

Creating a Successful Proposal

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Outline

- What we hope to cover today:
 - Getting Started
 - Internal Research and Support
 - External Research
 - Proposal Components
 - Constructive Practices
 - Aids to Success
 - Participant Survey
 - Summary



Getting Started

- Identify why you want to write a proposal:
- Identify a need or an idea
- What do you want to accomplish?
- What is the focus?
- Why is the problem/issue important?
- What, in the long term, do you hope to gain?
- Who/what will be impacted?
- Why do you/your institution want the grant?



Internal Research and Support

- Is there internal support for the idea?
- Grants your institution currently hold?
- What is their focus?
- Will the proposal concept fit in the future?
- Are there possibilities of leveraging grants?
- Identify help in writing the proposal
- Create a concept paper



Internal Research and Support

cont'd

- Is your institution prepared to be the fiscal agent?
- Institutional buy-in is critical
- Everyone ***need to have a stake in the game***
- Identify potential mutual gains
- What academic programs might the grant **complement?** (need “buy in”).



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External Research

- Identify the target audience that would benefit from the proposal outcomes
- Which funding agency might be the best fit based on the proposal outcomes
- Are there federal dollars available? *DOL; NSF; DOE; DOD; NIH; DoE, etc.*
- Would private foundations be a good fit? *Gates Foundation, Kellogg Foundation, private companies, national, local, etc.*
- Leveraging grants and existing resources



External Research

- What are the specific funds available?
- What is their funding cycle?
- Familiarize yourself with submittal guidelines
- Familiarize yourself with review guidelines
- Who do they make awards to?

Do your homework



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Proposal Components

Make a checklist

- Background and need statement
- Management & timeline
- Evaluation
- Dissemination
- Collaborations
- Budget & justification
- Bios
- In kind donations/leveraging
- Data management
- IRB approval (institutional review board)
- Funding agency requirements

Make a checklist



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Proposal Components - Narrative

Project Summary:

- clearly indicates the disciplinary focus
- identifies activities that will be undertaken
- primary audience affected by the activities
- addresses key need

Project Description:

- explains motivating rationale
- goals, activities, timeline, management, team roles/responsibilities
- sustainability, evaluation and dissemination



Proposal Components – Evaluation

- Identify clearly assessment points, instruments, and timeline
- Include formative and summative
- Create outcomes monitors/metrics
- Report assessment summaries
- Measure impact and effectiveness
- Provide recommendations



Proposal Components - Dissemination

- What kinds of products/processes will this project produce?
- How will disseminating activities share project information & results?
- How do they intend to reach their target audience?

Be innovative!



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Proposal Components - Collaborations

You do not have to do this alone -
but someone has to take the lead

Characteristics of strong partners

- ✓ mutual benefit
- ✓ shared information
- ✓ common goals
- ✓ co-management
- ✓ resources investment
- ✓ results focused



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Proposal Components - Collaborations

- Advisory committees or industry partners that can assist and support
 - Identify team members
 - Identify partners
 - Identify roles and responsibilities
- Will they *go to bat* for the proposal?
- Build an effective communication system

if there is difficulty getting responses : *move on!*



Proposal Components - Budget

- ✓ Standard process and forms
- ✓ Know what qualifies for funding
- ✓ Focus on personnel
- ✓ Indirect costs
- ✓ Detailed justification
- ✓ Acknowledge fiscal reporting requirements

KEY!! Use models from the funding agency



Proposal Specifics - Letters

- Be aware of the types of letters required by funding agency
- No cookie cutter/generic format
- Letters of Commitment “*we commit to...*”
- Letters of Support “*this is a great idea...*”
- Letters reflect what team members and partners are bringing to the project
- Individualize

Build relationships with these partners



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BIG No-No's

Seven Deadly Sins of Proposal Writing

1. Failure to focus
2. Poorly organized
3. No competitive analysis
4. No compelling value proposition
5. Key points are buried
6. Difficult to read
7. Credibility killers



Constructive Practices

- Succinct education of the reviewers
- Address a specific issue/problem
- Be engaging
- Articulate your story
- Address how the project will solve this issue/problem
- Focused vitas/resumes
- Be familiar with the proposal review process

Memorize the RFP!



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Aids to Success

- Ask questions - contact the program officers
- Be flexible and open to input
- Organize a grant team
- Memorize the program solicitation
- Allow plenty of time
- Rewrites and revisions are inevitable
- A proof reader is *key*
- Reviewers generally spend 1 hour on a proposal that can take over 150 hours to develop



Summary

- 14% to 33% of all submitted proposals are funded
- Do NOT get discouraged
- From submittal to award - 6 months to 1 year
- Situations/environments/budgets can change
- The fun starts after you are awarded a project



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Do you really want to do this?



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Thank you!

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