

Procedures for Submitting a Research Proposal to the National Park Service - CESU Agreement

Overview

The National Park Service (NPS) solicits research proposals from CESU non-federal partners in one of two ways: i) the NPS contact distributes a Request for Letters of Research Interest (LOIs) to obtain a list of prospective principal investigators (PIs) to choose from **or** ii) the NPS contact requests a research proposal/budget (see below) from a PI who he/she knows has the requisite experience and expertise to successfully complete the proposed project. LOIs are posted on the Chesapeake Watershed (CHWA) CESU's website as well as distributed by the CESU Director to the CESU Technical Representative(s) for each of the non-federal partners.

Important Note: The CESU non-federal partner must have a CESU \$0 Master Cooperative Agreement¹ in place with the NPS *if* the project will be funded through the CHWA CESU Region. This requirement differs by NPS region so check with the relevant [NPS CESU Research Coordinator](#) if funding is from another region.

Request for Letters of Research Interest (LOIs) (When Applicable)

The content of the Request may vary somewhat based on the NPS contact, but typically contains:

- Project Title
- Background
- Objectives
- Project Description
- Project Timeline
- Final Product(s)
- PI Requirements
- Funding Available
- Information to include in the LOI
- Evaluation Criteria
- NPS Contact Information

The LOI varies in length, depending on the specifications of the NPS contact, but is usually 2-6 pages. The LOI typically contains:

- PI Name and Contact Information

¹ A CESU \$0 Master Cooperative Agreement is created in response to a [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) posted on grants.gov, which satisfies the competition criterion and allows NPS staff to work with specific CESU non-federal partners with these agreements without further competition.

- Brief Description of the Proposed Approach(es) to Successfully Complete the Project
- Biographical Sketch(es) of Key Personnel (CVs attached)
- Brief Description of Relevant Past Projects
- Brief Description of Other Relevant Capabilities for Successfully Completing the Project

The NPS contact often creates a panel to review, rank and select the LOI. The PI with the top-ranked LOI then coordinates with the NPS contact to create a research proposal and detailed budget.

Research Proposal and Detailed Budget

The NPS cannot require a specific template for research proposals, but successful proposals usually contain these elements:

- Project Title
- Statement of the Problem/Issue
 - o What is the natural resource, cultural resource, or social science management issue to be addressed by the project?
 - o Include relevant literature citations.
- Purpose and Anticipated Benefits
 - o Clearly describe the purpose of the proposed project.
 - o Discuss how the anticipated project findings may assist resource managers in addressing the issue, in developing resource protection strategies, in further understanding the issue or resource being studied, etc.
- Proposed Methods
 - o For each task to be accomplished, clearly describe the proposed methods, including appropriate literature citations.
- Timeline/Schedule
 - o Clearly identify the time required to accomplish each proposed task.
 - o Timeline should include written progress reports to be submitted in either quarterly (three month) or semi-annual (six month) intervals. Check with the NPS contact to determine which interval applies to your proposed project. Progress and financial reports are due within 30 days of the end of the reporting interval.
 - o Include submission of project deliverables (e.g., final technical report) in Draft and Final form. Final reports, final financial reports, and other items are due within 90 days of the agreement termination date.
 - o NOTE: It is recommended that the timeline not include a specific start date because the start date is not predictable. Project start date is the time of execution of the project task agreement.
- Literature Cited (as applicable)
- Detailed Budget (see SF-424A below)

- o Provide a detailed itemized budget, including standard categories such as Personnel (salary and fringe), Travel, Supplies, Equipment, Indirect Costs, Total Costs.
 - o Indirect cost for the CESU program is negotiated at 17.5%.
- Budget Justification
 - o Clearly justify the requested cost for each budget category.
- Qualifications of Investigator(s)
 - o Provide a statement that describes the background and qualifications of the investigator(s) as related to the scope of the proposed project.

The research proposal and detailed budget will be attached to the Task Agreement that awards the funds to the recipient. In addition, the PI provides the following to the NPS contact (or designated NPS Agreements Technical Representative) to include in the Task Agreement package so that it can be processed and awarded.

- [SF-424](#) (Application for Federal Assistance)
- [SF-424A](#) (Budget Information: Non-construction Project)
- [SF-424B](#) (Assurances: Non-construction Project)
- Insurance Liability Certificate (obtained from recipient's insurance provider)
- *If applicable*: For awards over \$100,000 - [Lobbying Form](#) for recipients who do not lobby Congress
- *If applicable*: For awards over \$100,000 - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form ([SF-LLL](#)) for recipients who do lobby Congress, but not for funds on this project
- *If applicable*: If the recipient has not expended \$750,000 or more in Federal funds in the previous fiscal year, then an email is required from the recipient explaining that this is why they are exempt from the A-133 Audit requirement.