

## Memorandum

To: University Research Community

From: Roberto M. Gutierrez, Associate Vice President for Research

Subj.: Proposal Deadlines Reminder

Date: July 31, 2023

We have been experiencing challenges with award applications, in particular receiving the complete materials for grant applications as late as the day of or the day prior to the application due date. For example, an analysis we conducted for proposals submitted for the months of March and April 2023 indicated that 82 out of 196 (42%) of applications submitted to ORED did not adhere to the institution's policy # 2320.025, Deadlines for Proposal Submissions for Office of Research and Economic Development for Review. For some colleges, more than 50% of the applications were non-compliant with FIU's proposal deadlines. This is a major challenge on two fronts. First, both the colleges and ORED are short of staff, making the application difficult, and second, recent federal and state regulations have increased the regulatory review requirements for applications.

Our approved institutional proposal deadline policy (available at <https://policies.fiu.edu/policy/267>) states:

1. **Complete** proposals together with their **signed and fully routed ePRAFs must be received by ORED at least five business days prior to the sponsor's deadline**. If the proposal contains any subawards or external consultants, they should be submitted to ORED at least eight (8) business days prior to the sponsor's deadline to allow for sufficient review of required subaward documentation.
2. **Complete** proposals received by ORED at least five (5) business days prior to the sponsor / submission deadline date will receive a full review and will have priority status. **Proposals received by ORED with less than five business days will receive a limited review or no review depending on when it is received in ORED and the current workload of the assigned Pre-Award Proposal Coordinator**. Proposals that do not meet the five (5) business day deadline will not be given priority. Proposal review priority is given to those proposals that meet the Proposal Submission Deadline Policy.

To provide clarity and as a reminder to the University research community, the following items constitute a **complete proposal package** that must be received at least five (5) business days prior to the sponsor's deadline.

1. **Electronic Proposal Routing Approval Form (ePRAF)** fully completed, routed, and signed.
2. **Cost Sharing Form** (if applicable) fully completed and signed, with account numbers.
3. **Direct Charge Exemption Form** (if applicable) fully completed and signed by all parties.

4. **Draft Proposal**, composed of the technical description of the project and all sections required by the sponsor's guidelines, including the biosketches, facilities and resources, other support forms, current and pending support, etc.
5. **Budget and budget justification** fully developed and approved by the department and college.
6. **Sponsor Guidelines** or list the weblink on the ePRAF where the guidelines are located.
7. **Sub-awardee Commitment Form** as well as a copy of the sub-awardees' proposal, including their budget and scope of work, signed by an authorized representative of the sub-awardee.

ORED is fully aware of the programmatic and administrative processes involved with preparing and submitting a proposal, therefore we have the following allowances in place regarding what must be submitted at day five and what can be submitted at day two prior to submission deadline.

The following items are required to be received by ORED via a routed and approved ePRAF five business days before the sponsor's deadline:

1. Routed **ePRAF** with college and departmental approvals completed
2. Draft of **proposal**
3. **Budget & budget narrative**
4. **Non-programmatic elements** of the proposal (biosketches, facilities and resources, support forms, etc.)
5. **Sub-awardee Commitment Form** and associated statement of work, budget, and budget narrative from the proposed sub-awardee

We will require the following items two business days before the sponsor's deadline:

1. **Cost Share Form** signed by all parties (if required)
2. **Direct Charge Exemption Form** signed by all parties (if required)
3. **Finalized proposal** ready for submission (although programmatic tweaks are allowed).

Please note that all electronic submissions (i.e., grants.gov, research.gov, NASA NSPIRES, ProposalCentral and other sponsor specific systems) need to be submitted by ORED **no later than noon** on the date that the application is due to the sponsor to have sufficient time to address any errors or warnings related to the electronic submission process.

Proposals that do not adhere to FIU's approved deadline policy cause a series of issues for PIs, colleges and ORED. Some examples of issues experienced by because of non-compliance of the deadline policy include:

1. Penalizing timely received proposals by placing them on hold to address submission crisis that results from receiving proposal elements the day of the deadline.
2. Proposals being rejected by the funding agency due to missed programmatic or administrative requirements.
3. Budgetary issues that impact a resulting award including:
  - a. Incorrect salary and benefits used
  - b. Participant Support Costs incorrectly budgeted
  - c. Subaward vs. Contractor issues that impact F&A and sponsor approvals
  - d. Incorrect F&A calculation in violation of approved F&A rate agreement

- e. Unallowable costs budgeted
- 4. Cost-Share (committed or uncommitted) that had to be provided by the units
- 5. Delay in meeting required federal compliance requirements, which result in delays in award setup and release of funds

### **Plans to Address Late Proposal Packages**

To address these challenges, ORED will be embarking on a program of piloting Proposal Services Administration (Pre-Award) directly with research intensive units. A pilot unit will be identified, and we will also meet with all college / departmental proposal services administrators throughout the institution to better ascertain what services are currently being provided to the PIs to help them meet both the institution and sponsor's requirements for proposal submissions.

In the interim, we remind all members of the University research community that the requirements of our current proposal deadline policy referenced above remain in place and ORED will be strictly enforcing adherence to the deadlines. Proposal review priority will be given to those proposals that meet the Proposal Submission Deadline Policy. **Proposals received by ORED with less than five business days will receive a limited to no review depending on when it is received in ORED and the workload of the Proposal Services Team.**

If you have any questions about proposal deadlines, please feel free to contact your Proposal Services Team representative (<https://research.fiu.edu/ored/staff-directory/>) for further assistance.