Developing Grantsmanship Skills

Dr. Mary Farwell, Research and Grad Studies and Biology, ECU
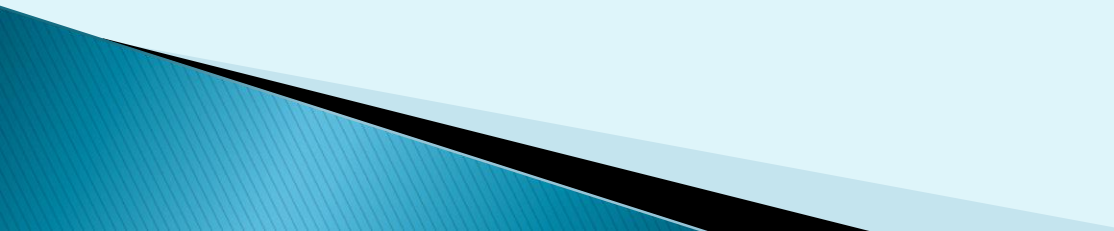
With help from Dr. Doug Lloyd, UNC-Greensboro
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Things you need to think about

- 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

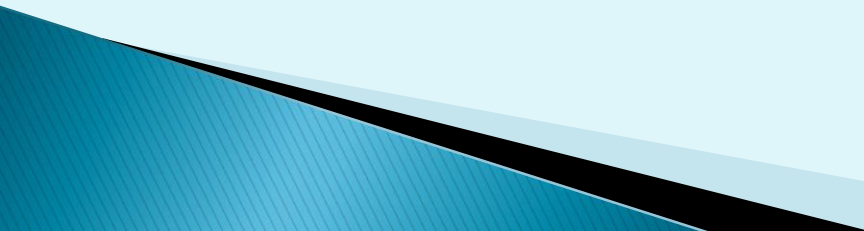▸ Foundations: $100 billion

▸ Corporate giving programs: $20 billion

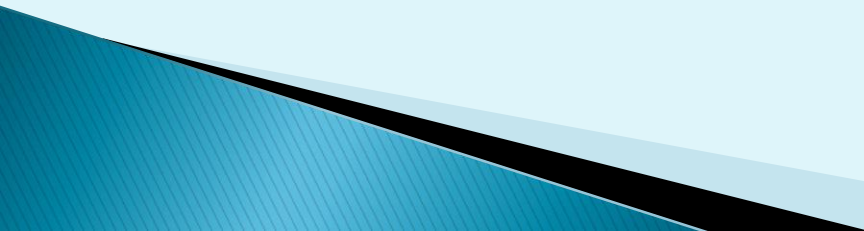More than $520 billion available to grant seekers every year.

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.).
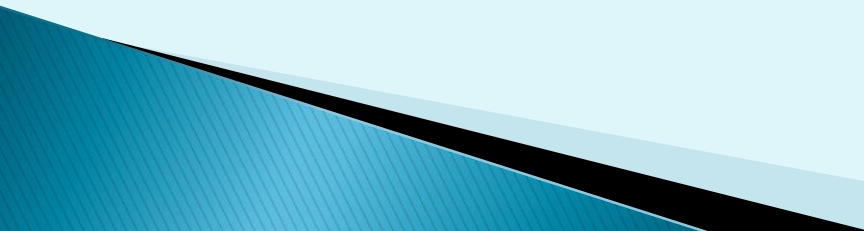
- Your proposal must beat the competition.

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?

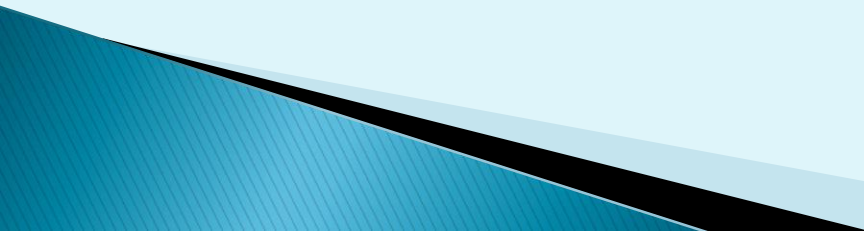- *Capacity.* Are the personnel capable? Are facilities and equipment adequate? Will the IRB/IACUC approve?

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 *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