary is involved), such transfer is always handled via a legally valid subaward issued in accordance with UNAVCO procurement policy, which by its nature involves agreement by both organizations.

PROPOSAL PROCESS AND TIMING

1. Steps Prior To Proposal Preparation

Prior to proposal preparation (approximately one month or more prior to proposal due date), the PI should submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) by e-mail to the President, with a copy to the Chief Financial Officer. The LOI must include the following information:

- Agency and program to which the proposal will be submitted
- Due date at the agency
- Announcement to which the proposal is responding, if applicable
- Proposed start date and duration of effort
- Names of PI and co-PIs
- Approximate budget and whether salaries are involved

- Whether any special requirements for the proposal exist
- A brief summary of the work to be proposed
- The reasons why submission through UNAVCO is appropriate.

The President will evaluate the appropriateness of a UNAVCO submission of the proposal. The criteria for evaluation are that there is a clear benefit in submitting through UNAVCO and that the proposal is consistent with the goals for activities conducted by UNAVCO as specified by the Board of Directors. The President will notify the PI with the determination. Authorization will specify a Proposal Coordinator in the UNAVCO Business Office, as well as a Board Liaison, who will review the proposal on behalf of the Board. The PI should contact this Proposal Coordinator right away to advance the proposal.

2. Proposal Preparation

The following steps should be completed at least two days prior to any specified proposal deadline:

- The UNAVCO Business Office will initiate a new proposal in the appropriate system (e.g., FastLane, Inspires, grants.gov) and provide the temporary proposal number, password, or other appropriate information to all participants
- The PI and collaborators will prepare all required proposal sections, and upload or forward to the coordinator as appropriate
- The budget and Budget Justification will be developed by the Business Office based on PI-provided information
- If subawards are involved, a written letter of intent to conduct work at a specified funding level from the subawardee institutional Sponsored Research Office (SRO) to UNAVCO must be in place prior to proposal submission
- Once all components of the proposal are entered, the Board Liaison and President will review the proposal
- After review, the PI will receive feedback from the President (re: content) or Business Office (re: budget and/or contractual issues) specifying corrective action
- Upon final review, the President will authorize the PI to submit the proposal for UNAVCO SRO approval
- The UNAVCO SRO will review the proposal for compliance with all UNAVCO and funding agency requirements and, if found acceptable, submit the proposal to the agency

PIs must provide complete, well written, scientifically sound proposals for submission via UNAVCO. The proposals should reflect positively on the community and should, to the extent possible, have been discussed with the prospective program director. UNAVCO cannot make changes to, nor attempt to remedy problems or deficiencies with, proposals except to communicate with PIs the need to complete sections of, or fix problems with, the proposal.

3. Budget Preparation

The budget is one of the most critical parts of the proposal and requires careful coordination between the PI and the UNAVCO Business Office. The budget must accurately reflect and enable the scientific/community goals of the proposed research/activity. The budget must be accurately calculated, and use up-to-date costs, including benefit and indirect cost rates. Finally, the budget must strictly adhere to the policies of UNAVCO and the sponsor, as well as to Federal cost principles, and must be developed and presented in the format specified by funding agency proposal guidelines.

The PI should discuss the budget with the Finance Office as early as possible in the proposal development process, in order to identify unusual aspects of the budget or elements that may require extra effort, such as subawards. The PI should develop a draft budget in Excel and an associated budget justification and submit it to the Finance Office as soon as available. After review and consultation, the Finance Office will develop the final budget and Budget Justification for submission. The Finance Office can provide an Excel budget template upon request.

NOTIFICATION OF FUNDING

Upon receipt of an award notification by UNAVCO, the Contracts Office will issue a Project Authorization to the PI with a project number, account information, period of performance, and any special conditions imposed through the award.

POINT OF CONTACTS

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