CHAPTER 20

PROPOSAL PREPARATION CHECKLIST AND PRE-SUBMISSION REVIEW

PROPOSAL PREPARATION CHECKLIST

If your application is replete with small errors that are clearly the result of you not following NSF's proposal-preparation instructions, it will likely impress reviewers negatively regarding your attention to detail. That can be a serious detraction from how they will regard the rest of your proposal, because what is research all about other than attention to detail? In the extreme, such errors can result in your application being returned without review (*Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide,* Chapter II.A).

To help ensure that your application is fully compliant, we recommend that you make use of the Proposal Preparation Checklist that NSF provides at the end of Chapter II of the PAPPG (Exhibit II-1). It will walk you through the entire application, section by section. After completing the Checklist you can be certain that you have avoided most, if not all, of the missteps that can undermine an otherwise strong application. Note that the Proposal Preparation Checklist has been updated to include relevant changes to Chapter II of the PAPPG.

PRE-SUBMISSION REVIEW

If we could offer you only one thing that would make the difference between success and failure it would be pre-submission review of your application by knowledgeable colleagues. Your colleagues have the capacity to pick up the same scientific and technical errors in your proposal that would otherwise be caught by the official reviewers. Why allow review-panel members to detect mistakes that could be removed prior to submission?

If pre-submission review is so important, why don't most applicants take advantage of what this step has to offer? Usually, it is because they haven't planned to have sufficient time before the deadline in order to do so. *Ideally, you should allow members of your pre-submission review committee two weeks to evaluate your draft, after which you should give yourself at least one week to respond to their constructive criticisms.* Even if you are following a compressed schedule because of a close deadline, don't make the mistake of eliminating this important part the developmental process. You may have to shorten the time that your committee members and you have for this part of the developmental process, but don't delete this step.

Choosing the Members of Your Pre-Submission Review Committee

There should be at least three reviewers on your pre-submission review committee. We recommend that they have experience with NSF and are familiar with the considerations under the