



SOCIETY OF  
RESEARCH  
ADMINISTRATORS  
INTERNATIONAL

# Streamlining Proposal Intake

Best Practices for Efficient and Compliant Submission

# Presenters

Cody Symanietz  
Pre-Award  
Coordinator,  
Pennsylvania State  
University



Donna Kiley  
Senior Director of  
Post-Award,  
Florida International  
University



Alice Puzarowski  
Pre-Award Coordinator,  
Pennsylvania State  
University



Sharita Wallace  
Director of Pre-Award,  
Central State University



# Learning Objectives

1. Identify the essential elements of a proposal submission form to ensure accuracy and compliance.
2. Evaluate how form design impacts proposal routing, review, and submission efficiency.
3. Implement process improvements that enhance data collection and reduce administrative workload.
4. Understand how the elements when the proposal is awarded are critical for the overall administration of the award.

# Navigating Research

Penn State: University Park and non-CoM Campuses

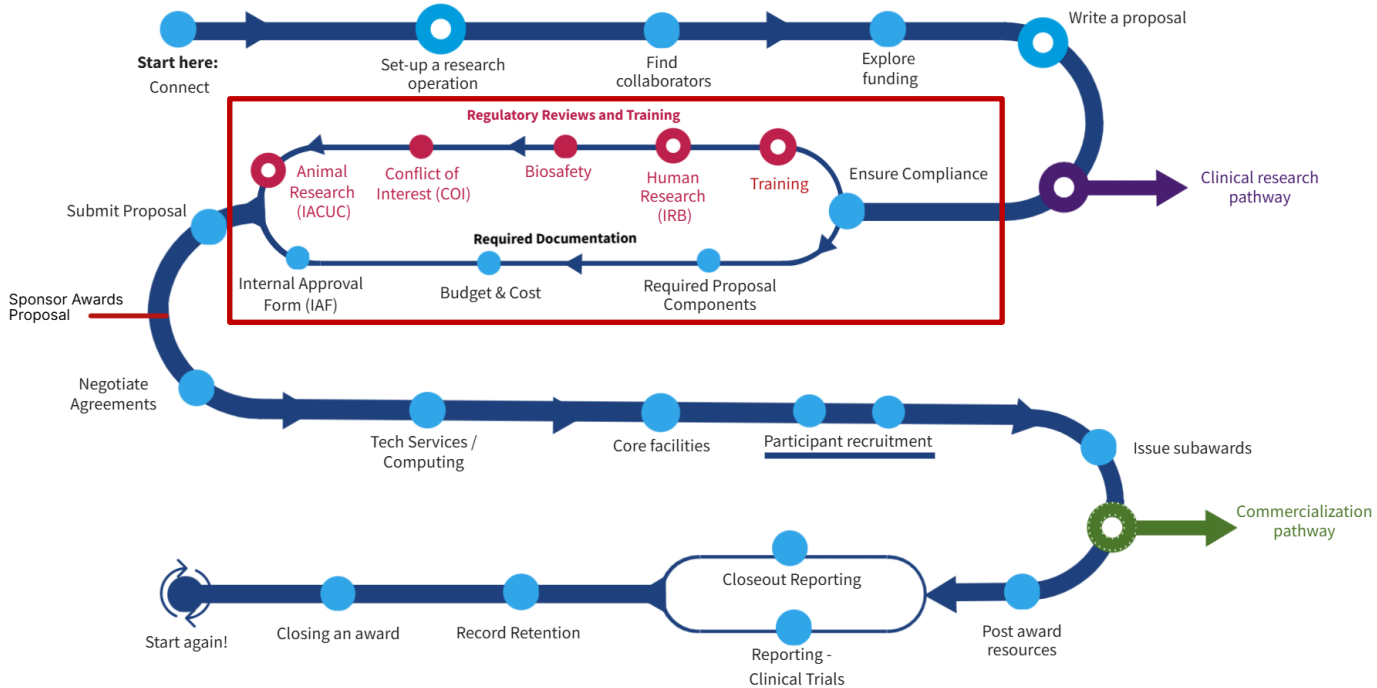


Photo credit: [PSU OSVPR Research Support - Research Lifecycle](#)

# What is a Proposal Intake Form?

**TOOL** → collects specific information:

- Key requirements
- Timelines/Deadlines
- Roles/Responsibilities
- Budget/Cost share



**TRIGGER** → compliance considerations:

- Routing
- Reviewing
- Training
- Tracking



# Effective Intake Form = Foundation for Success

- Accurate information at the beginning drives successful and on-time submissions
- Mitigates the risk of gaps, delays, or errors that could lead to missed or rejected proposal submissions
- Structure intake forms to enable scalable systems

Example Proposal Intake Form:

[Proposal Submission Form | Penn State College of Earth and Mineral Sciences](#)



# Proposal Submission Form

Submission of this form is **required** for all proposals, pre-proposals and white papers requiring an Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) signature. Principal Investigators are highly encouraged to **complete and submit this form no later than 3 weeks (15 workdays) prior to the sponsor's due date**. This form allows research administration staff to assess the level of support required for proposal preparation and compliance review. Please refer to the [EMS Proposal Submission Timeline](#) and the [EMS Proposal Submission Guidelines](#).

**PI First Name \***

**PI Last Name \***

**PI Penn State E-mail \***

**Unit administering award \***

**Name of sponsor (Or lead organization if Penn State is a sub-recipient) \***

**Is Penn State a sub-recipient? \***

**Solicitation link**

**Upload solicitation**

One file only.

1000 MB limit.

Allowed types: txt, pdf, doc, docx.

**Proposal due date**

**Hard deadline or open deadline? \***

- Hard deadline
- Open deadline

**Proposal title (Do not enter TBD) \***

If you do not have a project title yet, you may enter a temporary title for use during proposal preparation

**Project start date**

mm/dd/yyyy



**Project end date**

mm/dd/yyyy



Estimated proposal value

- \$100K or less
- \$100K - \$1M
- \$1M or greater

**Co-PIs and other key personnel at Penn State (include name, role, and department)**

One per line (i.e. Sally Smith, Co-PI, Geosciences - Joe Jackson, Investigator, Chemistry)

**External collaborators (include name, organization, contact information)**

One per line (i.e. Sally Smith, Name of organization, Email, Phone number)

**External subawardees (include name, organization, contact information)**

**Does this project require additional space, renovations to existing space or new equipment that is not funded in the proposed budget? \***

- Select -



**Will this proposal include international partners, services or travel? \***

- Yes
- No

**Will this proposal include cost share? \***

- Yes
- No

**Additional information**

Any other important information regarding this proposal, including non-standard requirements or anticipated waivers needed

**From:** Penn State College of Earth and Mineral Sciences  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2026 9:33 AM  
**To:** Penn State EMS Pre-Award Team  
**Subject:** PI Smith proposal for the National Science Foundation due on 2026-11-15

Submitted on Thurs, 4/23/2026 - 09:32

Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

**PI First Name**

John

**PI Last Name**

Smith

**PI Penn State E-mail**

[jsmith@psu.edu](mailto:jsmith@psu.edu)

**Unit administering award**

Geosc

**Name of sponsor (Or lead organization if Penn State is a sub-recipient)**

National Science Foundation

**Is Penn State a sub-recipient?**

No

**Solicitation link**

<https://www.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/arctic-research-opportunities/nsf23-572/solicitation>

**Proposal due date**

2026-11-15

**Hard deadline or open deadline?**

Hard deadline

**Proposal title (Do not enter TBD)**

Arctic Ice Depletion in Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve

**Project start date**

2027-07-01

**Project end date**

2031-06-30

**Estimated proposal value**  
\$100K - \$1M

**Co-PIs and other key personnel at Penn State (include name, role, and department)**  
Jane Doe, Co-PI, Meteo, Penn State

**External collaborators (include name, organization, contact information)**  
Jason Doe, University of Alaska Fairbanks, [jadoc@alaska.edu](mailto:jadoc@alaska.edu)

**External subawardees (include name, organization, contact information)**  
No

**Does this project require additional space, renovations to existing space or new equipment that is not funded in the proposed budget?**  
No

**Will this proposal include international partners, services or travel?**  
Yes

**Will this proposal include cost share?**  
No

**From:** Penn State College of Earth and Mineral Sciences  
**Sent:** Friday, April 24, 2026, 3:45 PM  
**To:** Smith, John <[jsmith@psu.edu](mailto:jsmith@psu.edu)>  
**Cc:** Penn State EMS Pre-Award Team  
**Subject:** RE: PI Smith proposal for the National Science Foundation due on 2026-11-15

Hi Dr. Smith,

Thank you for completing the EMS, Proposal Services Request Form. **Cody Symanietz** will be working with you as the Pre-Award Coordinator. He will email you shortly with a proposal development plan. Cody has the experience to ensure your proposal complies with the sponsor's guidelines, the U.S. Government's Uniform Guidelines ([2 CFR 200](#)), and Penn State's policies and procedures. Additionally, Cody will be able to assist you with budget preparation, subaward coordination, contractor management, cost-sharing, agency compliance reviews, and other ancillary documents that may require assistance. We request that you submit all final documents **5 days** prior to the deadline.

Please allow us to suggest a meeting to discuss how you would like to proceed with this project. We can schedule a meeting that fits with your schedule.

Sincerely,  
EMS Pre-Award Team



## Identify the people involved

- Principal Investigator
  - New or Experienced
  - Department Administering
- Collaborators
  - Internal or external?
    - Internal – Co-PI, Co-I, research assistants, student researchers, etc.
      - departmental or interdisciplinary?
    - External – subawards, contractors, or unfunded collaborators?
      - International partners?

# WHO?



# WHAT?



Identify the role of your PI and what documents will be required for submission

- Lead Organization
- Subaward
- Consultant

# WHERE?



Identify the details that will affect indirect costs

- On or Off Campus
- Office Resources
- Laboratory Spaces

# WHEN?



Identify the timing for the project and the pre-award process

- Period of Performance
- Submission Deadline
  - Hard
  - Soft
- Document Deadline



Identify the key elements that drive the proposal

- Sponsoring or Lead Organization
- Solicitation
- Research, Outreach or Instruction

# HOW?



Identify the resources needed to execute the project

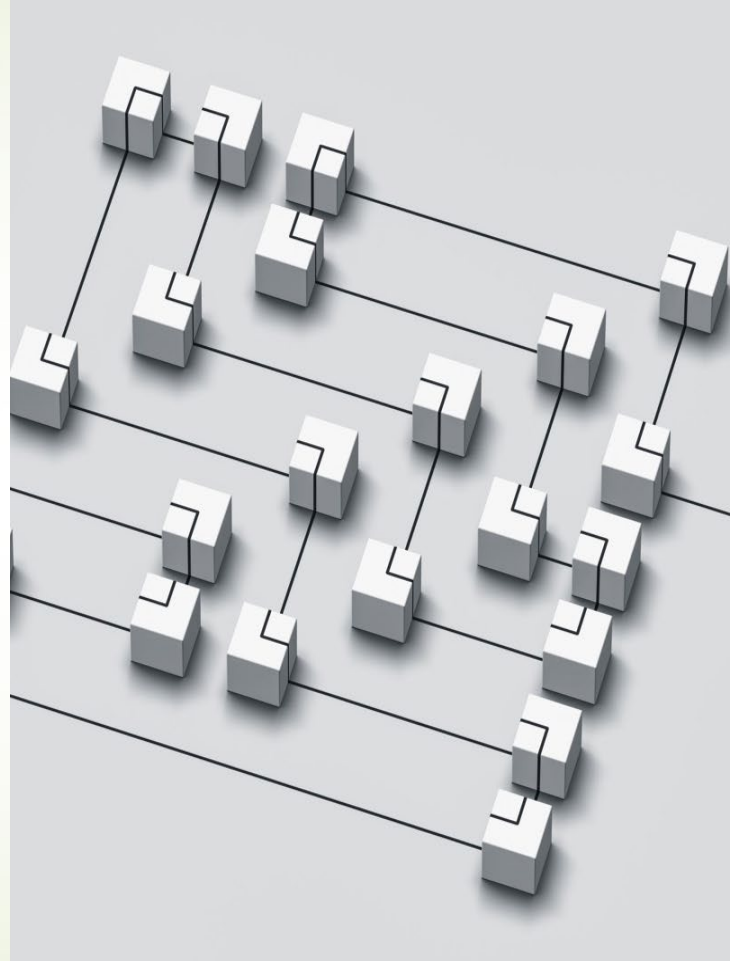
- Budget
- Additional space needed?
- Renovating Existing Space?
- New Equipment?
- Cost Share?
- International Partners or Services?





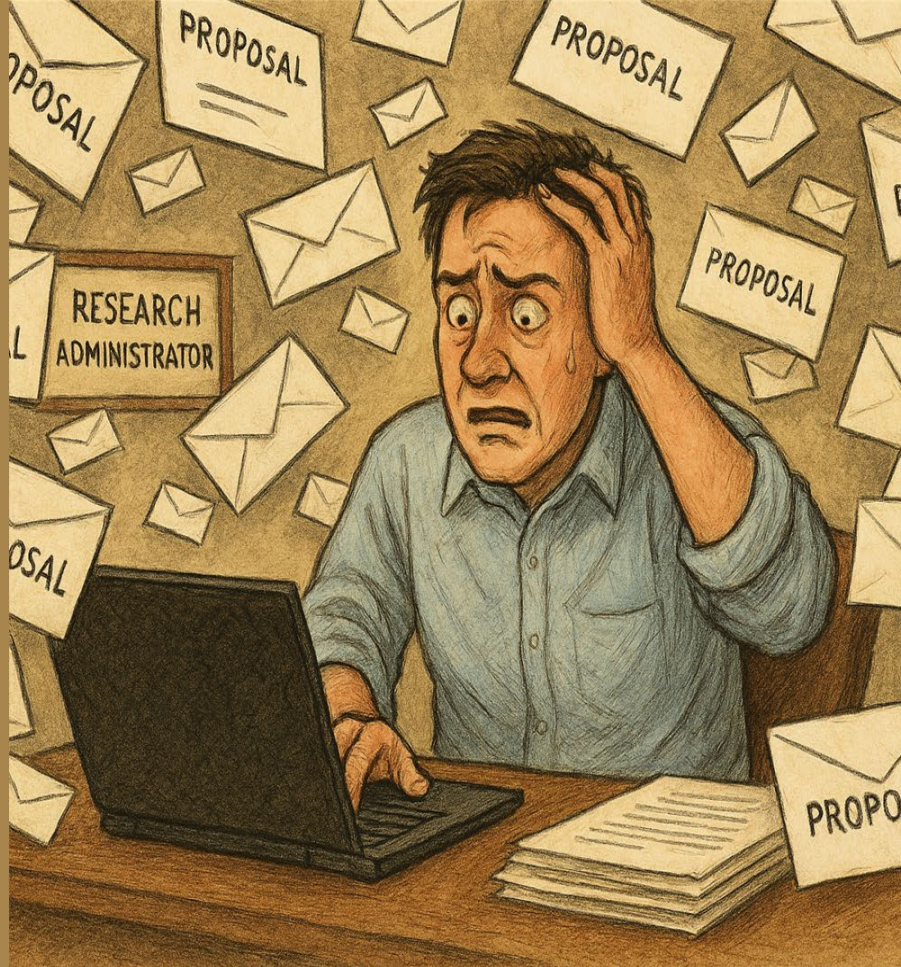
# Proposal Tracker Automation in Teams

Using Microsoft Forms, Power Automate, and Lists



# Challenges

- Proposals submitted via email → inconsistent & hard to manage
- No centralized tracking system → Hard to track status
- Delays in review and approvals
- Risk of missed deadlines and lost information



# Solution = Automated Proposal Tracker



Microsoft Forms  
→ standardized  
proposal intake



Power Automate  
→ automated  
routing &  
notifications



Teams List →  
centralized  
visibility and  
status tracking

# EXAMPLE OF PROPOSAL INTAKE FORM



## OSPR Proposal Notice of Intent

PD/PI:  PD/PI Dept.:

Are there any CSU co-PIs or co-investigators?    Yes    No

Co-I:  Co-I Dept.:

Are you the submitting PI?    Yes     No

Will there be any subawards (e.g., other universities, businesses, etc.)?    Yes     No

Subaward Institution(s):

Subaward PI. (s):

Subaward PI contact & :

Subaward administrative contact Name & :

Proposal Title:

What is the anticipated start date of the project?

Project period: Start date  End date

Sponsoring Agency/Organization:

Sponsor Deadline:

Link to RFA or attach separately:

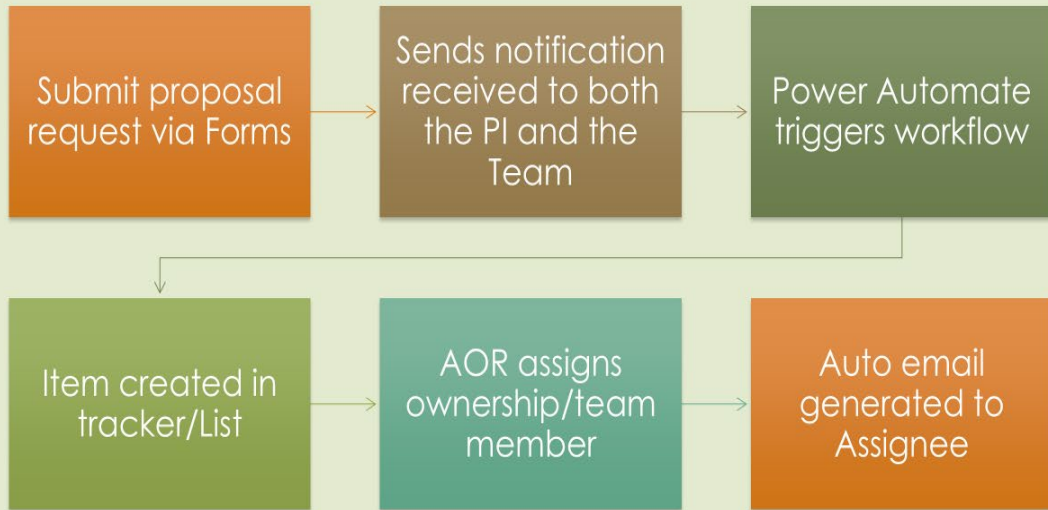
# MICROSOFT LIST/ PROPOSAL TRACKER

Central list is created in  
Teams/Sharepoint

Key fields:

Internal Proposal number (inputted manually)	PI Name (automatic)	Agency Due date (automatic)	Status (New, Under Review, Approved, Rejected) (inputted manually)	Team Member Assigned (inputted manually)	Funding Amount (automatic)	Title of the Proposal (automatic)	Sub awardee (automatic)
--	---------------------	-----------------------------	--	--	----------------------------	-----------------------------------	-------------------------

# How It Works



# Power Automate Workflow

## How the Integration Works

In Power Automate, Microsoft Forms has:

**Trigger:** *When a new response is submitted* — starts a flow when someone submits a form [Microsoft Learn](#).

**Action:** *Get response details* — pulls in the form's dynamic content (fields, attachments, etc.) so you can use them in other steps

The screenshot displays a Power Automate workflow configuration. It is divided into two main sections: 'Trigger' and 'Actions'. The 'Trigger' section is titled 'Trigger' and includes the text 'The flow starts when this happens'. Below this, there is a single trigger card: 'When a new response is submitted' from 'Microsoft Forms'. The 'Actions' section is titled 'Actions' and includes the text 'This is what the flow will do'. Below this, there are two action cards: 'Foreach' and 'Get response details' from 'Microsoft Forms'.



# Benefits

Faster turnaround

Improved accuracy & consistency

Real-time tracking & transparency

Reduced manual entries

Better team collaboration

# Key Takeaways



Easy to  
implement



Uses existing  
tools

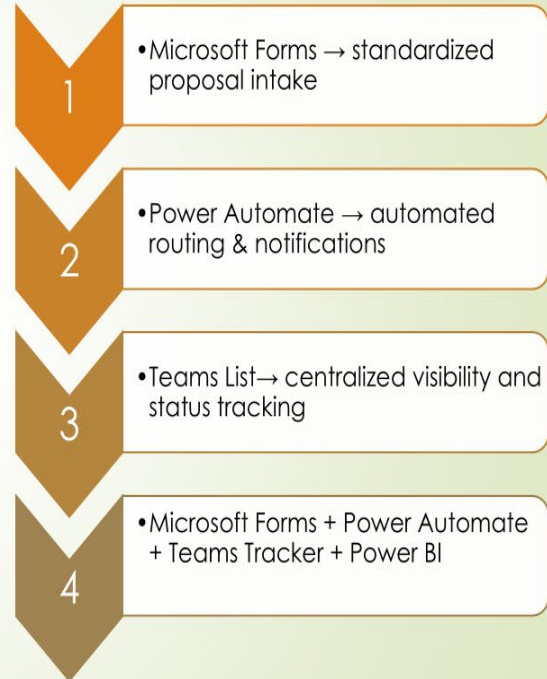


Scalable  
solution

# Next Level

## POWER BI

### Proposal Intake Process








# What is Power BI?

- Power BI – business analytics tool

## Why do we use it?

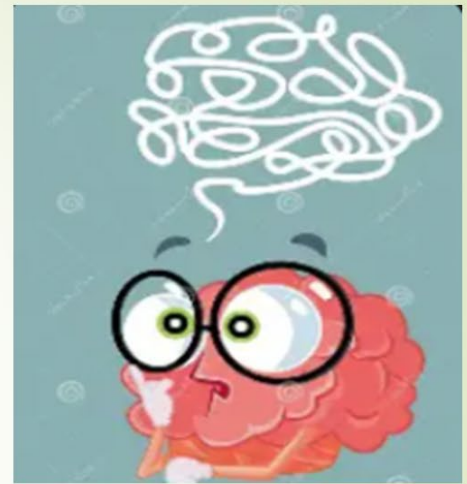
- Analyze large amounts of data quickly
- Create visual dashboards (charts, graphs, maps)
- Track performance (sales, finance, operations, etc.)
- Make data-driven decisions

### Key Features

-  **Data Visualization** – Charts, graphs, KPIs
-  **Data Integration** – Connects to Excel, databases, cloud services
-  **Real-Time Data** – Live dashboards update automatically
-  **AI Insights** – Detects trends and patterns
-  **Mobile Access** – View reports on phones and tablets



# NOW, YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT HOW YOU CAN STREAMLINE YOUR PROPOSAL TRACKING





# GOT QUESTIONS?

**Dr. Sharita Wallace**  
Central State University  
Director of Pre-Award Administration  
[swallace2@centralstate.edu](mailto:swallace2@centralstate.edu)





## Considerations for

# Post-Award during Budget Proposal



*Focus on Accuracy & Accountability*

# Budgeting in Pre-Award/Proposal

## How Early Decisions Shape Post Award Success

The budget becomes the **financial blueprint** for the entire award

Strong budgeting prevents:

- Cost overruns
- Disallowed costs
- Audit findings
- PI frustration



# BUDGETING PITFALLS



# BUDGETING PITFALLS

- Shrinking budgets to fit sponsor caps
- Wrong fringe, F&A, tuition, or salary escalation
- Misclassification of on-campus vs. off-campus rates
- Unrealistic effort commitments
- Cost-share promised without confirmation
  
- Missing required costs
  - Participant support
  - Publication fees
  - Data management
  - Mandatory travel
  - Equipment
  - Subrecipient vs. Contractor



Risk Management



- TRAVEL
- EQUIPMENT
- PARTICIPANT SUPPORT

**Strong Budgets =  
Smoother Awards**





# THANK YOU!

Travel was supported in part from the NSF-funded Skilled Training in Administration and Institutional Research (STAIR) at Penn State.



**PennState  
Research**

## **AI Use Disclosure Statement**

In developing this presentation, generative AI tools were used solely for brainstorming and outlining. These tools helped organize initial ideas, structure the content flow, and identify key themes relevant to the topic. The presenters completed all final writing, analysis, and synthesis, and all sources were independently researched and cited in accordance with academic integrity standards.