

TIPS

FOR PROCESSING

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

ACTIONS

IN STRIPES

TIPS FOR TO PROCESSING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ACTIONS IN STRIPES

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Note: This Guide provides DOE personnel with tips for processing financial assistance actions in STRIPES as configured for PRISM Version 5. This version uses the acquisition module to process financial assistance actions. As such, some accommodations were necessary and this Guide provides the information to translate the acquisition terms and choices into financial assistance requirements. These tips should be used on conjunction with the STRIPES financial assistance desk (user) guide.

I. Sharing and routing documents

The Preference section in STRIPES provides for individual configuration of information about the user and his/her usage of STRIPES. Three areas within this section will assist you in accessing STRIPES: Proxy, Document Sharing and Routing Lists.

A. Proxy

You may assign a proxy to handle your STRIPES actions while you are away from the office. The person you assign as your proxy should have the same or greater authorities as you do. For example, if you are a Contracting Officer (CO) with authority to sign grants up to \$5 million, then your proxy must also be a CO with authority to sign grants of at least \$5 million. When setting up your proxy, you will need to enter an expiration date.

B. Document Sharing

Document sharing allows you to grant access to documents that you own. A document is more than an individual memorandum or file. It is all the information that makes up an action. For an award, that would include not only the grant, cooperative agreement or TIA, but also all supporting documents that constitute your electronic award files (i.e., negotiation memorandum, technical evaluation of cost, and other background documentation.) As the creator of a document, you are the owner of the document. You may grant others the ability to view and/or edit your documents.

It is recommended that each procurement office establish a policy on document sharing that provides for access to documents in the absence of the documents' owner. Such access could be setting up a user group so that each member of a team has full access as a shared owner to all documents of every team member. Heads of Contracting Activity (HCAs) may also establish site sharing policies.

Note: STRIPES considers each HCA as a site.

C. Routing Lists

STRIPES allows you to set up route lists "For Review" and "For Approval". Multiple lists can be established that allow for routing of documents in a sequential, parallel or combination route. See the STRIPES Financial Assistance User Guide for more information.

For those FOAs and awards requiring Headquarters (HQ) Business Clearance review, a "For Review" route list should be set up that includes all local reviewers first then the HQ Business Clearance cognizant "buddy". HQ Business Clearance will not review actions that have not been reviewed by local independent reviewers, including local counsel and the procurement director. Evidence of these reviews must be included in the supporting documents.

D. Electronic Signatures

STRIPES makes use of electronic signatures for all documents, including internal ones such as those on the requisition, Determination of Non-competitive Financial Assistance (DNFA) or Determination of Restriction Eligibility (DRE). A Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) is released and awards and modifications/amendments are made (released) by the use of an “approval” password. This password is separate from the logon password. An approval password is the same as a wet ink signature and it is recommended that it be different from the logon password for security purposes. COs must only use their approval passwords in accordance with their warrants and appropriate review and concurrence processes.

Note: The final Approver in the routing sequence constitutes the electronic signature for the government. Only a properly certified and warranted DOE CO may obligate funds as a final Approver as defined within STRIPES.

Electronic “signature” in STRIPES for documents (DNFA, DRE, etc.) other than FOAs, awards and modifications is recorded by routing and approval of the document under an Advance Procurement Plan (APP). The final approval of the APP should be in accordance with the DOE guidance for that specific document.

II. Issuing a Funding Opportunity Announcement

The Contract Specialist (CS) or the Program FOA Coordinator (PFC) will prepare the FOA by using the “create document” function within STRIPES. Once on the ‘create document’ page, choose *solicitation* as the document type and *funding opportunity announcement (DE-FOA-#)* as the numbering mask.

Note: The numbering schema for requisitions, FOAs and awards has changed. These are now system generated as the document is created and there will be no connections between the numbers. STRIPES has a menu option called the Navigator which will show the associations of the requisition, FOA, awards and amendments.

Note: Here, as many other times within STRIPES, terms generally associated with acquisition are used as the normal field titles. Grants personnel will need to make associations based on process or use. Solicitation will be used in STRIPES for FOA.

As you enter the required information, you should remember the following:

a. On the Main/General Information Page:

1. “Type of Solicitation” should always be *5-RFP*.
2. “Solicitation Procedure” should be *B-Full and Open Competition – Competitive Prop* unless you have executed a JRE, then select *L-Other than Full and Open Competition*.

3. “Anticipated Type of Contract” will be *cost, cost sharing or fixed price* as applicable to your FOA.
4. Do not synopsized the FOA in STRIPES as this will initiate a link to FedBizOpps. You will continue to post your FOA in IIPS and Grants.gov. Leave the “Synopsized” box unchecked and under “Reason Not Synopsized” choose *C-Not Synopsized for Other Reasons*.

b. On the Main/Text Page:

1. Enter the program title in the Description block.
2. There are Statements that can be added in the header, footer, and notes sections. Add these as appropriate. You may also add your own text.

c. On the Items/General Page:

1. The “Product/Service Code Lookup” should be set to *0000*.
2. The “Qualifier” should be set to *By Dollar*.
3. The “Award Type” should be set to agree with the “Anticipated Type of Contract” on the Main/General Page.

d. On the Package/ Body Page

To prepare the FOA itself, go to the Package/Body Page. From this page, you will be able to use a clause template for drafting the FOA. STRIPES has four templates from which to choose, FA - FOA 424, FA - FOA RR, FA - SBIR/STTR PH1 FOA, and FA – SBIR/STTR PH2 FOA. The FA-FOA 424 is based on using the core application form template at Grants.gov. The FA-FOA RR is based on using the research & related application form template at Grants.gov. The FA - SBIR/STTR FOA templates are for use by the Office of Science only.

You will be able to build a FOA from the clause template in a similar manner to the current IIPS or Word template. STRIPES will provide you with a list of clauses for inclusion in the FOA. You can see the text of the clause, the prescription for the clause and required fill-ins by clicking on the applicable link. Clauses that are required will automatically be included in your FOA. For those areas of the FOA having several choices, you can identify the choices by the clause number. For example, FOA-2A001, FOA-2A002, FOA-2A003, FOA-2A004, FOA-2A005, and FOA-2A006 are the choices for Type of Award Instrument. Looking more closely at the numbers, FOA means this is for a funding opportunity announcement; 2A is the same section of the FOA as before (part II, section A); and 00X is a choice of clauses within that section.

Areas of the FOA that incorporate large sections of text, such as the Project Description and Merit Review Criteria, should be left blank and the text pasted in

after the FOA has been generated and checked out of STRIPES (see next paragraph).

After making all your choices and completing the fill-ins, you will generate a rich text file (RTF) file. This file can be checked out of STRIPES and finished in a word processing program (i.e., MS Word). Please note that when you check out a file DO NOT CHOOSE OPEN, you must save the document on your computer prior to opening it. Please refer to sections 3.0 and 6.3 of the STRIPES Financial Assistance User Guide for detailed instructions. You will be able to use fonts, special characters, formatting, colors, and tables in your FOA. You must check the file back into STRIPES after you complete your edits.

The FOA templates do not include a cover page. Once you have checked out the document and opened it in your word processing program, open the FA FOA Cover Page in the Library and copy/paste it as the first page of your RTF file.

The Table of Contents should be generated after all edits to the RTF file have been completed and prior to checking the file back into STRIPES.

Note: In some cases, there are choices within the text of a clause that could not be easily broken out into separate STRIPES clauses. You should delete the unwanted text after checking out your FOA.

Once the FOA is completed and has been reviewed, it can be released. The CO releases the FOA by approving it and choosing “Y” for the action to go to FedConnect. The approval sends the FOA to FedConnect and opens the communications web portal. Since STRIPES does not yet have the capability to communicate with Grants.gov, after the FOA has been released to FedConnect, the CS must go to IIPS and prepare and publish the synopsis to Grants.gov as is currently done.

There is one change to the IIPS process in that the CS/PFC will need to enter the URL of the FOA at FedConnect into IIPS so that this address can be transmitted to Grants.gov. Then you will go to Grants.gov and post the application package. Instead of uploading the FOA, a one page notice with the link to FedConnect is posted as the instructions. A sample page is provided in the Library.

Questions on the FOA will be handled through FedConnect and not IIPS. Applicants do not have to be registered in FedConnect to view the FOA, however they will need to register to submit a question and/or review the previous questions and answers. They will also have to be registered in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) prior to registering with FedConnect.

Because STRIPES does not have a system-to-system interface with Grants.gov, applications will continue to be downloaded from Grants.gov to IIPS. Special processing by HQ will move the applications to STRIPES.

e. Supporting Docs Page

A FA-FOA Index form was created to help you organize your supporting documents. The structure was developed to establish a department-wide supporting documents file convention. This form is in the Library. It must be the first item attached under Supporting Docs. Ensure all files uploaded to the Supporting Documents folder follow the numbering and naming convention stated in the FA-FOA Index form.

Note: All financial assistance items in the Library start with an FA. Use FA% for the search criteria to find the templates.

III. Processing Unsolicited and Non-competitive Actions

To process an unsolicited or other non-competitive action in STRIPES, the program official begins the process by creating the “APP” document. The “APP” is formally called the Advance Procurement Plan. While the APP is not identical to the acquisition plan required by the Federal Acquisition Regulations, for procurements it will be used in a similar manner. For financial assistance, the “APP” will allow for the routing of documents for review and approval outside of the FOA and award processes. By creating an “APP”, the program official will provide basic information on the activity to be funded and attach the completed merit review and the DNFA for review and approval by all appropriate parties.

After approvals have been received, the program official can prepare a requisition and link the APP to it. After receipt of the requisition, the CO will then prepare and post a letter FOA to the potential recipient in FedConnect. A sample that provides an outline for requesting an application from the potential recipient is posted in the Library. The potential recipient must be registered in CCR and FedConnect to receive the letter and reply with a completed application package.

IV. Processing an award

The process of making an award begins with the program official preparing a requisition. The award may be created by using either the Solicitation (FOA) or the Requisition but it is recommended that you create the award from the solicitation on the “Document Create” page. By choosing to create the award from the solicitation, the information in the Main Pages of the FOA will be carried forward into the award.

From the Document Create Screen, the steps are:

- 1) “Document Type”: Choose *Grant* (choose this regardless of whether award is a grant, cooperative agreement, or a TIA).
- 2) “Create From: *Solicitation*”
And then choose the correct solicitation number.
- 3) “Grant Numbering Option”: Choose the appropriate mask for the sponsoring program office. You will use the “Grant Numbering Option” for grants, cooperative agreements and TIAs.
- 4) “Section Template”; Choose *None*.
- 5) For the “Package Body”, choose *Do Not Copy*, as you do not need to pull the solicitation provisions into the award terms and conditions.

As you enter the required information, you should remember the following:

a. On the Main/General Information Page:

1. “Type of Agreement” will be *Grant or Cooperative Agreement*. The TIA award type has not been added to STRIPES at this time. If you are awarding a TIA, select *Cooperative Agreement*.
2. Leave “Agreement Category” at select category
3. “Award Type” will be *cost, cost sharing, or fixed price* as applicable to the award FOA.
4. The “Effective Date” should be used to show the Project Period Start Date.
5. The “Period of Performance” should reflect the Project Period Start date through the end of the current Budget Period.
6. “Recipient” will be selected from a drop down list. To be on the list, the recipient must be registered in CCR and FedConnect.
7. “Buyer” is the *CS*.
8. “Agreements Officer” is the *CO*.
9. The “Product/Service Code” should be set to *0000*.

b. On the Main/Additional Information Page:

1. You must enter the “Technical Deliverable” code. This was previously called “OSTI Deliverable”.
2. You must indicate the whether or not the award is to be paid through the Automated Standard Application for Payments system.

c. On the Main/Text Page:

1. In the “Header” indicate the beginning and ending dates for the entire project period and the dates for the current budget period.
2. There are Statements that can be added in the header section. Add these as appropriate.
3. When awarding a TIA, indicate the award is a TIA in the description section.

d. On the Items Page:

1. Generally, only one line item is necessary for the entire project period of the award. The Description field for the line item should indicate total project period and the number of budget periods. The Special Terms and Conditions should continue to show all budget periods. One line item will facilitate partial funding and carry-over dollars
2. The use of line items may be appropriate when the agreement includes go/no-go decision points or otherwise lends it self to definite funding periods with little chance of carry-over dollars or change to the budget period itself. When using line items, each budget period will have to be marked as an option on the Items/Line Item/Additional Info Page. In no way does this designation change the definitions of budget period and continuation award. There are no changes to the Special Terms and Conditions when using multiple line items.

e. On the Items/Line Item/General Page:

1. The “Qualifier” should be set to *By Dollar*.
2. The “Award Type” should be set to agree with the “Award Type” on the Main/General Page.
3. Do not check the “Calculate by Percentage” block.
4. Pick the correct choice for “Type of Government Share”.

f. On the Items/Line Item/Additional Info Page:

The “Accountable Property” item should be unchecked if there will not be acquired or federally owned property on the award.

g. Package/Cover Page

1. The Cover Page replaces the Notice of Financial Assistance Award (NFAA). This page is similar, but not identical to the NFAA. Use the Cover Page called Assistance Agreement Form.

2. Choose Edit under Cover Page to complete the following fields:

- a. Delete the pre-populated Authorities and enter the correct citations.
- b. In the Principal Investigator (PI) field, enter the PI’s name or names in the following format: Title, Full First Name, No Middle Initial, Last Name (e.g. Dr. John Smith).
- c. Under Submit Reports, reference the Attachment for the Reporting Requirements Checklist.

h. Package/Body page

The special terms and conditions for grants and cooperative agreements are available in STRIPES as a clause template. Select the clauses in the same manner as with the FOA body. You may notice some differences in the terms and conditions. Some changes were made to accommodate using a form other than the NFAA. As with the FOA templates, you may click on the applicable link to see the provision, any prescriptions for use, and fill-ins.

After making all your choices and completing the fill-ins, you will generate an RTF file. This file can be checked out of STRIPES and finished in a word processing program. Please note that when you check out a file DO NOT CHOOSE OPEN, you must save the document on your computer prior to opening it. Please refer to sections 3.0 and 6.3 of the STRIPES Financial Assistance User Guide for detailed instructions. You will be able to use fonts, special characters, formatting, colors, and tables in your award.

You must check the file back into STRIPES after you complete your edits. Please follow the instructions provided in the STRIPES Financial Assistance User Guide. Put attachments to the award on the “Package/Attachment” page and not in the body text.

For TIAs, the sample templates are located in the Library. You will not use the clause templates to generate the terms and conditions. Once you have negotiated the terms and conditions of the award, you will need to upload the file into STRIPES.

i. Supporting Docs Page

An Award Index form was created to help you organize your supporting documents. The structure was developed to establish a DOE-wide supporting documents file convention. This form is in the Library. It must be the first item attached under Supporting Docs. Ensure all files uploaded to the Supporting Documents folder follow the numbering and naming convention stated in the FA Award Index form.

j. Federal Assistance Award Data System (FAADS)

Unlike the current process of entering information on the award into PADS for submission to FAADS, STRIPES requires you to enter and validate FAADS information prior to award. You must pass the FAADS system validations prior to routing for review and making your award. Information on completing this item is in the Library. You can use the Validate button to prompt you for the required items and correct values for Fill-Ins. After passing the Validations, you must choose “Submit” to save the FAADS data.

Note: The values given are the only choices at FAADS so you must choose one.

k. Executed Awards

1. When the CO approves/releases the award, the recipient will receive their copy through FedConnect.
2. For awards that require a bilateral signature, the Bilateral Signature Page should be attached to the award document in the “Package/Attachment” page prior to transmission. The Bilateral Signature Page is in the Library.
3. A courtesy copy (read-only access) of the executed document can be routed to the Project Officer, Budget Office, etc. for their files.

V. Modifying an Award

The process for modifying an award also begins with a requisition, normally from the program official. A modification is created from the “Base Award” document. Open the base award and select the Modify button from the STRIPES toolbar, information is carried forward into the modification document. Subsequent modifications can be created from the previous one.

Modifications are now numbered sequentially without an “A” or “M” designation. Signatures and distribution of executed modifications are to be processed as stated above.

STRIPES is able to provide change text information which details all the changes generated in the system under that modification. In particular, incremental funding modifications will only need to have the reason for the modification generated on the “Main/Change Text” page.

VI. Using Milestone Plans

Milestone Plans will be used for the preparing and releasing the FOA, making the award and to track post award reporting requirements. **The Milestone Plans for the FOA and for the funding requisition initiating an award will be used for tracking the procurement action lead time (PALT) and other Balanced Scorecard (BSC) items. It is important that you select the correct milestone plan and modify only after approval of the CO.** The Milestone Plan can be altered to add additional steps and track other actions. However, the mandatory steps that are pre-populated in each plan cannot be deleted and must be completed.

The CS must create a Milestone Plan for the FOA prior to submitting the FOA for review and approval. The Plan is a living document and must be maintained to reflect the current status of the FOA through the selection process.

The CS must create a Milestone Plan and link it to the funding Requisition for all awards. This plan must be created prior to submitting the award for review and approval. The Plan is a living document and must be maintained to reflect the current status of the award through the award/release by the CO.

The CS can create a Milestone Plan linked to the Award after the award is made to track post award deliverables under the award.

VII. Using the Library

When you are in the “Package/Attachments” or “Supporting Documents” page, STRIPES opens up the Library feature on the tool bar. The Library contains templates and sample documents to assist you in preparing normal file documentation, such as a negotiation memorandum or DNFA. The financial assistance items all begin with “FA” for ease in identification. You should use the templates and samples in the Library to process FOAs and awards.

The forms in the Library are also available to program officials with STRIPES access. You should encourage them to use the Library version of any item they may normally complete.

The items in the Library have all been reviewed by a team of DOE financial assistance personnel and approved for inclusion by the Office of Procurement and Assistance Policy (OPAP). Should you find an error in a Library item, please send an email to your local Financial Assistance

Advisory Council (FAAC) representative or Procurement Director. They will bring your concern to the attention of the FAAC and OPAP for correction. If you would like to have a document included in the Library, you may forward a generic version of the item to the FAAC representative and it will be considered. Keep in mind that all forms must comply with the Paperwork Reduction Act and other statutes and regulations to be included in the Library.

VIII. Additional Tips for using STRIPES

Because STRIPES is configured for both financial assistance and procurement, there are many items that are not used for financial assistance. These items are generally nonfunctioning and grants personnel should not worry about them. The STRIPES Financial Assistance User Guide provides additional information.

All documents in the Library for use in financial assistance are designated with “FA” at the beginning of the name.

The clause templates for preparing an FOA or award also start with “FA”.

The Product/Service Code should always be set to 0000.

STRIPES does not coordinate or enforce the 72-hour prior notification or the 48-hour Advanced Notification of Award to the Office of Congressional Affairs. This must be handled outside of STRIPES in accordance with the current policies and procedures.

STRIPES requires completion of a “Security Classification” item for all system-generated documents and Supporting Documents. The three choices are:

- 1) For Official Use Only
- 2) Not Specified/Other
- 3) Unclassified Controlled Nuclear Information

Items that will not be released to the public or prior to their release should be marked *For Official Use Only*. Documents about to be released such as the FOA, the award and amendments should be marked *Not Specified/Other*. If in doubt, choose *Not Specified/Other*.

The Validations feature in STRIPES will show errors and warnings. Errors must be fixed before STRIPES will let you proceed. Although you may proceed in the system without correcting the warning messages, the items must be correct before the CO can approve the action.

The APP should be used to route any document requiring review and approval that is outside of the FOA or award.

STRIPES has a module for closing out awards. If you are assigned the role of closeout specialist, you will be able to access a checklist to aid in the close out process. Awards that have

been closed out will eventually be moved to an electronic archive section of STRIPES to be maintained indefinitely. All closeout obligations/deobligations (any amount) must be done by an amendment.

STRIPES does not interface directly with the Vendor Inquiry Payment Electronic Reporting System (VIPERS), the Vendor Invoice Approval System (VIAS), or the Department of Treasury's Automated Standard Application for Payments System (ASAP). Therefore, reimbursements to recipients will continue to be made through the current processes.