



## 2018: Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q. Why did WRF institute online proposal submission?**

A. For several reasons. First, we believe that this will be a much simpler and less resource-intensive submittal process for both researchers and our staff. Second, it will simplify proposal intake and distribution to our Project Advisory Committees (PACs), helping facilitate more timely proposal review and selection. Moreover, it will help submitters see that their proposal package is complete and ready to submit, and help ensure that we receive all required proposal components by the appropriate due date. Finally, we believe it's a more environmentally friendly and sustainable proposal submittal approach.

### **Q. Why must I scan or convert my documents to PDF format?**

A. The PDF file format ensures that your documents are received as intended and will not be modified in our PDF compile process. Converting files with equations, formulas, complex tables or layout, etc., require extra attention from you to ensure they retain your intended data / presentation. The selected proposer will be asked to provide their original native files, so be sure to retain a local copy.

**\*\*\*NOTE - IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE DOCUMENTS YOU UPLOAD ARE IN PDF FORMAT, THAT THE FILE NAMES DO NOT CONTAIN NON-STANDARD CHARACTERS, AND THAT THE PDF FILES ARE NOT DIGITALLY SIGNED OR LOCKED WITH PASSWORDS OR SECURITY SETTINGS.\*\*\***

### **Q. Why should I read the Proposal Guidelines?**

A. The Proposal Guidelines are the instructions for preparing the proposal and explain how to be in compliance with the proposal submission requirements and the terms and conditions of the Project Funding Agreement. The Guidelines provide the current year's program overview, instructions for preparing proposals, how proposals are reviewed and selected, and the award administration process. It's very important that prospective researchers, and their grant, finance and contract administration staff, review and understand the Guidelines before investing the time to prepare and submit a proposal. We welcome questions about the Guidelines at any time.

### **Q. Why should I read the sample contract (project funding agreement)?**

A. The sample contract outlines the WRF's standard terms and conditions for conducting research projects. Researchers are expected to comply with these terms and conditions. It's therefore very important that prospective researchers, and their grant and contract administration staff, review and understand these terms and conditions before investing the time to prepare and submit a proposal. Doing so not only avoids potential misunderstandings about the contract, but also helps ensure that the contract is executed quickly and that research gets underway as soon as possible. We welcome questions about the sample contract at any time.

**Q. Do I have to submit my proposal online – can't I just mail it in?**

A. Online submittal is now the only option for submitting a proposal to WRF for projects funded through the Solicited / Focus Area program. We have significantly modified our proposal intake process to accommodate the change to online submittal; it is now completely electronic, with key information provided by the submitter captured automatically. We believe that the time and efficiencies gained through this process will more than compensate for discontinuing the option of submitting paper copies by mail; after using online submittal, we hope you agree!

**Q. Why do I need a login?**

A. Your login is used to track your proposal both in the online system and in our internal system. This allows you to stop and start working online and return to continue your submission.

**Q. How do I obtain a login?**

A. If you've worked with WRF in the past, you probably already have a login. On the proposal site, use the "Forgot Password" link and the system will automatically email your credentials to you. If "Forgot Password" fails to recognize you, use the form on the proposal Website to request a login. Staff will reply to your request in 2 business days.

**Q. How do I get the Proposal Component Packet?**

A. Go here <https://proposals.waterrf.org/Pages/RFPs.aspx> and login. Select the RFP for which you'd like to submit a proposal and there will be a link to the packet.

**Q. Why do I have to login before I can get the Proposal Component Packet?**

A. By obtaining your login at the start of the process, you can be ready to upload your documents. If you wait to request a login, you may miss the deadline. We ask you to ensure you have a login before you begin the proposal process.

**Q. What is the Proposal Component Packet?**

A. This is a folder containing guidance documents and templates & forms needed to submit your proposal. The Word templates are simply starter pages to aid your document creation process.

**Q. In a nutshell, how does it work?**

A. Find the project you want to make a proposal on > login and download the Proposal Component Packet > scan or convert your documents to PDF > return to the site, login and upload your completed proposal components.

**Q. What are the recommended steps to successfully submit a proposal?**

A. WELL IN ADVANCE OF THE DEADLINE NOTED IN THE RFP, THESE ARE THE RECOMMENDED STEPS:

1) Read the RFP and make note of the deadline, 2) Read the Proposal Guidelines and the Sample PFA (Project Funding Agreement) to ensure you are able to comply with our requirements before you put the time into creating a proposal, 3) Ensure you have a login to access the required documents to upload your proposal, 4) download and save the compressed Proposal Component Packet folder, 5) Extract the files and enter your information into each required proposal document, 6) scan or convert your documents to PDF files, 7) Upload your document at <https://proposals.waterrf.org/Pages/RFPs.aspx>.

You may either upload your documents as you go or upload each file all at once – as long as you have completed your submission of all required documents before the RFP deadline date and time. It is recommended you keep a local copy of the documents you are uploading. The selected proposer will be asked to provide their original native files.

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**Q. What happens when an RFP deadline date and time passes?**

A. The RFP will not be available for selecting or editing once the deadline has passed. The system will not allow files to be submitted past the time of the deadline which is stated on every RFP. ***As system clocks vary, it is highly recommended that you do not wait until the last minute to press submit. Once our server time hits the deadline time, the submit button will not accept the proposal.***

**Q. Can I start more than one Proposal for the same project?**

A. No. Once you start a proposal for a project, you won't see that project # in the available selection list. You may only edit the existing one or start over with the same project #.

**Q. What if I have multiple documents of a certain component type, such as resumes?**

A. Each component type needs to be uploaded as a single document, so please scan into one document or merge the files in Adobe Acrobat to create one PDF file for upload.

**Q. Is there any leeway on the submission time – what if I'm a few minutes late?**

A. The system is programmed to close the submission process at the deadline time. There is not any delay built in. The upload page displays the time of the server clock and the system programmatically closes to submission when the deadline date / time is reached.

**This document may evolve over time, so please check back at the Website for the latest tips.**