

WRITING A WHITE PAPER OR CONCEPT PAPER



The Office of Research Development
University of California, Merced

WHITE PAPER BASICS

What to include in this short document.

A pre-proposal or white paper is a concise, authoritative document that presents a summary of the proposed research, methodology, team, and an estimated budget. Unlike proposals, which include more extensive information, white papers offer a brief overview of a research project in a way that explores why it would be important to a funder. These documents, which tend to be one to two pages in length, usually help a potential sponsor decide whether to request a full proposal. Sometimes, these documents are used to find reviewers for eventual full proposals rather than as an initial screening tool.

When formulating a white paper, it is important to write to a well-educated lay audience. The people reviewing your documents will not necessarily be conversant with your specific research, but they will likely have a general understanding of some of the concepts that you will discuss.



NSF Concept Paper Template

1 Project Title

2 Profound Statement of Need

3 Data or Research to Back Up Need

4 Specific objectives and outcomes

5 Intellectual Merit

How important is the proposed activity to advancing knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields? How well qualified is the proposer (individual or team) to conduct the project? (If appropriate, the reviewer will comment on the quality of the prior work.) To what extent does the proposed activity suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts? How well conceived and organized is the proposed activity? Is there sufficient access to resources?

6 Broader Impacts

How well does the activity advance discovery and understanding while promoting teaching, training, and learning? How well does the proposed activity broaden the participation of underrepresented groups (e.g., gender, ethnicity, disability, geographic, etc.)? To what extent will it enhance the infrastructure for research and education, such as facilities, instrumentation, networks, and partnerships? Will the results be disseminated broadly to enhance scientific and technological understanding? What may be the benefits of the proposed activity?

NIH Concept Paper Template

*A Concept Paper may address any or all of these topics depending on how far you have thought through your project. **The more information you can provide a Program Official, the better the advice** you will receive in developing your application.*

Grant Purpose:

Briefly, relate the type of mechanism (R01/R03/R43 etc), amount and duration of the grant, and which institutes/centers/agencies you think might be interested in funding your project.

Problem & Significance:

Explain why the literature/your research leads you to think this topic needs study. Relate the payoff to science AND to public health. Mention what makes your project unique and innovative, especially in light of any similar projects and the refereed literature.

Question:

Derived from the scientific literature, describe the theories and model(s) that will guide your hypotheses, and specify what hypotheses you will test.

Design & Analysis:

Describe the population (age range, gender, race, selective characteristics), interventions, controls, measures, etc. that will enable testing your hypotheses.

Estimate the required sample and power (N, levels of analysis). Justify the statistical approach that will ensure a fair test of your hypotheses.

Team & Logistics:

Indicate how your career stage, expertise, and experience qualify you to lead a project of the size, scope, & technology proposed. Name key collaborators (co-investigators, consultants, and organizations) who will help the project succeed. Mention the organizations whose cooperation you will need to access subjects/data/equipment/field sites, and indicate any people or organizations who have agreed in writing to participate/support the project.

Urgency:

If you are you trying to initiate work within a time-sensitive window, indicate the scientific and public health justification for early award and the consequences of delayed award.

Office of Naval Research (ONR) White Paper Template

Content adapted from ONR Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) #N00014-17-S-BA13

Summary:

A one paragraph Summary of the proposed effort.

Technical Concept:

A description of the technology innovation and technical risk areas. The project idea, technical rationale, and approach shall identify a problem(s), make arguments to substantiate the claims made, and describe the proposed approach to address the issue. The Offeror's capacities shall be discussed as they relate to achieving success in the project.

Future Naval Relevance:

A description of potential Naval relevance and contributions of the effort to the agency's specific mission.

Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) Cost:

White Paper submissions shall include a rough order of magnitude cost showing requested funding per year, total cost, and suggest spending priorities. Break requested cost down into categories of salaries and benefits, equipment, materials and supplies, travel, cost associated with student participation (tuition and fees) and indirect costs.

Army Research Lab White Paper Template

Project Title

(Do not include the words army, expeditionary, forensic, or battlefield in the title; be original!)

Project PI and Key Personnel

Personnel Affiliations

Project Abstract (less than 250 words):

A brief description of the proposed project. Should be written in clear, concise, layman/newspaper style statements.

Project Description:

Describe the proposed project in a coherent, fluid and understandable writing style. Tables, images and graphs are allowed, but be careful that they add clarity to the description. Some questions to address in addition to the project description are:

- Objective & Payoff: What is the objective of this project? What is the payoff? What current problem does this project address? How will this project solve the above problem?
- Contribution to Forensic Science/Biometrics: What is the capability, result, and difference offered by this technology? What is the application of this project? How would it be used and who would it benefit?
- Metrics/Measures of Success: Discuss what measurement criteria will be established to measure progress against stated goals (e.g., interoperability against an industry standard, opportunity for unit, system, or life cycle savings).
- Risk: Anticipated risks and brief risk handling plan.
- Potential Transition Plans to Services: How will this program/technology transition to the services?

Continued...

Army Research Lab White Paper Template Continued...

Funding/Cost:

What is the total cost of the proposed program? If the proposed work can be divided into discrete phases, then the cost of each phase and its measurable deliverable should also be noted.

As a subset of overall funding, indicate amounts leveraged from other programs/projects or Service/Agency investments (if applicable).

Include descriptions of any sub-allocation of funds (e.g., a portion of provided funding sub-allocated to a lab or industry, if applicable).

Program Plan:

Period of Performance: (specific dates)

Schedule: Show major activities/efforts planned for the technology/product development with milestones. Include both S&T and acquisition tasks/elements. When can the first items be delivered and what is the schedule for total delivery? (Fielding is strongly desired in 12-24 months). Include a brief “spend plan” broadly defining the anticipated time line for major project expenditures.

Deliverables: What will be delivered over the life of this project? Include hardware and software prototypes for field use or acquisition certification. Monthly reports and a final report are required – please include these required deliverables in your program plan.

Participants & Customers:

Include name, email, phone number, and complete address of key stakeholders/focal points, including:

- a. Primary and Alternate POC for monthly reporting.
- b. Technical representative who will manage this effort.
- c. Financial representative that will receive the funds and/or provide follow-on status of obligations/expenditures.
- d. Combatant Command/User Sponsor (if applicable)
- e. Lead Service/Agency (if applicable)
- f. Key contractors/providers of the technology or product.

**LIMIT TOTAL INPUT - NOT MORE THAN THREE
PAGES**