Developing Grantsmanship Skills

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Things you need to think about

- Where do you submit proposals?
- When can submit proposals?
- Who can submit proposals?
- For what can you ask?
- Why would you want to submit a proposal?
The Grants World

- Federal grants: $400 billion
- Foundations: $100 billion
- Corporate giving programs: $20 billion

More than $520 billion available to grant seekers every year.
Basic principles governing the grants world:

- Funding agencies MUST give away the money. They give it away through competitions.
- Agencies fund people, not things.
To win a grant:

- Your goals/objectives must fit the funding agency’s goals/objectives.

- Your proposal must meet the specifications of the grant program (be eligible, meet the funder’s goals, follow directions, etc.).

- Your proposal must beat the competition.
Overview of the Grants Process

- Searching for grant sources (FOAs and RFPs)
- Proposal Development
- Proposal Submission
- Proposal Review
- Award Management or Proposal Resubmission
The Logic of NIH Proposals

- **Significance of the question/problem to be investigated.** Why is the question you will investigate important? What is your hypothesis?

- **Specific Aims.** What are the goals and outcomes of what you propose?

- **Innovation.** Why is your question/hypothesis/goal/approach novel?

- **Research plan.** How will you answer the question?

- **Capacity.** Are the personnel capable? Are facilities and equipment adequate? Will the IRB/IACUC approve?
The Logic of Programmatic Proposals

- *Project Summary/Abstract* gives the reader a brief summary of the proposal.

- *Problem or need section* describes the problem you will address.

- *Solution (methods) section* states how you will address the problem.

- *Evaluation* tells the reader how you will determine whether or not the solution worked.

- *Budget* explains how you will pay for the work.
Writing the Narrative

- Know your audience and write to it.
- Use the outline provided by the funding source.
- Follow the directions \textit{exactly}.
- Make it readable—short sentences & paragraphs, heads & bullets, white space
- Present information in several ways
- Show your warts; no problem, no grant
- Each piece, each word, must lead to the conclusion.
Proposal Writing Pitfalls

- Not following the guidelines
- Not knowing your target audience
- Not allowing enough time to write the proposal and have it reviewed
- Not putting the proposal in the proper context
Some other little hints (NIH):

- Find the appropriate study section and reviewers and write a cover letter
  - Find out the success rate

- Give yourself PLENTY of time – get others to read the proposal and provide meaningful input
  - Time – for your institutional process – IRB, animal use, budget, collaborators, etc.
Some other little hints (NIH):

- Formulate a single, central hypothesis (1 sentence) that can either be proven or disproven.
- Have preliminary data.
- **BOLD** or underline important points
- Gather letters of support and give people time to write them.
- Most critical part of the proposal is the Specific Aims
Excellent guide from NIH on grant proposal preparation:

http://grants.nih.gov/grants/writing_application.htm
Council for Undergraduate Research (CUR)

- Multiple institutes that support new faculty
  - Proposal Development Workshops (new)
  - Proposal Writing Institute
  - Beginning a Research Program in the Natural Sciences at a Predominantly Undergraduate Institution
  - Initiating and Sustaining Undergraduate Research Programs
  - Institutionalizing Undergraduate Research

- Biennial conference that support faculty development

- NCUR—National Conferences for Undergraduate Research

- www.cur.org