Today’s Agenda

- Background
- Planning Process
- Emerging Themes
- Feedback and Questions
- How to Stay Involved/Provide Feedback
Introduction to Proposal Submission Modernization (PSM)

- PSM is a multi-year effort to modernize NSF’s proposal submission system (FastLane) and migrate proposal submission to Research.gov

- The initiative is an opportunity to broadly consider proposal submission improvement opportunities

- Planning began in FY14 and will continue through FY15

- The roll-out will occur incrementally
Why Modernization?

- NSF launched FastLane in 1994
  - System design principles have evolved over the last 20 years
  - Designed to translate a paper process into a computer process

- FastLane’s rigid architecture prevents it from being easily adapted for changing program needs
  - Changes to the proposal require extensive work and are expensive
  - Limited data exchange/pre-population across systems
**High Level Implementation Process**

**FY14**

- Phase 1
  - * NSF staff working group identifies improvement opportunities

**Phase 2**

- * PI/SPO outreach and feedback

**FY15**

- * Phased implementation begins

**Future**

- We are here
The focus for the remainder of this session is to gather feedback from you.

We will highlight select high level themes that have emerged out of recent planning discussions:
- Validate and/or highlight different opinions
- Collect additional requirements

Major topics for today’s discussion:
- General Look and Feel
- Compliance Checking
- Help Functionality

To gather feedback, we will utilize WebEx polling and Q&A.
Emerging Themes: Look and Feel

- Consider adjusting funding opportunity-specific language to ensure it is discernible from boilerplate

- Tailor the interface to include data elements/documents specific to the funding opportunity or applicant type

- Consider revising the methods used to capture data
  - Revise the proposal documents to include more structured data
  - Pre-populate additional proposal (and downstream document) data fields
  - Consider adjusting the types of files accepted by the FastLane system (e.g. multimedia files, PDF uploads, other formats)
Emerging Themes: Look and Feel

• Simplify the use of logins and passwords across NSF systems
  – A user identity that reaches across the various systems could assist with data management and provide a more seamless user experience

• Ensure changes to the current submission system minimize disruption and do not compromise operational continuity
  – Retain FastLane’s strengths (e.g. handling collaborative proposals)
  – Ensure users may easily locate their work and navigate systems
Emerging Themes: Compliance Checks

• NSF should continue to implement automated compliance checks
  – Automated compliance checks should focus on objective rules and should be checked consistently across programs
  – These checks should also check solicitation-specific or proposal type-specific rules

• PIs and SPOs would benefit from a clarification of proposal requirements
  – System warnings explain the rule broken and how issues may be addressed
  – Ensure PIs/SPOs/NSF staff have the same compliance checking tool
Emerging Themes: Help Functionality

• Additional help functionality could address common issues related to proposal submission

• NSF should review current availability and user need to help PIs and SPOs
  – LiveChat
  – Integrate FastLane Help or Help Wizard
  – Compliance checker spreadsheet

• NSF should ensure that new proposal requirements and functionality are communicated in advance
• What are other issues related to proposal submission (FastLane) would you like to see addressed?

• Other issues, performance gaps related to proposal preparation and submission
Press *1 to ask a question
Providing Additional Feedback

- NSF plans to conduct additional webinars (on different topics) as well as other types of outreach to gather additional feedback and communicate prospective changes.

- Please subscribe to FastLane/R.gov update emails: system_updates-subscribe-request@listserv.nsf.gov. Include the word “subscribe” in the subject line of your email.

- Interested in providing additional input? Please reach out to us at Modernizeproposals@nsf.gov.

- We will send out a feedback survey after this session concludes: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/K7LJ28N.