

1. My team composition has changed since I submitted my pre-proposal. Is that OK?

We understand that team compositions are dynamic and can shift throughout the contest. In the full proposal round, you may add or drop team members. When you submit your full proposal, you will be asked to indicate the names, email addresses, and departments of all of your current team members.

2. What should I do if I haven't solidified my team by the time the full proposal is due?

We understand that team building is a primary challenge teams face during the project development phase. If you know that you want to add an additional team member, but have not yet identified a person to fill that role, note that in your full proposal. It is better to say "we are looking for a programmer with X, Y, and Z skills," than to present information on an incomplete team and lead the judges to believe that your team does not recognize that you will need additional help to put your idea into action.

3. Do references count toward the page limit?

No. References are not included in the limit. The budget spreadsheet and all other required proposal sections, however, are included in the page limit. Five additional pages may be submitted as appendices.

4. How strict are the section divisions and order of sections? Can I add an additional section or rearrange sections?

You may rearrange the sections as it makes sense for your proposal, and you can add an additional section if you think it will enhance your proposal. That said, make sure that you include text addressing each of the sections described in the full proposal application requirements, as the judging criteria focus on the information provided in each of those sections.

5. What will my full proposal be judged on?

Please see the judging criteria listed in the Mentor Handbook. If you are a finalist in the IT for Society category, please note that at least one member of your team is also required to attend the IT for Society Poster Session on April 21, 2014 where judges will have the opportunity to learn more about your project and ask you questions. You will receive more information about this event (including the exact time and location) via email.

6. Who are the full proposal judges? Are they the same judges that read my pre-proposal? May I contact the judges at any point during the contest?

The judges are Berkeley faculty members and business professionals with content expertise in your category area, and they are likely not the same judges as those who read your pre-proposal, so do not assume that they have any previous knowledge of your project. Also, many projects focus in a specific area within the broad Big Ideas categories, so when writing your full proposal, assume that your reader has some general knowledge of the field (e.g., energy efficient technologies or global poverty), but no specialized knowledge in your particular project area. Be sure not to use jargon and explain technical terms. Judges' identities will remain anonymous throughout the contest. You will receive written feedback from the judges, but you will not be given access to the names or contact information of the judges.

7. Are there any restrictions on what kinds of expenses can be covered with Big Ideas funds? Are there certain expenses, like travel or personnel costs, that I shouldn't include in my budget document?

There are no restrictions on what expenses can be covered with Big Ideas funds. Past winners have budgeted for personnel costs (e.g., hiring a programmer or marketing consultant), domestic and international travel, marketing costs, building materials costs, and so on. Typically, teams do not include a salary for themselves in their budget. However, note that you should not request more than \$10,000 from Big Ideas. If your project requires more than \$10,000 in funding, note other funding sources you are pursuing in the Revenue section of the budget (and include in the Notes section whether you've applied for this money and not yet received it, have received it, etc).

8. Typically, how large are Big Ideas grants?

The average grant size is \$5000, but grants can range from \$1000 to \$8000 based on the quality of the proposal, as evaluated by judges, and project need. Successful proposals typically assume that a Big Ideas grant can cover \$5000 of their project expenses and typically do not request more than \$10,000 from Big Ideas.

9. My project has a definite end date. How should I address this in my proposal?

The proposal asks you to include a one-year timeline (approximately June 2014-June 2015) and a budget for the first year of your project. If your project is expected to last less than one year for any reason, address this in your project description, timeline, and budget. As long as you explicitly state that you are not projecting further because your project will end on such and such date, you are set!



Full Proposal FAQs for Finalists

10. Must I use a particular writing style to format my references?

No. As long as you are consistent, you can format your references any way you choose.

11. Can I include photos or graphs in my full proposal, or must the proposal contain only written information?

Yes! You can include figures in your full proposal to help explain your project, but they will count toward the page limit.

12. I am concerned about someone stealing my idea. Are proposals kept confidential?

Applicants are required to complete a webform with information about their team and a brief description of their project. Applicants will then attach their proposal and budget (preferably as one PDF document). The Big Ideas Contest reserves the right to use the brief description of the project in the webform publicly. However, you can indicate in the webform that you would like the attached (longer) proposal to be kept confidential. If you are concerned about protecting your idea, do not put any protected information in the webform, then check the webform box to indicate you would like the attached proposal kept confidential.

13. If my project receives funding through Big Ideas, how are the award payments handled? Can we have the funds sent to an NGO or local partner?

Big Ideas awards must be disbursed either to a) a registered student (from an eligible campus), b) an ASUC student group account, or c) a campus research account of a faculty advisor. Awards cannot be disbursed to partners, non-profits, or students from non-eligible campuses. Additional details about award options will be provided to the finalist teams at the Big Ideas Awards Ceremony in May 2014.

14. When will I find out if I have won a category-specific award?

Finalists will be notified about the status of their proposal in early May.

15. How many finalists will be chosen as winners in a particular category?

Typically, between 2 and 5 finalists are selected as winners in each category.

16. When will I find out if I have been invited to Pitch Day?

You will be notified via email by April 30, 2014 if you have been selected to pitch for a panel of judges. Pitch Day will be held on May 5, 2014 in B100 Blum Hall.



Full Proposal FAQs for Finalists

17. I want to submit a video for the People's Choice Video Contest.

Where can I learn more about the contest rules?

Check out the Video Contest Application requirements on our website. You will be able to upload your videos in mid-April.