

Letter Requests for Proposals

Occasionally, we are asked to support proposals from outside intuitions. We are also sometimes asked for outside letters for our own proposals. Our first step in either case is to determine whether the request is mutually beneficial. If so, the next step is to determine the level of support required by the agency. There are pointed differences between a letter of support, letter of collaboration, and letter of commitment.

Letters of support (testimonials) are persuasive means to engender support for a person or project. They do not commit to any financial or in-kind support. These are not typically accepted by granting agencies.

Letters of collaboration (cooperation) should state specifically what the collaborators will be providing to you or how they will be working with you (and vice versa). They should include as many details as possible, i.e. description of the equipment to be made available, expertise supplied, analysis capabilities, etc. If the collaborator is providing expertise, they should discuss their qualifications. It's fine for the letters to also discuss how the collaboration will benefit all parties.

Letters of commitment demonstrate that the funding agency is not the only source of financial support for a project. These letters specifically commit a fixed amount of financial or in-kind support. They are signed by the institution (OSP in our case) and include detail on exact personnel time and effort as well as any other obligations for specific resources. Letters of commitment should be obtained only after discussion of the merits of the proposal and development of a work plan, budget, and timeline.

Please contact us prior to sending any letters to make sure of agency requirements. Please feel free to call if you have any questions.