FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Why do I have to do an advance notice?

The University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR) is responsible to our primary sponsor, the National Science Foundation (NSF) to ensure that all outside funded projects are appropriate to UCAR and also to the University Relations Committee (URC), which is charged by the UCAR Board of Trustees to ensure that UCAR is not using its facilities and staff in unfair competition with universities. Advance notification to the respective entity Director's Offices allow for sufficient time to review and approve the proposed activities prior to submission of the proposal to the funding sponsor.

2. Why can't I just go ahead and submit a proposal to an agency then if it is funded do the administrative stuff? The funding agency said to just submit it after I told them my idea.

The proposal is an implicit agreement between the entity submitting the proposal and the federal agency considering the proposal. As such, a proposal being represented as coming from UCAR must receive a thorough internal review before being submitted for consideration to a prospective funding agency. This is a similar process to what would be required at any university or research institute. Your division director and entity director have multiple obligations before the proposal is submitted to a funding agency: to see that the proposal is of sufficient scientific quality, that it does not create unintended obligations or legal implications for UCAR and that it matches our institutional mission.

3. At what point in the proposal process should I begin an Advance Notice?

An advance notice should be provided to your entity's proposal office no later than two weeks before the proposal needs to be submitted to the funding agency. As a matter of course, it is generally a good idea to begin an advance notice as soon as one is able to fill in an abstract, in order to provide a heads-up to your division and entity proposal office.

4. What constitutes technology transfer?

Technology transfer is a formal, legal agreement between UCAR and an outside entity to make a specific UCAR intellectual property available for public benefit. As such, publishing, making data sets available and teaching a technique to a collaborator are not examples of technology transfer and should not be used as justification in a proposal. All technology transfer proposals should be coordinated with the UCAR Foundation technology transfer office (ext. 8870).

5. What is "cosponsorship"?

Cosponsorship is the term that NSF uses to describe the value of resources funded from NCAR's NSF Base Funding that is contributing to the performance of mutually beneficial research sponsored by another organization. It differs from cost-sharing because federal regulations prevent federal funds from being used as cost-share. Because of this distinction, it is vital that NCAR/UCAR proposals not suggest that the organization will share in the costs of a project. Note that cosponsorship ONLY applies to NCAR's NSF Base Funds and that employees that are not paid through NCAR Base Funds cannot show cosponsorship of their time on proposals.
6. What is "cost sharing"?

Cost sharing is a term for an institutional contribution to a project. OMB Circular A-110 defines cost sharing as "cash and third party in-kind contributions that are: non-federal; verifiable; not included as contributions for any other federally-assisted program; necessary and reasonable for accomplishment of the project objectives; allowable; not paid by the federal government under another award (pass through), and conforms to other OMB Circular provisions. Because virtually all UCAR funds come, ultimately, from federal sources, cost-sharing at UCAR is an unusual occurrence which is very closely monitored. All proposals which require cost sharing will be required to determine an approved source for the cost share and a cost share plan must be developed before the proposal will be approved. Mandatory cost sharing is required by the funding agency and is usually included in the agency program announcement—include a highlighted copy of the guidelines that state cost sharing is mandatory. Any other cost sharing is Voluntary. It is recommended that you don't propose to "voluntarily" or "informally" cost share any of the costs of a project. If you do, then UCAR will incur an obligation to provide for, document, and account for the cost share contributions to the project.

7. What is the difference between a Principal Investigator, Co-PI, Co-Investigator and Collaborator?

A Principal Investigator is the single point of contact responsible for the proposal. This should always be a UCAR person. A Co-PI is a person whose participation is integral to the conclusion of the project, though not necessarily a responsible contact. This may be a UCAR person or someone from outside the institution. A Co-Investigator is someone who will be actively involved in a proposal, but is not integral to the work plan. A Collaborator is an interested person who will be involved in a proposal in a meaningful way, but is not integral to the work plan. (Include an e-mail or letter of support from the Collaborator in your final proposal.)

8. What is proposal type?

A proposal type is the general purpose of the proposal. This is information collected for use in reporting to the University Relations Committee and NSF. For NCAR, a proposal is a NCAR Science proposal (basic research), a NCAR Facility Use/Development proposal (a proposal that primarily involves use or development of an NCAR facility like aircraft, radar or computer) or a NCAR Major Initiative (which should be coordinated through the NCAR director's Office).

9. What are the primary and secondary benefits of a proposal?

This allows UCAR to report to the University Relations Committee the reasons the proposal is being submitted. Each proposal should include at least a primary benefit. If the proposal involves University Collaboration, this should always be selected as the primary benefit. If the proposal involves Development of Community Model, include a short description of the improvement and feedback plan in the justification under criterion number four. If the proposal involves Development of Community Facility, explain what improvements will be made and how it will benefit the community in the justification under criterion number four. A Community Workshop proposal should address the topic and prospective participants in the justification under criterion number four. A Community Training proposal should address the prospective trainees in the justification under criterion number four.

10. When would I check Education and Outreach?
Education and Outreach should only be checked if you have developed an education/outreach plan as part of the proposal or if a portion of the proposal will be coordinated by UCAR's office of Education and Outreach. Simply including funding for a student employee does not constitute education/outreach.

Questions: contact apphelp@fanda.ucar.edu