

How to Learn More About the NSF's Economics Program

The NSF homepage www.nsf.gov has tools and links you can use to find information about the Econ program and about NSF as a whole.

Where to start:

The expandable tabs on the NSF homepage offer the best way to navigate the site:



From here you can find information on the **Merit Review process**, access the **Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide** that has the answers to most questions about preparing proposals and managing awards, get help using our **Research.gov** and **FastLane.nsf.gov** proposal portals, and **search NSF awards** to see what any NSF program has funded in past years. You can also search for **other NSF programs** that might be a fit for your project. Your favorite search engine can also take you directly to many of these resources.

How to find information about the Merit Review process:

Click the “Merit Review” link under the FUNDING tab to bring up an overview of how the NSF Proposal and Award process works. Information about how to prepare and submit a proposal, how NSF reviews and processes proposals, and how NSF makes awards is all here, along with timetables for each phase of the process.

How to find and use the Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide (PaPPG):

The PaPPG is NSF’s guiding policy document. Look here for NSF’s official rules for who can apply for funding, how to prepare proposals (including instructions for preparing budgets), and how to submit required reports if you have an NSF award. You’ll find a link to the current PaPPG under the “Merit Review” link, and it’s also linked from other places on the website. Both pdf and html versions are available.

- ***Hint:*** The PaPPG is updated yearly. If you are preparing a proposal be sure you are using the up-to-date version!
- ***Hint:*** Part I of the PaPPG, Chapters I and II explains how to submit proposals, and includes a useful Proposal Preparation Checklist. Think of it as a syllabus; you want to read it.

How to get help using Research.gov or FastLane:

You can use either of these sites to prepare your proposal. Research.gov is the more modern site, and it has good online help files: click “Help” in the upper right menu to see these files and the FAQ. FastLane.nsf.gov is the legacy site, and clicking “Help” will only get you to a pdf manual (over 1000 pages and not indexed). NSF also has a staff of people available to help you with either site: click “Contact” in the upper right menu for the email addresses and the phone numbers for the Help Desk (NSF IT Help Central). It’s staffed from 7am – 9pm M – F, except for federal holidays.

How to look up NSF awards:

Want to know what awards the Econ Program or another NSF program has funded? Want to know what NSF program has funded a particular research? This is an important way to find out what sorts of projects we fund. Use NSF’s Advanced Search tool by Clicking ‘Awards’, then ‘Search Awards’, then ‘Advanced Search’. Or just google “NSF Advanced Award Search”.

You have lots of ways to search, but entering ‘1320’ into the ‘Element Code’ box will get you all awards with any funding from the Economics Program budget.

How to contact an NSF program director about your idea:

Email us a one-two page description of the research project, focusing on the research question/s and methods. Include any specific questions you have in that email. We’re happy to schedule phone or video calls once we have that email. The team has dedicated time set aside each week just for talking to PIs, but we can answer most questions via email.