



# ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION

## GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES

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This document lays out the content and formatting requirements when writing a grant proposal to the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation for

**Non-research projects where the total funds requested  
from the Sloan Foundation exceed \$125,000**

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A *research project* is any project the output of which could be appropriately published in an academic journal. A *non-research project* is any project that is not a research project. Non-research projects include conference support, software development, policy analysis, public education and outreach projects, institution-building, science-themed media production, etc.

If your project is a research project or the funds requested from the Sloan Foundation do not exceed \$125,000, this is not the correct set of guidelines for your grant proposal. Please visit our [Grant Proposals Guidelines](#) page to download the correct guidelines.

Projects with *both* a research and a non-research component (for instance, a project that plans to both conduct research and build a website to disseminate that research to the public) are considered research projects for the purposes of which guidelines to select.

Please read our [Tips for Writing a Successful Grant Proposal](#) for useful advice on what makes for a successful grant proposal to the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.



## Elements of a Grant Proposal

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All grant proposals to the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation must contain the following elements. Unless indicated otherwise in these guidelines, proposals that fail to contain any of these elements are not complete and will not be considered for funding until such time as all elements have been submitted.

1. Proposal Cover Sheet
2. Proposal
3. Budget
4. Appendices
5. Proposal Administration Form

The first four elements should appear in a single document in the order indicated above. (Proposal cover sheet first, then proposal, then the budget, etc.) This electronic document should not exceed 2 megabytes. The Proposal Administration Form should be submitted as a separate document. Specific content and formatting requirements for each element are detailed below.



## Proposal Cover Sheet

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All grant proposals must be accompanied by a completed Proposal Cover Sheet Form. [Visit the Forms section](#) of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation website to download a Proposal Cover Sheet Form.



## Proposal

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### Format

The proposal must

- |                     |                   |                     |
|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Be double spaced    | Have 1” margins   | Not exceed 20 pages |
| Be in a 12 pt. font | Have page numbers |                     |

## Content

The grant proposal must be divided into sections that answer the following questions.

- 1. What is the main issue, problem, or subject and why is it important?** The proposal should start with a discussion of the main issues, problems, or subjects that the proposer expects to address. It should go on to discuss why these are important and how they are related to the particular Foundation program that would provide the grant support.
- 2. What is the major related work in this field?** The proposal should contain a summary of similar projects or other work addressing the same subjects, issues, or problems. This summary should include references to important publications or results of other significant creative efforts in the field. The proposer should describe how his or her work differs from, contributes to, or complements this work.
- 3. Why is the proposer(s) qualified to address the issue or subject for which funds are being sought?** The proposer's education, previous accomplishments, etc., related to the proposed project should be discussed briefly.
- 4. What is the approach being taken?** The proposal should contain a discussion of the overall approach to the subject, issue, or problem, and a detailed description of the proposed activities. The proposal should describe steps to be taken, by whom and when. If the proposal involves collaboration with other individuals or organizations, those collaborators and their expected contributions to the project should be listed. A management and staffing plan for current staff or staff to be hired should be provided, clearly indicating who will do what jobs or have what responsibilities. If applicable, the proposal should also describe the status of the work to date, and plans for dissemination and/or sustainability.
- 5. What will be the output from the project?** The proposal should include a discussion of anticipated products such as publications, programs, conferences, briefings, training of students, etc., that the project is expected to yield.
- 6. What is the justification for the amount of money requested?** The proposer should justify the budget request and why it is consistent with the associated output that the funds will support. This should be a general discussion, with additional detail provided in the budget section. (See "Budget", below.)
- 7. What other sources of support does the proposer have in hand or has he/she applied for to support the project?** If funds are being provided or requested from other sources, the proposal should list those sources, amounts and the current status of funding from each. This narrative information can be integrated into the previous question, with detail provided in the budget section. (See "Budget, below.)

**When an existing or previous grantee seeks funds for a project in the same or related area to that currently or previously supported by a Foundation grant, an additional section should be included in the proposal:**

8. **What is the status and output of current and/or previous Sloan grants?** The proposal should include a discussion of the work that has been produced (or is in process) in connection with previous Foundation grants. This discussion should include a list of publications (working papers, articles published in journals, books, PhD dissertations, etc.) and other products (e.g. conferences, presentations, films, training, etc.) designated as output or outcome metrics from current and/or previous grants.



## Budget

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### Format

- The budget should be presented in tabular form, but the Foundation does not require a particular format.
- Universities, which comprise the majority of Alfred P. Sloan Foundation grantees, may have formats that they require their researchers to use. Such formats will generally meet the needs and requirements of the Foundation.
- Individuals and organizations without required budget formats, or those less experienced than universities in preparing budgets, may want to use or adapt the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation sample budget format. [Visit the Forms section](#) of the Foundation's website to download the sample budget.

### Content

- Overhead costs may not exceed 15% of direct project costs.**
- If there is a "pass-through" or subcontract as part of the grant, there must not be double overhead. (The institution should not charge 15% on money subcontracted to another institution.) A recommended division of overhead where a subcontract is involved is 3% for the contracting institution and 12% for the institution that makes the final expenditure.
- If the total cost of the project is larger than the amount requested from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, an overall financial plan for the whole effort must be included, including the identification of matching financial contributions (either secured or anticipated). When possible, letters of support from other funders should be included indicating their

willingness to provide funds and the amount of support to be provided.

- Detail needed to supplement the narrative budget justification in the body of the proposal should also be included in this section.
- The Foundation discourages budget requests to cover summer salary for senior faculty. Proposals may request (and must justify) up to one month summer salary support for senior faculty members in the amount of either 1/9 full academic salary or \$35,000 *whichever is lower*. This policy applies to all faculty more than ten years beyond attainment of their Ph.D. The Foundation may make exceptions to this policy in extraordinary circumstances, but a strong case for such an exception must be made in the proposal.



## Appendices

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Supplementary material to the grant proposal may be included in one or more appendices, as applicable.

- Curriculum Vita(e) \*
- Conflicts of Interest / Sources of Bias \*
- Attention to Diversity \*
- Bibliography of papers, articles, books, texts, or other sources cited in the proposal
- End notes
- Letters of Support if the success of the project depends on the support of key figures other than the principal investigator and project team
- Information Products Appendix \*
- Appendix for Projects that Support Workshops, Conferences, or other Large Meetings \*
- Other supplementary material the proposer feels appropriate.

*\*See below for additional guidelines*



## Curriculum Vita(e)

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- Proposers should provide CVs or bios of key project staff that will implement and supervise activities.

- CVs should include education, employment history, a list of the proposer’s most important previous publications, the journals in which they appeared, book reviews, and important honors (NAS, AAAS, best paper awards, etc.) and other awards.
- Full CVs are not requested; 1-3 pages per person are generally sufficient.



## Conflicts of Interest / Sources of Bias

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The proposal must include as an appendix a disclosure of potential conflicts of interest or sources of bias on the part of the primary investigator, all key project staff, and the grantee institution. Potential conflicts that should be reported in this section include:

- **Financial interests:** Any significant financial interests (equity holdings, stock options, etc.) in any corporate entity involved with the subject matter of the proposed research;
- **Management/Advisory affiliations:** Any status as an officer, trustee, or member of an advisory committee in any entity involved with the subject matter of the proposed research;
- **Paid Consulting:** Any compensation or honoraria received (within the last three years) from an entity involved with the subject matter of the proposed research in exchange for consulting services, speaking engagements, or expert testimony;
- **Patents:** Any planned, pending, or awarded patents the value of which may depend on the outcome of the proposed research.

If no such conflicts exist, the appendix should include a statement to that effect.



## Attention to Diversity

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In keeping with the Foundation’s long-standing support for the professional advancement of underrepresented groups in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and economics, the Foundation urges proposers to be mindful that African-Americans/blacks, Hispanics/Latinos, Native Americans, and women are often underrepresented in the scientific enterprise. Proposers should strive for diversity when drafting their proposals, constructing project teams, creating advisory panels, and assigning leadership and management responsibilities on a project. Proposers should provide a brief appendix discussing current and planned efforts to ensure racial and gender diversity in the project. **Note that mere provision of the diversity or equal**

**opportunity policy of one’s institution is insufficient.** Rather, what we are looking for are concrete plans to ensure that *the particular project under consideration* will be structured in such a way as to encourage racial and gender diversity. Film, television, radio, and other media projects should note that the Foundation’s interest in promoting diversity applies to both sides of the camera. Producers of such work should describe efforts to encourage diversity both in the media to be produced (invited guests, featured experts, selection of topics, on-screen/on-air talent) and in the production team (crew, writing staff, management, science advisors, etc.).



## Information Products Appendix

The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation funds the generation and dissemination of knowledge according to a set of core principles:

- We aim to support exceptional projects that can attract substantial attention when disseminated through high-impact channels;
- We believe that making project outputs freely and openly accessible can increase the reach and value of what we fund;
- We recognize that there are costs to the dissemination of knowledge, and that sustainable models are necessary for the institutions that do so; and
- We want our policies to align well with those of other major funding agencies and institutions, especially ones that also value open access to knowledge.

Many Sloan-funded projects produce “information products,” which may include: scholarly publications and pre-publications (such as working papers), project assets (e.g., data, software code, raw footage), and other products such as presentation materials, popular media, websites, curricula, etc. Proposers who will generate “information products” (i.e., more than a simple, traditional journal article) are required to submit a brief one to two page appendix explaining how they plan to manage and disseminate such materials in accordance with the principles above. This “IP Plan” should address the following topics (with key questions to consider listed below each):

### **Description:**

- What information products will be created in the course of this project?
- What format(s) will those information products take? Please list as appropriate.
- Does the project involve organization or analysis of pre-existing materials, and if so, what are the relevant licensing or sharing arrangements?
- Is the work subject to any superseding policies (such as a university open access mandate or other organization-wide policies)?

### **Management:**

- What tools, platforms, and processes will be used to manage project assets as they are created and used through the grant period?
- Who will be responsible for managing project assets during the grant period?

**Dissemination:**

- What channels will be used to disseminate grant products to target audiences?
- Under what license(s), in what timeframe, and (if applicable) at what cost will grant products be available?
- If the project relies on project assets that are proprietary or otherwise not available for wide dissemination, how will the final grant products be reproducible (in the case of research findings) or otherwise accessible for future use?

**Archiving & Stewardship:**

- How will you ensure the long-term durability of grant products after the funding period ends?
- How long beyond the grant term will grant products be maintained and by whom?

*Please note that individual Alfred P. Sloan Foundation programs may have more specific guidelines or policies, which are available from the relevant Program Director.*



## Additional Requirements for Proposals in Support of Workshops, Conferences, or other Large Meetings

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### Additional Materials Required

The following documents must be included in an appendix to any grant proposal requesting support for a workshop, conference, or other large meeting.

- Draft conference agenda
- Draft list of conference invitees listing the name, title, and institutional affiliation of each
- Draft letter of invitation
- Draft list of invited speakers, presenters, and/or panel participants listing the name, title, and institutional affiliation of each
- Draft call for papers (if applicable)

### Attention to Diversity

In keeping with the Foundation's long-standing support for the professional advancement of underrepresented groups in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and economics, the Foundation urges conference organizers to be mindful that African-Americans/blacks, Hispanics/Latinos, Native Americans, and women are often underrepresented at conferences,



especially as panel chairs, speakers, and panel participants. Conference organizers should strive for diversity when drafting conference agendas, invitation lists, lists of speakers, and outreach plans.

## Evaluation and Participant Survey

All proposals should contain an evaluation plan that includes a survey of conference participants at the conclusion of the conference. The details of participant surveys will vary depending on the nature and aims of the conference, but the survey should be designed so that conference organizers can use the collected survey data to evaluate which panels, plenaries, lectures, workshops, breakout groups, networking dinners, or other events were attended, the perceived quality of those events, what participants thought most valuable about the conference, where there is room for improvement, how the conference compares to similar conferences the participant has attended, and whether the conference achieved its overarching goals.

Should the grant proposal be successful, a discussion and analysis of participant survey data must be included as part of the grantee's final report to the Foundation.



## Proposal Administration Form

(Separate Document)

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In order to process a successful grant proposal, the Foundation needs to collect certain administrative information about your institution. [Visit the Forms page](#) in the Apply for Grants section of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation website to download the Proposal Administration Form.

To ensure prompt payment upon a successful grant application, a completed Proposal Administration Form must be submitted with or soon after the grant proposal as a separate document.



## How to Submit a Completed Grant Proposal

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Grant proposals invited by a program director of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation should be submitted as an email attachment, preferably as a single file, directly to him or her. If a program director has not invited you to submit a proposal, *do not submit a proposal*. Instead, compose and submit a Letter of Inquiry to the relevant program director via email. For guidelines on Letters of Inquiry, [please see the Foundation's website](#).



## Confidentiality

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The Foundation requests that prospective grantees treat grant proposals as confidential during the application process and refrain from publicly distributing their proposals (in whole or part) or revealing their status in the application process until the Foundation has completed its evaluation and made a funding decision.