



2020: 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 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 than submitting paper copies by mail.

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 during our intake 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.

***** TO SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL, YOU WILL ORGANIZE YOUR PROPOSAL INTO TWO PDF FILES consisting of your technical review documents and your financial review documents. REFER TO THE PROPOSAL GUIDELINES.**

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE DOCUMENTS YOU UPLOAD ARE:

- **IN PDF FORMAT**
- **FILE NAMES DO NOT CONTAIN NON-STANDARD CHARACTERS (E.G. / \ ? % & .)**
- **PDF FILES ARE NOT LOCKED WITH PASSWORDS OR SECURITY SETTINGS**

Q. What method can I use to create the PDF files?

A. WRF cannot specify a particular method. The technique you use will depend on the software you are using and what versions of the software.

For example, your version of Microsoft Word or Excel may have the Adobe Acrobat plug-in installed to create files as a PDF or you may have the pro version of Adobe Acrobat. You might use a free online converter web application or purchase a dedicated pdf converter. You might be able to simply print to a pdf file type from within your printer dialog. In the most basic method, you might print your files to a hardcopy and then scan to pdf.

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 Research Priority 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 and assemble the individual components into two PDF files > return to the site, login and upload your assembled proposal components as two PDF files representing your proposals technical documents and your financial documents.

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) assemble your files into two PDF files representing your proposals technical documents and your financial documents, and 8) Upload your document at <https://proposals.waterrf.org/Pages/RFPs.aspx>.

Ensure you have completed your submission of all required files before the RFP deadline date and time. It is recommended you keep a local copy of the documents you are submitting. The selected proposer will be asked to provide their original native files.

*****NOTE - IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOUR 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. 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 type, such as resumes?

A. Each type needs to be converted to a single document, so please scan into one document or merge the files in Adobe Acrobat to create the file for inclusion in your proposal file.

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.