

NSF tips for early-career folks  
or  
Up your chances for NSF \$

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(with help from Barbara Ransom)

Program Directors  
National Science Foundation



# How do I find opportunities?

- ▶ NSF Funding page: [www.nsf.gov/funding/](http://www.nsf.gov/funding/)
- ▶ Follow @NSF, @nsf\_geo on Twitter
- ▶ NSF Custom News Service – what's new
- ▶ Ask your friendly neighborhood Program Officer...

# Early Career Resources

## ▶ NSF Graduate Research Fellowships

▶ [www.nsf.gov/grfp](http://www.nsf.gov/grfp)

▶ Deadline Nov, offers 3 yr support @ \$40.5k/yr (\$30k to student)

## ▶ EAR Postdoctoral Fellowships:

▶ <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2010/nsf10500/nsf10500.htm>

▶ Deadline 1 July, offers 2 yr support @ \$85k/year (\$58k salary)

## ▶ CAREER Faculty Early Career Development Program

▶ <http://www.nsf.gov/career>

▶ Deadline: 27 July

# Early Career Resources

- ▶ Award Search

- ▶ <http://nsf.gov/awardsearch/>

- ▶ Proposal Writing Guide

- ▶ [http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2004/nsf04016/nsf04016\\_5.htm](http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2004/nsf04016/nsf04016_5.htm)

- ▶ Project Evaluation Handbook

- ▶ <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2002/nsf02057/nsf02057.pdf>

# A Good Proposal

- ▶ Good idea, well expressed
- ▶ Clear methods for work, evaluating findings, dissemination
- ▶ Realistic, well-justified budgets compatible with program guidelines
- ▶ Complies with program solicitation, merit review criteria, GPG
- ▶ How to write a proposal: <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2004/nsf04016/start.htm>



# Read the solicitation...

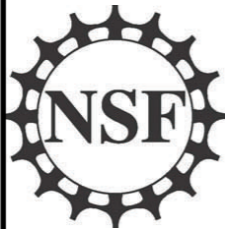
## EarthScope

### PROGRAM SOLICITATION

NSF 09-535

*REPLACES DOCUMENT(S):*

NSF 06-562



**National Science Foundation**

Directorate for Geosciences  
Division of Earth Sciences

**Full Proposal Deadline(s)** (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time):

July 16, 2009

July 16, Annually Thereafter

July 16, 2010

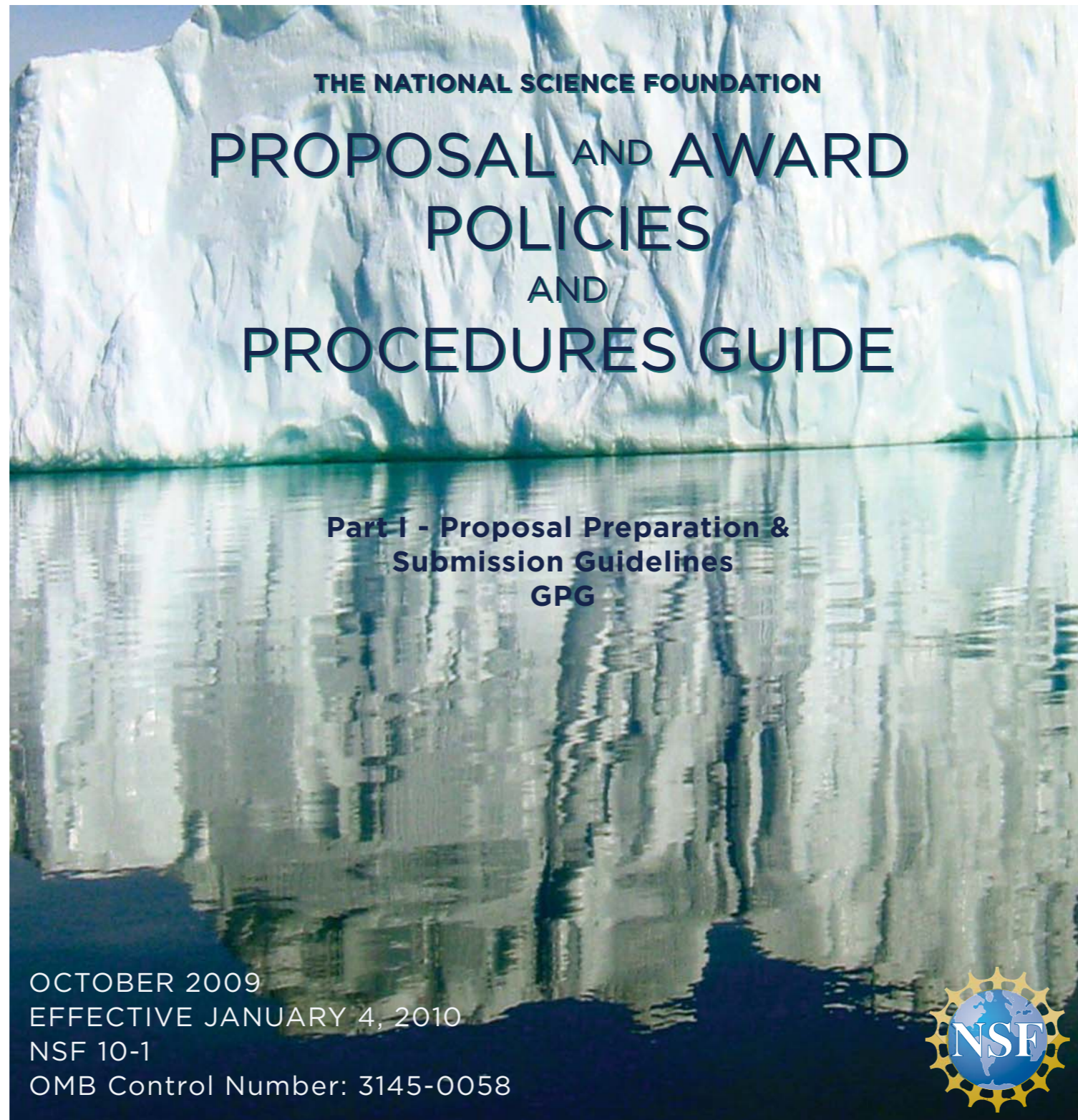
July 16, Annually Thereafter

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND REVISION NOTES

A revised version of the *NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide* (PAPPG), [NSF 11-1](#), was issued on October 1, 2010 and is effective for proposals submitted, or due, on or after January 18, 2011. Please be advised that the guidelines contained in [NSF 11-1](#) apply to proposals submitted in response to this funding opportunity. Proposers who opt to submit prior to January 18, 2011, must also follow the guidelines contained in [NSF 11-1](#).

**Cost Sharing:** The PAPPG has been revised to implement the National Science Board's recommendations regarding cost sharing. Inclusion of voluntary committed cost sharing is prohibited. In order to assess the scope of the project, all organizational resources necessary for the project must be described in the Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources section of the proposal. The description should be narrative in nature and must not include any quantifiable financial information. Mandatory cost sharing will only be required when explicitly authorized by the NSF Director. See the PAPP Guide Part I: *Grant Proposal Guide (GPG)* Chapter II.C.2.g(xi) for further information about the implementation of these recommendations.

# Read and follow GPG...



[http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub\\_summ.jsp?ods\\_key=gpg](http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=gpg)

# Proposal PsyOps

- ▶ Put yourself in the reader's shoes
  - ▶ Answer their questions before they even have them
  - ▶ 80-85% of proposal narrative under "Research Plan".
  - ▶ "Salesmanship" up front where it won't be missed.
  - ▶ Address any external or negative issues directly.
- ▶ Think of your proposal as 45 in a stack of 50.
- ▶ Err on the side of readability - language & format

# NSF Review Criteria

- ▶ <http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/meritreview/>
- ▶ Intellectual Merit
  - ▶ How much would work promote knowledge/understanding?
  - ▶ How well qualified is the proposer?
  - ▶ How creative, original, transformative, well conceived is work?
- ▶ Broader Impacts
  - ▶ How well would work promote teaching, training, and learning?  
Broaden participation of underrepresented groups?
  - ▶ How would it enhance infrastructure for research and education?
  - ▶ Will the results be disseminated broadly?
  - ▶ What may be the benefits of the proposed activity to society?
- ▶ Both equally important

# What do Program Officers do?

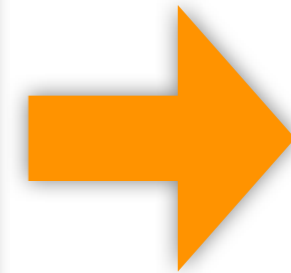
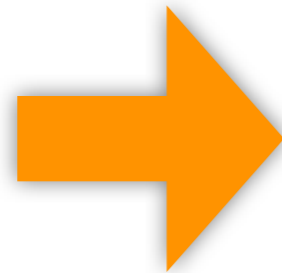
- ▶ Write solicitations
- ▶ **Answer questions, give advice**
- ▶ Run the review process for each proposal
- ▶ Revise budgets if needed (often is)
- ▶ Make final recommendation for each proposal
- ▶ Oversee awards

# Call us - we don't bite!

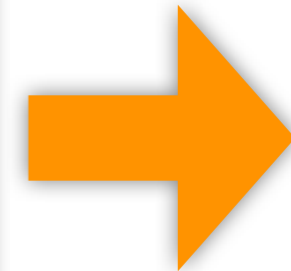
- ▶ Here's what I want to do: does it fit your program?
- ▶ If not, who else should I call?
- ▶ What can I do to make my proposal more competitive?
- ▶ How will proposals be reviewed, final decisions made?
- ▶ How much money is likely to be available?
- ▶ What's a reasonable budget?
- ▶ What is the success rate?

# Review process seems like...

COVER SHEET FOR PROPOSAL TO THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION				
PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT/SOLICITATION NO. CLOSING DATE: not to appear in a program announcement/solicitation until NSF 50-2			FOR NSF USE ONLY NSF PROPOSAL NUMBER	
FOR CONSIDERATION BY NSF ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS (include the most specific unit known, i.e., program division, etc.)				
DATE RECEIVED	NUMBER OF COPIES	DIVISION ASSIGNED	FUND CODE	FILE LOCATION
PI OVER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (ENR OR PI NUMBER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (PIN))		SHOW PREVIOUS AWARD NO. IF THIS IS <input type="checkbox"/> A RENEWAL <input type="checkbox"/> AN ACCOMPLISHMENT-BASED RENEWAL		IS THIS PROPOSAL BEING SUBMITTED TO ANOTHER FEDERAL AGENCY? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> IF YES, LIST ACRONYMS
NAME OF ORGANIZATION TO WHICH AWARD SHOULD BE MADE		ADDRESS OF AWARD-EE ORGANIZATION, INCLUDING 9 DIGIT ZIP CODE		
AWARDEE ORGANIZATION CODE (IF KNOWN)				
NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION, IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE		ADDRESS OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION, IF DIFFERENT, INCLUDING 9 DIGIT ZIP CODE		
PERFORMING ORGANIZATION CODE (IF KNOWN)				
AWARDEE ORGANIZATION (Check At The Appr) (See GPO I.D. 1 For Definitions) <input type="checkbox"/> FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION <input type="checkbox"/> SMALL BUSINESS <input type="checkbox"/> MINORITY BUSINESS <input type="checkbox"/> WOMAN-OWNED BUSINESS				
TITLE OF PROPOSED PROJECT				
REQUESTED AMOUNT	PROPOSED DURATION (140 MONTHS)	REQUESTED STARTING DATE	SHOW RELATED PREPROPOSAL NO. IF APPLICABLE	
CHECK APPROPRIATE BOXES IF THIS PROPOSAL INCLUDES ANY OF THE ITEMS LISTED BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> BEGINNING INVESTIGATOR (GPO I.A.3)	<input type="checkbox"/> DISCLOSURE OF LOBBYING ACTIVITIES (GPO I.D. 1)	<input type="checkbox"/> PROPRIETARY & PRIVILEGED INFORMATION (GPO I.B. I.D. 7)	<input type="checkbox"/> NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (GPO I.D. 10)	<input type="checkbox"/> HISTORIC PLACES (GPO I.D. 19)
<input type="checkbox"/> VERTEBRATE ANIMALS (GPO I.D. 12) (ACUC App. Date _____)	<input type="checkbox"/> HUMAN SUBJECTS (GPO I.D. 12) (IRB App. Date _____)	<input type="checkbox"/> INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES: COUNTRY/COUNTRIES		
<input type="checkbox"/> SMALL GRANT FOR EXPLO. RESEARCH (GGER) (GPO I.D. 12)		<input type="checkbox"/> FACILITATION FOR SCIENTISTS/ENGINEERS WITH DISABILITIES (GPO V.0.)		
<input type="checkbox"/> RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY AWARD (GPO V.0.)				
PIPO DEPARTMENT		PIPO POSTAL ADDRESS		
PIPO FAX NUMBER				
NAMES (TYPED)		High Degree	Yr of Degree	Telephone Number
PIPO NAME				Electronic Mail Address
CO-PIPO				
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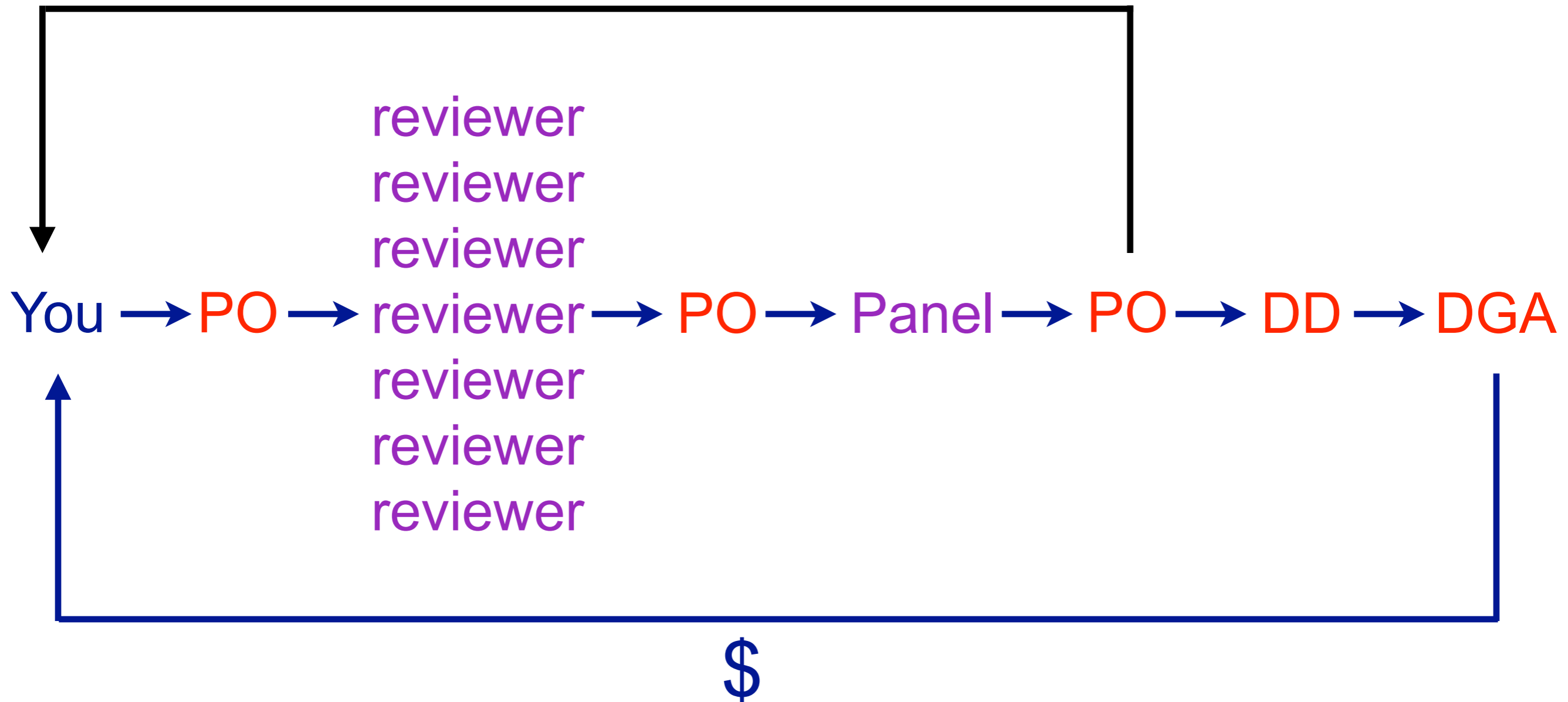
Yes



No

# How it actually works...

Two distinct audiences – technical and general



# Get on the inside track...

- ▶ Be active in writing and submitting proposals
- ▶ Be a reviewer or a panelist
- ▶ Talk with POs at national meetings
- ▶ Come to NSF and visit folks
- ▶ Participate in NSF community workshops
- ▶ Come to work at NSF



## ▶ **How to maximize your proposal chances**

- ▶ Find an appropriate opportunity for your idea
- ▶ Follow the solicitation - call the PO for advice
- ▶ Follow the GPG - or your proposal can be returned
- ▶ Understand the process - and get involved!