

Grant Writing 101

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Overview

- Grant Writing Basics
- The Grant Writing Process
- Strategies for Success
- Resources



GRANT WRITING BASICS



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What is a Grant?

“A grant is a *mechanism* by which an agency awards money to fund a research study or other activity, such as an educational program, service program, demonstration, or research project.”

Source: Gitlin, L. N., & Lyons, K. J. (2013). *Successful grant writing: Strategies for health and human service professionals*. Springer Publishing Company.



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Why Apply for a Grant?

- Advance scientific knowledge in your field and advance your professional career
- A grant means an enhanced prestige of your institution
- A grant may be one of few alternatives available to implement certain projects
- A grant means a contribution to the financial health of your institution
- A grant means a new program that otherwise can be too expensive for your institution to support and implement
- Winning a grant can make it easier to raise money from other government and private sources



What Are the Type of Grants?

- **Federal** – awarded by a government agency
- **Private** – given by foundation, corporation, or non-governmental agency
- **Public Charity** – give funds to charitable organizations
- **Individual** – awarded to persons who meet specific criteria
- **Non-profit** – assist 501(c)3 organizations
- **Sponsorship** – for non-profit organizations

The Grant Process



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Planning

- Develop your ideas for funding
 - An idea must fit with your long term career interests, as well as the interests of a funding source
- Learn about your institution
 - Know your institution's policies early
 - Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval

“He who is best prepared can best serve his moment of inspiration.”

— Samuel Taylor Coleridge



Searching for Grants

- Determine what type of grant you will be using and which Institutes and Centers (IC) is most appropriate to fund your research
- Search for the proper Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) through **grants.gov**
- After identifying the FOA, read the FOA in details, read the institutions requirements carefully, and follow the instructions early



Type of FOAs

- **Parental Announcements** - Broad FOAs allowing applicants to submit an investigator-initiated application for a specific activity code
- **Program Announcements (PAs)** - FOAs issued by one or more Institutes and Centers to highlight areas of scientific interests
- **Requests for Application (RFAs)** - FOAs issued by one or more Institute or Center to highlight well-defined areas of scientific interest to accomplish specific program objectives

Determine Eligibility

- Review eligibility criteria outlined in FOA
- Review criteria against organization status
- Contact staff Grants Management Officers/Specialists (GMO/GMS) or the staff person listed if additional assistance is required



THE GRANT WRITING PROCESS



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Research grant writing in progress.

What to Know Before You Start Writing

- Instructions for writing your application
- Peer reviewers
- Overall impact
- Scored review criteria



Organizing Your Proposal

- Title page
- Abstract
- Introduction
- Literature review
- Project Narrative
- Personnel
- Budget and budget justification



Title Page

- A brief yet explicit title
- Names of the principal investigator(s)
- Institutional affiliation of the applicants
- Name and address of the granting agency
- Project dates
- Amount of funding requested
- Signatures (when necessary)

Abstract

- General purpose
- Specific goals
- Research design
- Methods
- Significance (contribution and rationale)

Introduction

- Statement of the problem
 - Background and rationale for the project
 - Establish the need and relevance of the research
- Purpose of the research
- Research goals or objectives
- Significance of the research

Literature Review

- Preliminary research
- Be selective and critical, not exhaustive
- Evaluation of critical works



Project Narrative

- The meat of your proposal
- May require several subsections
- Detailed statement of the problem
- Research/program objectives or goals
- Hypotheses
- Methods or procedures
- Outcomes or deliverables
- Evaluation and dissemination of research



Personnel

- Staffing requirements
- Skill sets and functions of personnel
- Experience



Budget and Budget Justifications

- Project costs
- Detailed line items
- Budget narrative (or budget justification)



Writing

- Be prepared to write, rewrite, and rewrite!
- Writing takes time; plan a working schedule
- A well-written proposal should be clear, focused, and precise
- A poorly written proposal has the potential to limit the chances of having a competitive idea funded

Important Writing Tips

1. Make your project's goals realistic
2. Be organized and logical
3. Write in clear and concise language
4. Sell your idea on paper
5. Edit yourself, but also enlist help
6. Share your comments



Revising Your Proposal

- Have you presented a compelling case?
- Have you made your hypotheses explicit?
- Does your project seem feasible? Is it overly ambitious? Does it have other weaknesses?
- Have you stated the means that grantors can use to evaluate the success of your project after you've executed it?



HOW TO MAKE WRITE



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Submitting Your Application

- Applications are submitted electronically
- Electronic submission involves two separate systems working together: Grants.gov and eRA Commons
- Grants.gov requires a one-time registration by *the applicant organization*
 - The applicant organization and the Principle Investigator (PI) must also complete a one-time registration in the eRA Commons



STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS



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Organize Your Time

- Make sure your specific research aims can be accomplished within the proposed time and resources
- Make sure you have adequate preliminary data.
- Consider identifying experienced investigators in your organization, or in other organizations, who might be able to review a draft of your application and provide you feedback
- Develop a feasible timeline with draft application deadlines
- Build in extra time for unforeseen circumstances (e.g. equipment issues, personnel issues, etc.)
- Plan to submit your application to the funding agency well ahead of the deadline (days, not hours)

Most Common Mistakes

- Missing the deadline
- Not reading the RFP
- Failure to follow instructions
- Unclear goal and objectives
- Missing attachments
- Irrelevant support letters



General Tips

- Begin early
- Apply early and often
- Don't forget to include a cover letter with your application
- Answer ALL questions
- If rejected, revise your proposal and apply again
- Be explicit and specific
- Be realistic in designing the project
- Follow the application guidelines EXACTLY



RESOURCES



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The Big Search

- U.S. Federal Grants

www.grants.gov

- Grant Watch

<https://www.grantwatch.com/grant-search.php>

- Partners in Information Access for Public Health Workforce

- <https://phpartners.org/grants.html>

- Agency Home Pages

- Check for mission statements or research interests
 - Program announcements/RFPs
 - Sign up for ‘alert emails’ when possible



Grant Writing Resources

- NIH Grant Writing Tip Sheets

https://grants.nih.gov/grants/grant_tips.htm

- CDC Grant Writing and Tips

<https://www.cdc.gov/stltpublichealth/grantsfunding/grant-writing.html>

- Introduction to Writing Proposals Short Course

<http://grantspace.org/training/courses/introduction-to-proposal-writing>

- Guide for Writing a Funding Proposal

<http://www.learnerassociates.net/proposal/>

- Applying for Grants

<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>

- Successful Grant Writing, 4th Edition: Strategies for Health and Human Service Professionals

<https://www.amazon.com/Successful-Grant-Writing-4th-Professionals/dp/0826100902>



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“Agreed. We fund only those proposals
we can understand.”

Questions?