**Tips for Writing a Compelling STC Pre-Proposal**

(BRDO, March 2019).

NSF’s solicitation for the 2019 STC competition appears to place a greater emphasis on *impact and significance* at the pre-proposal stage than in the past. Other departures from earlier solicitations include expansion of the pre-proposal project description to 12 pages and revisions to the organizational/content requirements (see pre-proposal outline – *coming to BRDO STC webpage soon*).

* The main purpose of your pre-proposal is to excite reviewers about the importance of the proposed work, your team’s unique capacity to bring it to fruition, and the impact this will have on your field(s) and nationally.
* Make sure that you clearly explain the problem(s) your Center will attempt to solve and why this is important. Why should reviewers and people outside your immediate area of expertise care about these issues? Also explain how your Center will support the missions of NSF and the directorate(s)/division(s) you’re applying to.
* Write clearly and directly, avoiding or clarifying jargon, using active and vivid language.
* Stay focused on the big picture. In describing your approach, resist the temptation to get bogged down in “nitty gritty” technical details of the research at the pre-proposal stage.
* At the same time, avoid being overly generic. Your pre-proposal should contain enough specifics to allow for evaluation and should not read like boilerplate. If any parts could be used “as-is” by a different research group or project, go back and customize these.
* Review your pre-proposal to make sure it addresses all of the review criteria, and seek feedback on your draft from a range of readers, including friends/colleagues outside your area of expertise to check whether the vision, significance, and impact come across clearly.