Grant Proposal Resources, Roadmaps, and Timelines Q&A

This document should be viewed as a supplemental document to the NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide. The following list of questions and answers related to grants and innovation.

<u>The Q&A Presenters</u>:

Elaine Craft, Director of SC ATE Center of Excellence; South Carolina

Mel Cossette, Executive Director/PI at MatEdU; Seattle, Washington

<u>The Q&A Moderator</u>:

Michael Lesiecki, Director of MATEC, Arizona

<u>There's a lot of work that needs to be done with my program. We started with one of those small ATE grants but as I move up why does NSF expect me to have all kinds of partners. I mean, I'm just starting small. Is it just because we're requesting a larger grant award or what's the drive for expectation of partners?</u>

Elaine Craft - I think there are a number of reasons, but primarily this expectation is linked to NSF's requirement that projects be able to demonstrate broader impacts. It encourages you to not work in a silo or to be an island that is your own program or college, but rather to consider how what you're doing can help others improve technician education programs while advancing your own. With expanding partnerships, you don't have to abandon your own program. You can include work that continues to advance your own program; it stimulates you to broaden your perspective and opens the door to learning from those with whom you work. Sometimes you will find that partners have even better ideas than the ones you came up with. Ideally, those partners will later reach out to others and the ripple effect can broaden your impact even further, which creates those broader impacts that NSF really is looking for.

<u>A lot of our faculty here, especially in math and science, don't have direct contact with industry. Mel, in your experience, what's a faculty member to do to establish those industry contacts? What's their best shot at evidencing that in a proposal?</u>

Mel Cossette –Well, I think, one of the things is that people don't give themselves a lot of credit. When I sit and talk to or talk with some of the mentees I've worked with and others who are trying to prepare proposals, I'll ask those questions, and they'll come back and say, "Well we don't do this, and we don't do that." Really, once we set the communication and the conversation, it comes out that they do have those contacts. One of the easiest and low-hanging fruit is any advisory committee at your institution, it doesn't have to be members from your own committee, and it could be members from another sector within your college. For instance, with us, if I wanted to talk to someone about material science and I don't have very many. Well, material science is a big part of manufacturing. So I would go to the manufacturing group and talk with them and see if we could get some connections with industry at that level. I think communicating more and within your institution to see who's out there and who's using who. At our institution at the community college, we just started a process whereby we're collecting from all the different advisory committees the names of the companies that they're working with. So it creates a pool for the faculty to be able to go to and find out who that industry representative is working with, go to that person, and explain to them what they're looking for. Then, therefore, it establishes more collaboration within the institution and more buy-in if you include other aspects within that area. The other thing that can happen is if you do feel that way, if you do feel you don't have that connection, but you really would like to, it also helps prompt the institution to support your effort to go out and establish some of those relationships. You may be able to use them (relationships) on these grants and all these proposals more than you think.

Michael Lesiecki - As you were saying that, I had a thought about our own institution. Here we've had success in addition to contacting individual industry members. We've gone to some industry associations; they often act as advocacy groups for their own industry sector. They've helped us make a lot of connections. They feel that's what they can do, is connect educators and industry folks, both parties benefit. So we've had some success doing that.

<u>What about you, Elaine? What's your best shot at connecting with industry partners?</u>
Elaine Craft- Now the advisory committees that are already in existence as Mel mentioned is a great approach. Another thing you can do is to check and see who in your technology areas or in your manufacturing education areas do field trips with students, gets their students out into industry. You could ask to accompany those classes and make field trips to areas where you could ask questions, and get a feel for where what you're doing is used in the workplace, whether it's math or science. You could, also, I found this myself particularly for people who are at community colleges in small communities, and you can look for opportunities to interact with those who work in industry at a youth soccer game or ball games where parents gather; swim meets or church. I've had a lot of very rich conversations that have led to really good partnerships just connecting with people who worked in industry in other settings around the community.

Michael Lesiecki - You just reminded me of something that we found interesting. To connect with our industry colleagues, we invited them to come and see our labs. Then, we ask for reciprocal invitation for our faculty to go back and visit them and that's often a good start of a relationship and is often eye-opening for both sides. I think all of those things can lead to a strong industry partnership. We've had good luck.

<u>We've even used an industry member as a Co-PI on one of our grants. Have you ever done that, brought in an industry as Co-PIs?</u>
Mel Cossette - Yes, I have.

Elaine Craft – Yes, and we found that those who hire our graduates are typically very pleased when we show an interest in aligning our academic preparation of students with their workforce needs. When you're asking them how can we help you, versus how can they help? In other words, you're offering what you can do for them instead of just always having your hand out looking for something in return. What you want is just good information when you're developing a proposal. Once you get that good information, you can work towards building that relationship that allows you to get a commitment to actually help you make something happen if you get a grant.

<u>Remember the main advice here is to read the solicitation several times. It seems to be a requirement to interface with ATE Central, why is that? What do you tell your mentees about them?</u>
Mel Cossette - Several things, one is that they are funded just like any other project. It is a competitive funding if I remember correctly. It is like a big library and not only is it a requirement, but if you go on ATE Central you can also use it as a resource for your own proposal. One of the reasons why we put it in there, from what I've learned, is that when a project or a center is sunsetting (ending), or you want to promote activities that you're doing, you can use ATE Central. In other words, if there's a project or something that's going to go away, everything they produced can go on ATE Central, and they will

archive it so it will always be available to others to access. The sad part is that by not doing that, then, all the work and all the efforts that the proposal teams have done could go away and it could just fade into the woodwork. We don't really want that to happen. So we want to be able to use those resources. We want to be able to access them and that is where ATE Central, again, is like a library. The other thing it does is when you get a grant or proposal; they send you an email congratulating you, letting you know what the resources are. So they're a very active part of ATE community, and they're always open to look for new opportunities to work with projects and centers. They do post events and other information that you can access so it's a very useful resource. I think about it like the big library where all the wonderful information modules, lessons, any of that is if stored.

Is there a way to get involved with the ATE program? This person isn't, yet, and they're not sure about being a PI or even a Co-PI for a grant, how do they take some baby steps to get involved with ATE?

Elaine Craft - Well of course, there are a number of resources that the ATE program has available. For instance, the ATE Central resources, and the teachingtechnicians.org resources are freely available on the web to anybody without being grantees. But it's even better if you are in the program with a project of some sort. If your college is really not quite ready to put in a proposal; you're not quite ready to step up to the plate and be a principal investigator you could become a partner on someone else's ATE grant proposal. This is really a great way to get engaged in the ATE community without having the responsibility of being a lead institution, a principal investigator or a fiscal agent for the grant; which falls to your college. Those submitting new proposals are always looking for good partners who will fully participate and do their share. I had a wonderful conversation with someone just recently who said that she had decided her mission in life is to be the best partner that any other grantee has ever had. That she finds that with her large number of students in these particular programs, she can be innovative and she can put new things in her classes. She can get professional development, and do a lot of good things in exchange for providing data and for implementing things that are being developed by a lead institution. So she says, "I really have found my niche in life. I'm going to be the world's best partner," which I thought was an interesting approach. A way to shop for projects with whom you might partner is at the HI-TEC conference. HI-TEC, which is short for the High-Impact Technology Exchange Conference, is held in July each year. The conference is actually sponsored by NSF ATE grantees, and so you find plenty of us there at the conference each year. The programs that are offered at high tech will likely lead you right to someone whose work may be something you would like to get involved in. So if you would like to do something with robotics in your program or a biotech or geospatial technology, whatever the idea you have is, and whatever program that your college would like to improve, you're probably going to find a program or a session at HI-TEC that's got somebody working in that area who would be thrilled to death to know that you're out there and would like to partner with them on their current work or some future work. Many curriculum modules and new innovations are developed by ATE grantees that needs people to pilot test those innovations. Sometimes those pilot testing opportunities actually come with some resources. You either get some travel to go and learn about the innovation, or they actually give you some sort of financial compensation for actually being one of their pilot test sites. Sometimes you just benefit by getting the innovation in your classroom before anybody else. So, those are some ideas I think would be a great way to get involved in ATE if you're not quite ready to be a PI. But of course, we would love to encourage people to put in grant proposals, because we think it's a great way to develop as a STEM faculty leader to be an ATE principal investigator.

What does it take to be a reviewer for one of these proposals? Have you ever reviewed?

Mel Cossette – Yes, I have in numerous directorates of NSF, but probably one of the first things that you would do is, going back to what Elaine just talked about, if you are a partner to another proposal and you want to review, the easiest thing is to let the PI know of that grant that you're working on or contact a PI that you may know. It's probably the fastest way to do it or the easiest way to get your CV or resume in front of a program officer if somebody recommend you to submit. Which doesn't mean that you can't do it yourself; it just means that because they know that you are maybe affiliated, you know somebody, or you know something about ATE or NSF, they may look at you a little bit more favorably in that light. They are always looking for reviewers. So what they do is they would ask you to send in your resume, CV or whatever you would like to share with them. From that point, they keep you on a database or a bank, and as proposals come in they try and match up panels, if you will, panels are what they call them. Panels and reviewers for each directorate hopefully specialized in that area or at least familiar with those areas with different disciplines. Then they contact and invite you. The biggest thing is just having the desire and wanting to do it.

Michael Lesiecki - I found that here at one of our colleges, one of our persons that worked in the Grant Development office applied to be a reviewer and was accepted as well. They sort of appreciated her perspective.

They do try to build a different expertise on those panels don't they?
Mel Cossette –They do, they try and get a good variety of folks, but still somebody who obviously has knowledge in that area that they're reviewing, also maybe has an affiliation with the type of topic that they're looking at, at least some familiarity. You're right, if you can bring a different perspective that's a good thing, but again, it's letting somebody know that you're interested letting your institution always know that you're interested; and then, working with somebody, connecting with somebody or trying to get a name off the website and sending it to them directly, would be good. It's showing your desire.

How do you distinguish between direct costs and indirect costs? How do you know what your institution's indirect cost is?
Elaine Craft - The direct costs are going to be those costs that you incur to actually implement your project, to support the personnel, the activities, to buy the materials, supplies and equipment. Whatever it is that directly goes to that project. Whereas, indirect costs are tied to the cost that the college incurs to support the grant and basic operations of the college. Most people think of that in terms of the business office because so much of this workload of having grants does fall at least from the money side and accounting side falls to the business office, but there's no money in your grant in the direct costs that supports that so the college typically will be able to recover. At least they do for NSF grants, it's not true for every granting entity that you get to recover indirect costs, those costs of basic operations that keep the lights on, heat your buildings and get that business office operation going to support the grant. There are a number of colleges that we're encountering who are new to the ATE program that do not yet have an indirect cost rate at their college. The college may have had some grants, but those grants came from entities that did not require that an indirect cost be charged. NSF does require that a college recover indirect costs and that's the language they use "recovering indirect costs." So you have to have a rate and you have to charge that full rate on a grant proposal. Now the irony is if you don't have an indirect cost rate that's already established through your college and these are called federally negotiated indirect cost rates, they have to be set by a federal agency and for most of our two year colleges this is done by the US Department of Health and Human Services. You can't get an indirect rate unless you have been recommended for a funding award. So you say, "Hmm, I want to write a proposal and put a proposal in, but I can't get an indirect rate until I have been recommended for funding. So, what do I do in the interim?" Well, NSF understands that is an issue and so they have established a de Minimis rate or a minimum rate that you must take on your proposal. We cover that in great detail in a budget webinar we do from the Mentor- Connect project that I'm the principal investigator for and Mel is one of the mentors. So, I won't go into a lot of detail about that, but it is a

factor and it is becoming an increasing factor for two-year colleges. As we start to negotiate these federal indirect cost rates, some of them are rather high and must be part of the total grant award that you get from NSF. So, if you're going to get a two-hundred-thousand-dollar award and you've got to include indirect costs, and those indirect costs could be almost fifty percent then mentally you say how high that only leaves me about half of that 200,000 to actually do the work of the grant. So the lower that indirect cost is, the more money you have to do the actual activities of the grant; the higher it is, the less you have. It really does impact your budget. It's a big whopping factor. I can see why people would have questions about it. You can access those webinars on budgets - developing budgets and budget justification – also, on developing all the forms that go a long with NSF ATE grants and on evaluation association. You can get the archived copies; plus tutorials that have been developed from webinars on those topics. We update them every year, and they're available at mentor hyphen connect dot org.

<u>What is your biggest budget horror story that you've had? What are some things to avoid that you ran into? What do you think is a budget challenge?</u>

Mel Cossette - I think one of the biggest challenges is when there is a program and it's a really good program; but they need some equipment, and they want to put the majority of the money into buying the equipment that is a real red flag to me. Do they really want to establish a program that could grow? We obviously want someone to do the first one and with the new to ATE through Mentor - Connect or independently if that's what they choose to do and then we want them to grow into the next level and possibly keep growing. And I know that's our desire which is one of the reasons mentors like myself and others around the country donate our time and I can tell you that we give our time to help the mentees and grow. I think the biggest one is trying to explain that equipment is not the sole purpose of this contract, this grant and this proposal. Trying to explain to the powers that be within the institution that no, you can't put $150,000 out of $200,000 into equipment. It's been kind of interesting and I ran into that a couple of times. Also, when I work with their budgets I make sure there are funds in there for the required pieces. I know you might ask this later, but for instance, evaluation, there needs to be some funds set aside for that. They just don't feel like evaluation needs to have any funds to it, yet, it’s a required part of the solicitation. So those are kinds of things that we help guide them on. I hope that answers the question. That is a good question.

<u>Can faculty get “extra pay” for being on a grant?</u>

Elaine Craft - I have some hot off the press news to share about this. For many years, it has been the NSF position that you could not pay somebody more than a hundred percent of what their normal pay was at the college when they're working on an NSF grant. Therefore, if you have faculty who work overloads, typically, its more common than not - in our two-year college world - to have faculty teaching overloads. For them to work on a grant, they had to give up that overload pay and do all of their work within the base one hundred percent compensation that is said for their position at the college. Within the last week, I have gotten some new clarification from NSF on this. The new ruling is that if the college has a written policy that allows overload pay to faculty that you can get paid overload when you're working on an NSF ATE grant as long as you are within the written policy of the college. So it may be if the college has a union, for instance, the union contract is probably going to have very clear written guidelines on how much overload a faculty can be expected to do or can elect to do, and those guidelines are set very clearly. At other colleges, they, likewise, probably have a written policy regarding how much overload a faculty can be granted in any particular semester or term. So that is a big change from what we've been doing in the past. As long as the college has a written policy and the overload pay is within the college's written policy, then, NSF is going to be okay with that. Now they have asked that if you're going to be paying somebody in overload to work on the grant that it is clearly stated in the budget justification and

you articulate that this is within the written policy guidelines of the institution what you have planned. We are very excited about this news. This is a real game-changer for two-year colleges. We're busy wordsmithing some information to get out to the folks that we work with on this right now.
(Note: If you wish to pay overload to faculty, it is best to contact a program officer at NSF for discussion and approval)

<u>Is that going to be applicable to ones submitting in October?</u>
Elaine Craft- This coming year, yes.

<u>In one of the previous sessions there was reference to the fact that there was going to be a whole new set of guidelines not the ones that came in January for formatting, but apparently a new set of guidelines coming out in June that would affect possible grants. If I understood that correctly, I was wondering what kind of changes that might include? Would it be worth waiting for those new guidelines? Whatever associated grants may come up after that versus consider a grant that might be due saying in the fall that is already being advertised?</u>
Elaine Craft - I think what you're referring to is the new ATE solicitation, and it is expected by early summer. Our experience has been that those solicitations do not change radically from year to year; however, this year nobody will tell us okay. But, it's been hinted that there may be some different levels of funding, for instance right now under the projects you can go for those new to ATE, which is $200,000 and it's been kept at that amount for a long time, I think, since the program started. Then, the next cap has been $900,000 for projects. Now you didn't have to ask for $900,000, but that was the new cap. There may be some interim levels this time that's been alluded to. Sometimes they add new opportunities, for example Mel happens to have a grant for something called Research Coordination Network and that was new with the last solicitation, isn't that right, Mel?

Mel Cossette – Yes it is, that is correct.

Elaine Craft - So they introduced new funding opportunities, but my suggestion is don't wait if you've got a good idea, go ahead and start fleshing that out now. Then when the program solicitation comes out, you may have to trim it back a little to fit something they've described that they'll fund, some funding track, or add something to it so that it better fits another funding track that they have. Mel, what are your thoughts on that.

Mel Cossette - I totally agree, I was just with NSF earlier this week and that's exactly what they were talking about. They are working on creating that, however, I heard the same thing, that there's going to be some different levels. I think a part of that, too, has been the success of the Mentor-Connect program. When you come in at $200,000 and you're learning how to manage your money, and the college's that are first time fiscal agents in this way, it's kind of a hard leap to go from $200,000 to $900,000. Even though Elaine just said that you don't have to ask for the $900,000, but we find more often than not, many of my mentees want to go that way. They may not be ready, so they may want to take a smaller step and maybe do $500,000 or $400,000 which seems a little more doable to them; and it doesn't scare them in a way where they might be worried about time to manage it. So I think this allows for baby steps to help them to the next level and hopefully makes them a little more self-confident that they can do it without putting themselves in a situation where something could change and all of a sudden their faced with a big grant. It's the awards that they're kind of worried about how they're going to take care of it and how they're going to manage it.

<u>Will the overload policy apply to currently funded or those starting this year? (Note if you wish to pay overload to faculty, it is best to contact a program officer at NSF for discussion and approval)</u>
Elaine Craft- I don't have the exact date that NSF made this change. It actually is not a brand-new decision we discovered, but it just had not filtered down to the ATE program, yet. Now my guess is that people have been funded in the last couple of years are probably okay following those newer clarified guidelines. NSF is very consistent with the way they do things. For instance, you might say how much can you pay somebody who's traveling or reimburse somebody who's traveling for a grant; NSF wants you to follow your college guidelines. So whatever your college reimburses for travel is what they expect you to reimburse for travel for people who are doing grant work for your college. This is very consistent with the way NSF works. So you just make sure that you're following your own institutions guidelines, policies and procedures and that you have those things documented for your grant operations. Now what really upsets them is if you treat those who are working on grants differently than you do other employees at the college. You can't pay them more than you would pay somebody else who is doing something for the college. You can't give a more travel reimbursement than somebody else who's doing some work for college and so forth. It's got to be equitable, and it's got to follow college policy and procedure. That's really the best rule of thumb I can give you.

(Note: If you wish to pay overload to faculty, it is best to contact a program officer at NSF for discussion and approval)

<u>How much equipment can you ask for? There's a reasonable amount right?</u>
Mel Cossette - There's a reasonable amount. I think the biggest thing is aligning it to what the project is going to deliver that is the bigger picture that you want to look at. I would think about it from this standpoint a simple way to probably present it is that if I was going for a new to ATE and I wanted to talk about something I know about, material science, and I wanted to do composites or a grant or proposal and composites, then, I could look at what I want to add to the program that I'm working on. If it's something that I can do with an oven and that would be an oven versus an autoclave (an autoclave is very, very expensive not only to purchase, but to maintain and set up). So if I was doing that I would probably look at purchasing an oven, which would be in line with I could still deliver the program; I could still deliver the outcomes; I can still make the impact I'm looking at without having to spend a thousand more dollars to do the autoclave, when we're not really prepared to go to that level. It’s making sure that what you're asking for in equipment is in alignment with what you plan to deliver and what your outcomes are going to be.

Elaine Craft - I have another perspective to add to that, another thing to think about is that one of the areas of a proposal that you have to do is called *sustainability.* If you think of the things that you do in a grant, which things can be sustained and will live beyond the grant funding. Equipment is probably one of those things that is not going to have sometimes the longest lifespan, you know, there'll be new iterations coming down the line. But, if you change, say, teaching methodologies or put a new programming or new modules in a program, or you change something in the infrastructure of the college in terms of your curriculum, you build strong industry partnerships that can live on for years and benefit the college and the program. If you think about the things you're going to do in your grant, you can see why NSF wouldn’t want all the money to go just towards a piece of equipment that may be obsolete in a few years.

<u>Who actually submits the proposal? It's not the faculty member but rather it's the institution? Who at the institution signs off on that submission when they're ready to press that FastLane button? Who does that and how do you know who does that?</u>

Elaine Craft – Well, it's called an *Authorized Organizational Representative* and some people call it a *Sponsored Research Officer* so you see these acronyms SRO and AOR, there has to be someone at the college who has the authority to commit the college to a grant, represents the person who pushes the final button when you submit an NSF ATE grant or actually any NSF grant by way of FastLane. It is a two-step admission process. The principal investigator or the grant writer, if it's not one in the same with the SRO or AOR, can submit the proposal, but that proposal when it's submitted the first time goes nowhere near NSF. It actually, just goes over to whoever that designated person is at the college. That designated person at the college, then, has several options: they can review the proposal; they can submit it the way it was received (signing off for the college in good faith if they're going to be good stewards of this money, if they receive the award) or they can kick it back to the principal investigator or whoever submitted it initially and request that revisions be made. You were talking about budget horror stories, well, there have been proposal horror stories with principal investigators who hit that submit button and thought their proposal had been submitted to NSF, and it had never left their institution. So you have to make sure that it gets to that second submission process and that that person who signed off on it the second time has the authority to do that. That's the person who gives various people permission in FastLane to do everything from drawdown money to support the grant, to registering people who can be principal investigators and so forth of for the budget. So it's a very important role at the college and it comes with a lot of responsibility. NSF really does not want that to be the same person who is the principal investigator for the grant.

<u>The person understands that evaluation is important, but, they say they've never worked with an external evaluator before. What do they have to know before calling that external evaluator the first time? How should they prep themselves to be ready to discuss evaluation?</u>

Elaine Craft - I think one of the nicest things about the ATE program is that it actually does make grant awards to people who can help you with these types of things. In the case of evaluation, we have Evalu-ATE its E-v-a-l-u-hyphenate ATE. Evalu-ATE is a funded project in the NSF ATE program where evaluation expertise resides. They do a masterful job of helping people understand evaluation; how to write evaluation plans; and how to do different kinds of evaluation activities. But most importantly to the question you asked, they actually provide advice on how to find an evaluator, what questions to ask; find how to work with an evaluator. They just have a lot of resources. They do webinars and their webinars are recorded and are as well done as any you'll encounter. That's just a terrific resource and certainly the place to start if you're an evaluation novice. If you feel like you don't even know the right questions ask, they're material is very user-friendly and their websites are good. I would definitely encourage you to go to Evalu-ate.org.

<u>How long does an evaluation plan have to be? I mean is it five pages? Is it one page? What are your evaluation plans within that 15-page narrative, how long are they typically?</u>

Mel Cossette - Typically ours has been anywhere from 2 to 2 and a half pages. It really depends on the activities that are taking place and what the outcomes are going to be. The other thing is, we also use another document (we talked about in the last webinar) called logic model. If we can align the logic model and evaluation plan, it becomes a very powerful document that you can use as a PI to manage your project down the road, so it really needs to align. I, typically, will tell my mentees or share with my mentees that it might be a good idea that two maybe two and a half, pages of the plan and one page of the logic model, and it needs to all line up. At this point, I would like to share one of my horror stories on evaluation, we had one in the last five years, and we really talked about reading the solicitation by the PI, the team and the grant writer. But also, I think it needs to be brought to light that other people at the institution have to be aware of the requirements, because when one of the mentees I was working with a few years ago submitted to post for an evaluator, they didn't already have it within their proposal. They went to talk to their contract folks to see how they would work this and one of the people at the institution, which I believe was the vice president, said we don't need external evaluation; we don't need any evaluation at all; we know how good we are. So they called me, and told me asked me for help, so I found it in the solicitation; highlighted it; copy and pasted it and sent it to them and said this is what they have to read. What happened was the PI was panicking a little bit, because their annual report was due and there had never been any evaluation written. So now they had to find an evaluator very quickly and to get their report done, they had to have an evaluation of some kind. The evaluation is a requirement not a nice to have, you have to have it. I say all that because I make it a practice to always include any evaluator I'm working with early on from the beginning. Once they write their evaluation plan and you got it in your proposal keep that communication line open. As soon as you get them, then, you let them know and start working with them. I communicate with my evaluator on some of our grants at least once a month so it's a very very important part. It can also help you set the stage for your next proposal.

Elaine Craft - Mel mentioned logic models, and Evalu-ATE has training on that too. They can show you step-by-step how to put one of those together.

Michael Lesiecki - I'm just reviewing a proposal for the Department of Education. I was surprised, not surprised, but about half of the proposals I reviewed had a logic model in them and from a reviewer standpoint, and it really helped me understand what they were trying to do. I don't mean I was surprised, but I found it interesting.

Sometimes in a proposal (depending upon the involvement of students especially when we look at student performance, or ask students questions for surveys) we need to use an internal review board or have our proposal go through an internal review board for an IRB approval. Not every college especially those that are new to the grant world might not have an existing IRB. Are you aware of any third party IRB providers that could be used?

Elaine Craft - A number of people will have a university partner are a university in their community that's willing to do the IRB review for them, for those people working in the ATE program. However, I really encourage people to set up their own institutional IRB process. Because of the nature of the proposals that we tend to produce, the review process is a lot simpler. This has to do with protection of human subjects. So you can imagine that if you're a research university that's doing things in the medical field or in psychology, where you're doing tests or you're dealing with a lot of small children that sort of thing that this would be very, very important. The review process will be very rigorous in those cases. In the case of ATE projects, it's usually much more minimal, it's a process that reviews the proposal to make sure that the individuals are going to be involved in the project, that their rights are going to be protected, and the data is going to be secure. That sort of thing can be done in a fairly efficient process. I have run into some horror stories, which I'm at horror stories today. One of our new to ATE grantees had to have their IRB letter, which says that their proposal has been reviewed for these particular things prior to getting a funding award and they started frantically looking around in their community for somebody to help them because they had not set up an IRB at their institution. I mean there were people saying, "Yea, we'll do it for you for $1,800, for $2,400." I mean money they didn't have. Then, their local university said yes we'll be happy to do it but pick a number and stand in line our waiting period now is about six weeks. So that didn't help them at all, because they were on the cusp of getting

an award and their program officer wanted that letter now, not six weeks from now. So it is really something worth looking into, well, in advance of the point in time when you might be recommended for an award. It is not difficult to set up an IRB at your institution. On the Mentor-Connect website, we provide samples and guidelines and even a PowerPoint training program that you can use as part of your institutional IRB process. So that's the advice we would provide.
(Note: An IRB letter is required before any ATE proposal is funded)

Mel, how long does it take you to get something through IRB at Edmonds College?
Mel Cossette – Well, first, I serve on the IRB committee and that's the other thing I would say if you do set up an IRB within your institution try and be a member of that IRB, because it really enhances your personal development and professional development knowing this piece. In fact, I have been working with several other 4-year institutions and 4-year universities, and I have to prove if I am on their grant. If we are working as partners, I have to show proof in writing that I have gone through IRB training. It's an easy thing to do, it's oftentimes, like Elaine said, there's some really good training out there. It's a very positive thing to learn about, and you really learn the student side of the house, why they do it, and the protection that they give themselves. But to answer your question, Mike, it probably takes us about a month. We do have a very active IRB in our institution, and we have about 8 members, 10 members now. We keep it at that, because someone's either on vacation, or out or something. So we always have at least a minimum of eight at our committee meetings. We try and meet once a month to view what's coming in and we do a lot of our pieces online so we vote online. Then, we have our point which is our VP for workforce development and training; he takes the lead in response to the requester. It's what we call them for an IRB review. So I would probably say for us unless it's a real emergency situation, we can turn it around in two weeks.

Michael Lesiecki - That's pretty good. Here at Maricopa, we're more like four sometimes six weeks, but depends on where you get in their cycle.

This grant stuff can be very complicated is it worth it to you personally?
Elaine Craft – Absolutely, being in this budget era, it is really where you find the innovation at our colleges; otherwise, people just don't have the resources to do anything new and different. They're just going to have to keep doing what they've been doing. It just opens so many opportunities to professional development, to learning what's going on elsewhere in the country, finding out all the new emerging technologies, and how you can best address those to prepare your students for the workforce. It's absolutely the most rewarding thing I've ever done in my career.

Mel Cossette – Absolutely, I came in 1999, I was working on other grants at the time, and some other organizations. I thought I would do it for the life of that one project and 17 years later, I'm still here in the community that is built under ATE and within ATE is fabulous. It's great! There are more resources out there than you know.

More Proposal Preparation Webinars Coming
Three webinars still to come in this series:

- March 23, 2017; Developing Stakeholder Partnerships
- April 20, 2017; Final Tips for a Competitive Proposal

Every one of those upcoming three events has a live Q&A scheduled one week later. Please check out our website atecenters.org/CCTA. This provides you access to pre-recorded webinars and our upcoming events.