

Contacting the Potential Funding Agency

How to prepare

- Develop a concept paper. The concept paper provides a brief outline of the project that will be helpful for guiding a conversation with the program officer and for providing an initial framework for developing a proposal.
- Conduct an investigation. Research the program officer's background, the funding agency's mission and funding priorities, and the guidelines of the program to which you are considering applying. The agency's website is a good resource with which to start.
- Formulate a list of questions. See the list below for ideas regarding the types of questions you may want to ask.

Questions to ask program officers

- What do you think?
 - Present your concept paper to the program officer in advance of your conversation to allow them time to familiarize themselves with your project. The program officer may provide insight that will make your proposal more competitive or can help you decide how it can be refocused to better align with agency priorities.
- What makes a project competitive?
- What are the agency's current funding priorities?
- What is the typical grant range and average award amount?
- To which program should I submit?
- Who will evaluate my proposal?
- Are there any anticipated changes to the application guidelines?
- Is the agency willing to review a draft of my proposal before submission and provide feedback? If so, how early does the draft need to be submitted?
- How many applications are typically received, and how many are typically funded?
- What are the most common flaws in proposals that are not funded?