Proposal Processing Guidelines for NWREC, Puyallup, and CSANR

From 2015-2017, there were just under 100 proposals submitted each year by the combination of NWREC, Puyallup, and CSANR. In light of this significant volume, this document was developed collaboratively with input from unit leadership, administrative staff and faculty in order to streamline the proposal submission process and ensure the best quality coordination and support between PI's and the admin support team.

This document provides additional information, specific to what faculty and grant administrators can expect at NWREC, Puyallup, and CSANR. It is meant to be consistent with, and support, other existing resources relevant to extramural funding, which include:

- An overview of the process for NWREC, Puyallup, and CSANR.
- The *Proposal Processing and Development* section of the WSU Business Policies and Procedures Manual (BPPM 40.02)
- A general overview of the proposal process from CAHNRS Office of Research may also be helpful.

In the case that there is a deadline-driven workload bottleneck, the Director of WSU CAHNRS Western Washington has discretion to deny a proposal that doesn't follow the guidelines.

Communication is key to successful grant submission. Unit grant administrators are expected to acknowledge receipt of communications from PI's within one business day with information regarding expected next steps and anticipated timeline (or provide an out of office response that lists expected return to office). PI response to unit grant administrators should also be timely throughout the process.

1. Communicate with your Unit Grant Administrator as soon as you are considering submitting a proposal, and email them the RFA/RFP link or file. We encourage you to submit your request via our online proposal notification form if possible. Whether you notify by email or through the online form, early notification will help her/him plan accordingly and give her/him time to review the rfp. If the proposal is large/complex, the unit grant administrator will set a time to communicate directly with you and plan for successful submission. Large proposals that meet the designated criteria may in some cases also be submitted through the CAHNRS Office of Large Grant Development instead of with our unit grant administrators – if you are interested in pursuing this option, please contact them to see if they are able to accept the proposal.

   All email communications relating to grants should be sent to grants.cmp@wsu.edu (this allows for coverage in the case of unexpected absences or events). As of Oct 2019, the individuals with primary responsibility for grants pre-award are:

   - Jean Canonica (253-445-4506), Puyallup pre-award
   - Lisa Friend (360-848-6143), Mount Vernon and CSANR pre-award.

   Per CAHNRS guidance, individuals at a Research and Extension Center should not use their departmental administrators or the CAHNRS Business Centers in Pullman for pre-award or post-award support.

2. Upon notification of your intent to submit, your grant administrator will initiate the online eREX in MyResearch (the eREX is WSU's internal routing form, and is required for ALL submissions). They will provide **READ/WRITE w/notification** access to both the PI and to the CAHNRS grant administrator.
   After completion of key administrative sections, your grant administrator will then notify the PI to complete the remaining sections:
   a. Please pay particular attention to the "checklist", as these are items that you may need to discuss with your unit director. For example, any items such as equipment installation, etc. that obligate the unit to commit resources - staffing or financial – to support the project, will need approval *prior to* submission.
   b. Once you have completed remaining sections, ask your Unit Grant Administrator to review.

3. Send an email to your Department Grant Administrator with the items that you would like to start the draft budget with and she/he will set up the first draft and send to you. Alternatively, you can develop your budget using the latest version of the WSU Budget Workbook template which can be found at https://orso.wsu.edu/forms-templates/. Send your first draft to your Unit Grant Administrator as early as possible for pre-review of salaries, benefits, etc. Your Unit Grant Administrator can help you determine appropriate budgetary decisions (e.g. appropriate GRA Step) or how to find that information. If you are waiting for more information from others please send the draft anyway so at least part of it can be reviewed. Please aim to have ALL budgets be completed at least 15 working days prior to the agency deadline, so that budget information can be accurately transferred to required format for agency. This timeline is consistent with CAHNRS proposal processing guidelines. **PI's should make every effort to meet this timeline, but if this is not possible, they should communicate with the Unit Grant Administrator regarding an alternative plan.** Once budgets are completed by the Grant Administrator, the Grant Administrator will certify the budget (if the administrator is certified), or will ask another Grant Administrator to certify it (if they are not). Changes should not be made to certified budgets. **CAHNRS grants deadline is 5 full working days prior to the agency deadline, ORSO's deadline is 3 full working days prior to agency deadline.**

4. If the proposal will have a subcontractor(s) then include a separate budget and scope of work for each subcontractor(s) along with your WSU budget. The subcontractor budget should be approved/certified by their institution or entity. Check the RFP for other specific requirements for subcontractors such as a letter of commitment from their institution.

5. The PI is responsible for completing all of the required proposal documents, as outlined in the RFA/RFP (important links to additional guidance for specific proposal documents/agency requirements may be referred to within the RFA/RFP). Should you need assistance (e.g. if you have questions or have had trouble with a document in the past), contact your Unit Grant Administrator. Your Unit Grant Administrator will prepare all of the official grants.gov/Workspace/Fastlane forms.

6. If the proposal needs to be submitted through a different electronic means (i.e. a website) the files to be submitted will need to be attached to the eREX. If it's an online form that your Unit Grant Administrator does not have access to or the PI has a special online account for submitting, then the PI will attach the file to the eREX prior to your Unit Grant Administrator submitting the eREX for routing. Your Unit Grant Administrator is available to help attach the files, or help you figure out how to do this. Submission in this case should not happen until approval is granted.

7. **Your Unit Grant Administrator will submit the eREX for routing – do not do this yourself.**

8. **Timeline:** The "package" (all documents unless the "Narrative Hold" program is being used, as described below[1]) should be to your Unit Grant Administrator at least 10 full working days prior to agency deadline date. **If this timeline cannot be met, the PI needs to proactively coordinate with the Unit Grant Administrator ASAP.**

   <mark>IMPORTANT:</mark> Any submittal having less than 5 full working days for CAHNRS Grants staff approval and if the eREX approvals are not completed 2 business days prior to the deadline, ORSO will terminate and restart the approval process with all signatures required and no delegation allowed. ORSO will require a **waiver with PI justification** as part of the eREX routing process which will include manual approval by the Chair and Associate Deans.

"ISSUES TO AVOID / LESSONS LEARNED"

- Do not submit any proposal / budget/ subcontract without formal WSU approval; you must go through the proposal process. Letters of intent and pre-proposals also require formal WSU approval, if they include a detailed budget, cost share, or an authorized signature. If you are not sure, talk with your Unit Grant Administrator.
- Graduate students are not allowed to submit grants on their own (see OGRD Memorandum 35: Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator Eligibility for more information about PI eligibility). They may help prepare a submission under the direction of a faculty supervisor (who must be a co-PI on the project.)
- Do not commit cost-share / cash-match without formal WSU approval; you must go through proposal process as described in the document on cost-share / cash match. This will ensure that cost-share is not over-committing your time.
- Do not sign <u>any</u> document committing resources of <u>any</u> kind from WSU; call or email your Unit Grant Administrator for review & recommendation for the proper process/form to use.
- DO always start with your Unit Grant Administrator for everything from proposals to policy; if she/he doesn't know the answer she/he will find the answer.

Just remember WSU has a form or process for <u>everything</u>! If you don't know what it is, your Unit Grant Administrator will be happy to help. Also remember that ongoing communication between grant administrator and faculty helps the process go smoothly.

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[1] The "Narrative Hold" program, available for grant proposals being submitted via a number of online portals ((NIH) ASSIST, (NSF) Fastlane, (NASA) NSPIRES and the new online Workspace portal in Grants.gov), allows for the submission of an eREX with all the final components of the proposal completed except the research/technical narrative (e.g. Project Description, Research Strategy, etc.) and directly associated documents (e.g. references cited) – please see the Narrative Hold memo for important additional information.