



Pre-Award Policy

Rationale

This policy emphasizes the importance of engagement with the Grant Services Office as early as possible in the proposal development process. There are several benefits to this collaborative approach.

- Prevents proposal submission oversight related to eligibility or compliance;
- Ensures the budget and subsequent justification/narrative only include allowable, reasonable, allocable expenses;
- All proposed grant activities will comply with funding agency and institution guidelines;
- Ability for project team to receive guidance, review, and writing or editing support to prepare a proposal for timely submission;
- Ensure the proposed project does not conflict with other active grants or projects already in process with a specific funder; and
- Any unique policies or procedures, financial or administrative documents, applicant cost share needs, or other application requirements specific to the funding agency or the Request for Proposals can be addressed in an efficient manner to prevent submission delays.

Policy

All proposals for external funding are required to be reviewed and processed through the Minnesota North College Grant Services Office **prior to** proposal submission to the applicable funding agencies. This policy applies to all grants, income contracts, cooperative agreements, and subawards.¹ This policy pertains to any college employee (faculty or staff), students, or unaffiliated individuals who wish to utilize the college as the fiscal host or subrecipient for externally funded project activities.

All proposals must be reviewed and approved through the *External Funding Approval Process*. The External Funding Approval Form must be completed by the Principal Investigator/Project Director. The completed form (minus signature page) should be sent to the Grant Services Director along with a copy of proposal materials including a project summary, line-item budget and budget justification/narrative. These materials should be sent to the Grant Services Director **at least 10 business days prior** to the submission deadline. The Grant Services Director will then route the approval form for review and signatures to the appropriate staff and administrators. Signatories will include the project

lead and co-lead (if applicable), supervisor/dean, budget analyst, business manager, VP of Finance and Facilities, and the VP of Academic and Student Affairs and/or the institution President. Along with signing the approval form, project leads and co-leads will also be required to complete the Financial Conflict of Interest form. Project leads will receive this form via Adobe Signature along with the external funding approval form. Please refer to the Minnesota North College Financial Conflict of Interest Policy for further information or reach out to the Grant Services Director.

In addition to the internal approval process, the Grant Services Office must receive a final draft copy of **all** grant submission materials **at least 2 business days prior to** the funding agency submission deadline for final review and assistance with the uploading of documents to the grant portal. This process allows the office sufficient time to review all documents, ensures materials are formatted based on the funding agency specifications, and allows time to manage potential technical issues that may arise with the submission process. The approval and submission process must be completed for any competitive grant, cooperative agreement or subaward submitted to an external funding agency including those to the Minnesota State System Office.

The MNC Grant Services or Business Services Offices reserve the right to deny submission of a proposal or acceptance of an award if one or more of the following conditions are applicable:

- The application is deemed unsuitable (e.g., quality, completeness, or outside institutional priority, etc.) for external review based on the evaluation and feedback from any internal signatory
- The requirements of the funding agency are unreasonable; violate institution, system, or state policy; or would place undue burden or liability on Minnesota North College or its employees. This statement includes the inability of the institution to meet cost share requirements of the funding agency and/or the specific solicitation.
- All final drafts of the grant materials are not submitted to the Grant Services Office at least 2 business days prior to the funding agency submission deadline

Beyond the external funding approval process, the project team must be in communication with the Grant Services Office upon consideration of submitting a proposal or when seeking to identify an appropriate funding agency for a project idea. This communication allows the Grant Services Office to address any initial project concerns, assist with funding agency prospecting as needed, and track grant seeking efforts across the institution.

Procedures

Minimum of One to Three Months Prior to Submission

Principal Investigators/Project Leads will contact the Grant Services Office early in the proposal development process (i.e., funder prospecting stage; considering a proposal to a specific funder). The Principal Investigator/Project Lead is also responsible for notifying their Department Chair and Dean about their interest in submitting a proposal and discussing any potential institutional cost share needs, course buyouts or honorariums that may be needed to conduct project activities. The Grant Services Director will review the RFP/NOFO/FOA (if applicable) and work with the project lead to determine any assistance needs (e.g., prospect research, writing, editing, budget development, supplemental document formulation, internal and external collaborators, subawards, contractor needs, external evaluation, domestic/international travel, cost share/institutional match requirements).

Two Weeks to One Month Prior to Submission

Initial drafts of the proposal and all supplemental documents required for submission should be submitted to the Grant Services Office for review.

Ten Days Prior to Proposal Submission

The Project Lead must submit the completed External Funding Approval Form (except for signature page) along with a line-item budget, budget narrative, and project summary to the Grant Services Director for processing. Once the internal approval process is complete the application can be submitted to the applicable funding agency.

Two Days Prior to Proposal Submission

Final copies of all application documents should be sent to the Grant Services Director for review and archiving.

¹Any employees who provide services for activities taking place outside of the institution that do not involve payments directly to the college or require employee time that would otherwise be committed to college-related business must still consult with the Grant Services Office to determine any potential conflicts of interest that may arise from the employee's involvement in the activity.

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