

Tips for Grant Writing Success

- **Contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs** as soon as you are considering a project. The office can help you to identify funding sources; communicate with funding agencies; interpret proposal guidelines; and develop, prepare, refine, and submit your proposal and budget.
- **Develop a concept paper.** The concept paper provides a brief, 2-3 page prospectus of your project, helping you to outline your project activities, objectives, methodology, and needs. It is particularly useful for guiding conversations with program officers. Tips for developing a concept paper are available on our website [provide hyperlink].
- **Contact the program officer.** The designated funding agency contact can provide guidance on whether your project is a good match with the agency's priorities. The interaction also puts your name in front of the funder, helps clarify your project, and can assist in refining your project design.
- **Follow the guidelines.** Grant guidelines provide a blueprint for developing a competitive proposal in line with the funder's requirements. Take heed of allowable budget items. If specific questions are asked, address them in the order they are listed. If there are page limits, follow them. Don't risk having your proposal disqualified because the margins are too narrow.
- **Create a timeline.** Count backward from the submission deadline. Keep in mind that you need to obtain authorizing signatures from your department chair/unit director and dean/division director. The proposal and budget should be submitted to the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at least ten business days before the due date.
- **Have a clear work plan.** Define who will do what as well as when, where, and how it will take place. Consider your project's scope: is it reasonable to accomplish the planned activities during the available time?
- **Establish the need** for the project. Why should the grantor fund your project? How does it address the issues of importance to the funding agency? Capture the grantor's interest by connecting your project's purpose with their priorities. Explain the project's broader impact.
- **Develop a plan for sustainability.** Grantors want their dollars to make the most significant impact possible, and the majority wants to know how you will sustain the project once the grant funding is completed.
- **Collaborate.** In the current economic environment where resources are limited, a plan for collaboration will make your proposal more competitive. Funders want to ensure that their dollars are not duplicating services and have the greatest impact possible. Collaborative projects have access to more resources (financial and intellectual), have a broader impact, and have a greater likelihood of success and long term sustainability. Thus, most funders give preference to projects that involve partnerships.
- **Justify budget items and double check figures.** Use the budget narrative to help funders understand how you reached the amounts requested. Many reviewers look at a budget first to get an overview of the project and verify the request is appropriate. Make a good first impression.
- **Share early proposal drafts with colleagues.** They can provide valuable feedback on the content and design of your proposal.