

# How are DLI-DEL Proposals Reviewed?

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## About this webinar series

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- Funded by National Science Foundation grant BCS-2039991 “Strengthening Capacity in Dynamic Language Infrastructure for Tribal Nations”
- Thanks to the project’s Advisory Committee, which has provided advice and insight in developing this programming.

**Expected Outcome of the Webinar  
Series and other Grant Activities**

“the project is such that it will lead to the **creation of proposals focused on questions largely shaped by Native Americans**. The insights of such PIs about their languages and cultures are likely to lead them to **focus on important research on topics that have been neglected by outside scholars** and, thereby, **expand the range of scientific advances** that can be supported by research on Native American languages. This will **allow Native American theories of language to inform linguistic theory** in much the same way that data from Native American languages has, which has transformative potential for the study of language.”

# Overview

# Topics Covered Today

- The process of merit review at NSF
- NSF-wide criteria of Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts
- Solicitation-specific criteria
  - The DLI-DEL requirements to address in proposals
- Reviewer template and panel processes

# Key Acronyms

NSF: National Science Foundation

NEH: National Endowment for the Humanities

DLI-DEL: the Dynamic Language Infrastructure-Documenting Endangered Languages funding partnership

PAPPG: NSF's Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (said: Pap-Gee )

DMP: Data Management Plan

TCUP: NSF's Tribal Colleges & Universities Program (said: Tea-Cup )



# Proposal Life Cycle, with an Eye to Merit Review

# Concise Schematic of Merit Review





# Types of Reviews

## ***Ad hoc*: Proposals sent out for review**

- *Ad hoc* reviewers usually have specific expertise in a field related to the proposal.
- Some proposals may undergo *ad hoc* review only.

## **Panel: Face-to-face sessions conducted by reviewers mainly at NSF but also in other settings**

- Panel reviewers usually have a broader scientific knowledge.
- Some proposals may undergo only a panel review.
- Some proposals may undergo reviews by multiple panels (especially for those proposals with crosscutting themes).

# The Review Process

- There is also internal review by NSF Program Directors, either in conjunction with the other reviews or as the sole type of review, as in RAPID or EAGER proposals.
- Panels (and reviewers) are Advisory and do not make funding recommendations.
- Program officers make funding recommendations, but not funding decisions.
- Division leadership concurs with those recommendations (or not).
- Funding decisions are made by the Division of Grants and Awards.



# Merit Review Criteria

All proposals must explain the project's justification for NSF reviewers in terms of the merit review criteria:

- Intellectual Merit
- Broader Impacts
- Any solicitation-specific criteria

## Merit Review Criteria

- Intellectual Merit: The Intellectual Merit criterion encompasses the potential to advance knowledge; and
- Broader Impacts: The Broader Impacts criterion encompasses the potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes.

# Merit Review Criteria -- More Detail

1. What is the potential for the proposed activity to:
  - a. Advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields (Intellectual Merit); and
  - b. Benefit society or advance desired societal outcomes (Broader Impacts)?
2. To what extent do the proposed activities suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts?

3. Is the plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well-organized, and based on a sound rationale? Does the plan incorporate a mechanism to assess success?
4. How well qualified is the individual, team, or organization to conduct the proposed activities?
5. Are there adequate resources available to the PI (either at the home organization or through collaborations) to carry out the proposed activities?

# Quick Guide: NSF Review Criteria

## Intellectual Merit:

- Importance of topic
- Qualifications
- Creativity & originality
- Transformative?
- Conception & organization
- Access to resources

## Broader Impacts:

- Training
- Mentoring
- Diversity
- Infrastructure
- Dissemination/Public awareness
- Societal Benefits



# Intellectual Merit in the Project Description

Prior PAPPG version [https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg18\\_1/pappg\\_2.jsp#IIC2di](https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg18_1/pappg_2.jsp#IIC2di)

- **clear statement of the work to be undertaken**
- **the objectives for the period of the proposed work and expected significance**
- **the relationship of this work to the present state of knowledge in the field, as well as to work in progress by the PI under other support. general plan of work, including the broad design of activities to be undertaken, and, where appropriate, provide a clear description of experimental methods and procedures.**
- **what the PIs want to do, why they want to do it, how they plan to do it, how they will know if they succeed, and what benefits could accrue if the project is successful.**
- **activities may be based on previously established and/or innovative methods and approaches, but in either case must be well justified.**

## Broader Impacts in the Project Description

[https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg18\\_1/pappg\\_2.jsp#IIC2di](https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg18_1/pappg_2.jsp#IIC2di)

**“The Project Description also must contain, as a separate section within the narrative, a section labeled “Broader Impacts”.**

activities that contribute to the achievement of societally relevant outcomes.

**Broader impacts may be accomplished through the research itself, through the activities that are directly related to specific research projects, or through activities that are supported by, but complementary to the project. NSF values the advancement of scientific knowledge and activities that contribute to the achievement of societally relevant outcomes.”**

## Societally relevant outcomes Include (but are not limited to):

[https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg20\\_1/pappg\\_2.jsp](https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg20_1/pappg_2.jsp)

- “full participation of women, persons with disabilities, and underrepresented minorities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM);
  - improved STEM education and educator development at any level; increased public scientific literacy and public engagement with science and technology;
  - improved well-being of individuals in society;
  - development of a diverse, globally competitive STEM workforce;
  - increased partnerships between academia, industry, and others;
  - improved national security; increased economic competitiveness of the U.S.;
  - use of science and technology to inform public policy; and
  - enhanced infrastructure for research and education.
- 
- These examples of societally relevant outcomes should not be considered either comprehensive or prescriptive. Proposers may include appropriate outcomes not covered by these examples."

# Possible Relevant Broader Impacts

- Increasing the representation of Native Americans/Native Hawaiians/Alaska Natives in linguistics/social sciences/STEM
- Enable a Native American doctoral student/junior faculty member advance in their career
- Resulting materials to be used in some other way (be specific):
  - Exhibit in cultural center or museum or the tribal library
  - Teaching materials
  - Publication like a book or leaflet with accompanying audio
  - Podcasts

# Language Revitalization Activities

- If there are specific, concrete plans for language revitalization connected to the project activities or resulting products, outline these as part of the **broader impacts** of what you are proposing.
- Language revitalization as a broader impact can be a real strength to a proposal, if the activities clearly link the resulting documentation with revitalization.
- Be mindful of how the DLI-DEL solicitation discourages language revitalization – but be aware of where you can leverage it.



# Solicitation-Specific Review Criteria

# Additional DLI-DEL criteria:

- Discussion on the degree of endangerment of the language(s) to be documented and the urgency of the need for documentation
- Description of the level, quality, and accessibility of any existing documentation of the language(s)
- Discussion on any special linguistic, historical, cognitive, cultural, or social significance of the language(s)
- Discussion on collaborations and other arrangements made with the speaker community which may include reference to the training of native speakers in the practice of linguistics and to the production of resources useful to the community of native speakers.

The background of the slide is a solid blue color. In the top-left corner, there are three parallel white diagonal lines extending from the top edge towards the center. In the bottom-right corner, there is a black triangular shape, and within it, there are three parallel white diagonal lines extending from the bottom edge towards the center. The text "Understanding the Review Process" is centered in the middle of the slide in a white, sans-serif font.

# Understanding the Review Process



# Review Format in FastLane

Reviewers provide feedback to NSF based on the Review Criteria and the Review Elements

Review Criteria and Elements are available as reviewers provide feedback


The following elements should be considered in the review for both criteria:

1. What is the potential for the proposed activity to
  - a. advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields (Intellectual Merit); and
  - b. benefit society or advance desired societal outcomes (Broader Impacts)?
2. To what extent do the proposed activities suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts?
3. Is the plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well-organized, and based on a sound rationale? Does the plan incorporate a mechanism to assess success?
4. How well qualified is the individual, team, or institution to conduct the proposed activities?
5. Are there adequate resources available to the PI (either at the home institution or through collaborations) to carry out the proposed activities?

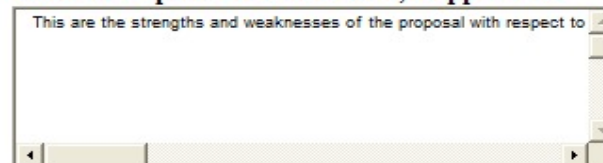
**In the context of the five review elements, please evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal with respect to intellectual merit.**



**In the context of the five review elements, please evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal with respect to broader impacts.**



**Please evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal with respect to any additional solicitation-specific review criteria, if applicable.**



# What is the Role of the Review Panel?

- Discuss the merits of the proposal with the other panelists
- Write a summary based on that discussion
- Provide some indication of the relative merits of different proposals considered



## Research.gov has Documentation from Merit Review

- Verbatim copies of individual reviews, excluding reviewer identities
- Panel Summary or Summaries (if panel review was used)
- Context Statement (usually)
- **PO to PI comments (formal or informal, written, email or verbal) as necessary to explain a decision**





# Homework for Preparing a Proposal



How would you explain your project's justification for NSF reviewers in terms of the merit review criteria:

Intellectual Merit

Broader Impacts

The four DEL solicitation-specific criteria



# Program Officer Contacts

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## Distinguished Panel Shortly...Next Webinar Sessions

- ~~Session 3 (September 22): How do DLI-DEL proposals get reviewed? Presentation on NSF merit review, along with a panel discussion from experienced DLI-DEL reviewers~~
- **Session 4 (September 29):** Budgeting DLI-DEL Proposals; panel with NSF past and current PIs talk about their experiences budgeting and managing an NSF grant)
- **Session 5 (October 6):** Archiving and Data Management Plan, led by archivists specializing in Indigenous collections