

### Grants and Outside Funding

#### **I am in the process of applying for a grant. Is there anything that I need to be aware of before I send the proposal to the funding agency?**

Any staff member wanting to seek funding from outside organizations, including other federal agencies, for projects that contribute to the overall advancement of astronomy is encouraged to contact SPO to ensure compliance with AURA Policies and Procedures. The general NSF and AURA guidelines are:

1. NOAO shall not compete with any non-FFRDC concern in response to a federal agency request for proposal (RFP).
2. Proposal requests to agencies other than NSF may require approval by AURA and the NSF.
  - o All proposals require the approval of the NOAO or NSO Director **prior** to being submitted to the funding agency. The directors will not approve the proposal until the proposal's budget has been [reviewed by SPO](#).
  - o Proposals less than \$25,000 require notification only to the NSF (i.e., an informational letter regarding an interagency transfer).
  - o Proposals in excess of \$25,000 and less than \$100,000 require notification and supporting justification/documentation being forwarded to the NSF (i.e., a copy of the proposal).
  - o Proposals in excess of \$100,000 require the approval of the NSF.
  - o Proposals involving funding of more than \$1,000,000 but less than \$3,000,000 require the approval of the AURA president.
  - o Proposals involving funding of \$3,000,000 or more require the approval of the AURA Board of Directors.
3. Proposals submitted to other federal agencies must state that funding, if approved, be provided through an interagency fund transfer between the NSF and the other federal agency. If interagency funding is not possible, NOAO must send a justification to the NSF explaining why direct funding is necessary.
4. Grant funds can only be used to carry out activities in accordance with the funding agreements. Use of non-NSF funds for a project other than that intended by the agreement requires prior approval of the funding agency and the NSF.
5. Funds cannot be committed or spent until NOAO has received a copy of the funding agreement or interagency transfer.

Adriana "Andy" Commissaris, Sponsored Projects Manager, [andyc@noao.edu](mailto:andyc@noao.edu); extension 8241, will handle the approval process and will interact as necessary to ensure that funding is transferred to the NSF.

More detailed information on the specific grant types and characteristics of each follows:

- Interagency Transfers and Special NSF Awards:
  - o Proposal to other government agencies (e.g., NASA, USNO, USAF) are generally funded via interagency transfers. The funding agency sends funds directly to NSF which, in turn, passes them on to AURA through its Cooperative Agreement with NSF. Special NSF awards are funded directly through the Cooperative Agreement.

- The principle investigator (PI) is responsible for performance reporting requirements.
  - Funds cannot be expended until a letter of acceptance is received at AURA. Some grants have a specified period of performance and others continue until the funding is expended. Unused funds at the end of the fiscal year carryover to the next fiscal year.
  - Generally, financial reports are not required. If periodic financial reports are needed, the assistant controller will assist in their preparation.
  - Interagency transfers and NSF awards may require close-out documents. SPO will assist with the financial and closeout documentation.
- HST Grants:
    - The grants are awarded by the Space Telescope Science Institute (STScI) and proposals are submitted via their Grant Management System (GMS) Web site. For information on accessing GMS, contact Chris Richardson, NOAO Assistant Controller ([crichardson@noao.edu](mailto:crichardson@noao.edu); extension 8504).
    - Notification of awards are sent by e-mail and the award documents are retrieved via GMS. Commitment and expenditure of the funds may begin when notification is received from SPO.
    - Performance reporting requirements are handled by the PI and submitted via GMS.
    - Funding is received on a cost reimbursement basis through the issuance of quarterly financial reports using STScI's GMS. The NOAO assistant controller submits these reports.
    - The specified period of performance for HST grants is generally two years. No-cost extensions may be requested, with the first year's extension being automatic, however, the PI must furnish a justification and have it approved by STScI.
    - Spending continues until funding is depleted. The grant is transferable to other institutions (contact SPO for further information).
    - Close-out documents, including a final equipment report and new technology reports, are submitted via GMS. SPO will assist with the financial and closeout documentation as necessary.
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