



Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies

Anatomy & Physiology of Sponsored Projects



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Where to begin – The role of Sponsored Projects Office

- ⑩ Sooner rather than later you will need to seek funding for your research projects.
- ⑩ Very important that you get to know the proposal submission process in your institution.
 - ⑩ All institutions are different. All Grants offices/Sponsored Projects Offices are different. They can even be called different names. Grants Office – Sponsored Projects Office – Preaward Office.
 - 1. Get to know the people in your Grants/Sponsored Projects Office. Develop a relationship with the office personnel before you need to submit a proposal. Stop by the office, introduce yourself and ask for procedural advice and guidance.
 - 2. Learn what will be your responsibility and what the Grants/ SP office will do for you.
 - 3. Learn the routing process and timeline. And follow it. Don't try to bend the rules. They have been in existence longer than you have been at the institution.
- ⑩ Understand that the rules have been put into place for a reason and are meant to protect the institution and the PI.
 - 1. Don't wait until the last minute. Deadline times are very hectic. The larger the institution the greater the number of proposals that need to be routed and submitted.
- ⑩ Large institutions usually have both departmental and central offices that need to approve proposal submissions, increasing the amount of lead time needed to work through the process.
 - 1. Asking usually works better than demanding and thank you always helps.
 - 2. LISTEN – Listen – Listen



Where to begin (continued)

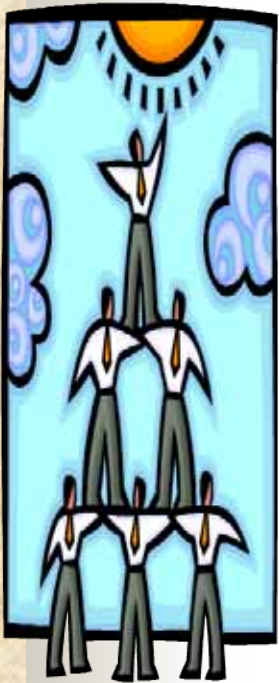


- ⑩ **Learn the procedures and follow the procedures of your current institution.**
- ⑩ **Do not waste time on doing things that are not required by your institution or in a way different than your institution requires.**
- ⑩ **Do not waste time arguing about how things were done at your previous institution. Between deadline times, you can suggest improvements but don't be surprised/upset if they are not implemented.**
- ⑩ **Cool heads should prevail. Losing your temper at deadline submission time rarely helps the situation.**
- ⑩ **Attend workshops offered by the university on proposal writing. Seek the advice of your mentor, supervisor and other senior faculty members.**
- **Ask to be placed on any e-mail list of current announcements that the institution offers.**

Where to begin (continued)

■ Remember Sujay's Seven Rules (Plus One)

- **Start ahead - give your grants person a heads up as soon as you're thinking of submitting a proposal.**
- **Be nice - remember that your proposal isn't the only one that people are working on.**
- **If the proposal involves multiple PIs and/or pieces, set up a timeline/schedule and e-mail this to your collaborators.**
- **Work out your budget first, and talk to collaborators about their subcontracts also.**
- **If you haven't already, start using End Note for collating references. You will likely submit variations of the proposal to other places, and it saves time.**
- **If possible, try to finish your part ahead of time to allow time for mishaps and/or routings.**
- **Once you get funded, make sure to tell your grants person and collaborators and let them know that they were an integral part of this success!**
- **Always send reprints, etc. to the funding agency with a little note.**



Where to begin (continued)

- **Allow plenty of time to prepare a proposal – Things always take longer than you think!**
- **Get the boilerplate, routine stuff done early – CVs, C&P, Facility Statement – so you don't have to deal with it at crunch time.**
- **Don't ask too many favors – most people will go out of their way for you once or twice, but not everyday. Ask for favors only when you really need them.**



The Basics

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT (PA)

- Identifies areas of increased priority and/or emphasis on particular funding mechanisms for a specific area of science.
- Usually are accepted on an on-going basis on standard receipt dates.
- Remains active for three years from date of release unless the announcement indicates a specific expiration date or the funding agency inactivates sooner.
 - **PAR** – A PA for which special *referral* guidelines apply as described in the PAR announcement
 - **PAS** – A PA that includes *set-aside funds* as described in the PAS announcement.

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

- Identifies a more narrowly defined area for which the funding agency has sent aside funds for awarding grants.
- Usually has a single receipt (*received on or before*) date specified in the RFA announcement.
- Usually reviewed by a Scientific Review Group (NIH) convened by the issuing awarding component.

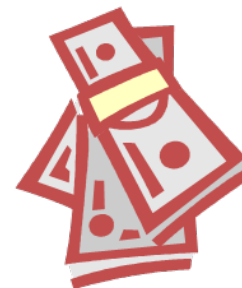
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

- Solicits contract proposals. A RFP usually has one receipt date, as specified in RFP solicitation



Funding Mechanisms

- **Grant** – an award to an organization for a specific investigator (s) to conduct research or other program as specified in an approved proposal. Deliverables such as a programmatic (annual/final) and fiscal reports are required.
- **Contract** – a reciprocal agreement in which one or more institutions agree to provide certain goods and/or services in return for prearranged compensation.
- **Cooperative Agreement** – a sort of hybrid grant+contract, which involves a partnership between the funding source and the recipient. The funding source has input into the research project.
- **Gift** – an award given with *few or no conditions specified* usually by individual donors. If programmatic and/or fiscal reports are required, the award is probably a grant and not a gift.





Proposal Parts

- **Cover or face page**
 - Application form or cover letter
 - Solicitation number
 - Applicant Organization information
 - Investigator and Contact Information
 - Title
 - Other information
 - Form/format is usually supplied by funding agency

The image shows a detailed proposal form with multiple sections. Key sections include: 'PROJECT INFORMATION', 'APPLICANT INFORMATION', 'INVESTIGATOR INFORMATION', 'CONTACT INFORMATION', 'TITLE', and 'OTHER INFORMATION'. The form contains numerous fields for text entry, checkboxes, and dropdown menus. A 'Read Form' button is visible at the bottom right of the form area.

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- **Abstract or Summary**
 - Short synopsis of overall project
 - Usually restricted to specific size or number of words
 - Should be easy to understand
 - Define technical terms, jargon and acronyms
 - This may be the first and/or only part people read



Proposal Parts (cont'd)

■ **Key Personnel information**

- Biographical sketch or CV
 - Other Support – Current and Pending
 - Expertise
 - Role on the project tied back to scope of work
 - Justification of level of effort
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■ **Institutional Environment**

- Resources available – equipment, space, services available, collaborators, capacity.
- Institutional Commitment
- Unique potential (populations, environment, etc)
- Any information that builds credibility or show ability to perform scope of work with excellence
- Explain how facilities will benefit project and expertise to use equipment.



Proposal Parts (Cont'd)

■ Background and significance

- Describe current situation or problem that needs to be solved.
 - Why is the solution important.
 - What is known already.
 - What are the gaps.
 - What will be the benefit if the problem is solved.
 - How is this related to the funder's stated goals or mission. Pay attention to what the funder says their goal or mission is.
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■ Research plan

- Goals and Objectives (usually limit to 3 or 4). More might be considered overly ambitious.
- Materials and methods
- Assessment
- Proposed outcomes
- Timeline
- Potential pitfalls (not putting in may appear that you haven't considered or don't know how to handle)
- Next steps (sets the stage for future funding and collaborations)



Proposal Parts (Cont'd)

■ Budget and Budget justification

- Read instructions to see what can be charged to a particular award.
 - Follow sponsor's categorical breakdowns
 - Tie budget back to scope of work and show relationship to the project.
 - Budget justification should follow sequence of the budget.
 - Elaborate on expertise in budget justification (Ex: Based on his/her expertise in the area of ..., Dr. X will spend 10% of his/her time on the project doing X,Y,Z.)
 - If the research plan changes, make budgetary adjustments **and vice versa!**
 - *Be sure to carefully/ and thoroughly justify any unusual expenses!*
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■ Tips to remember

- September 30th is end of federal fiscal year
- Proposal should be like a symphony – all parts should flow together harmoniously while making the case that this is the best project to fund.
- Attention to detail is important.
- *Read and follow the instructions*
- *Appearance counts – Sloppiness counts against you!*
- Build your argument throughout the proposal.
- If allowed, include letters of support from distinguished faculty
- Make a strong case as to why your question is more important to find answers for over others.
- Get a friendly review of your proposal from colleagues, if possible, or at least try out your ideas on colleagues before submitting the proposal.

Basic Elements of a Budget



■ Salaries

- full time/benefited employees.
- **Principal Investigator(s)** - This is the person designated as taking overall responsibility within the team of researchers for the design, conduct and reporting of the study.
- **Senior Personnel** - Faculty Associate (faculty member) - an individual other than the Principal Investigator(s)
 - considered by the performing institution to be a member of its faculty or who holds an appointment as a faculty
 - member at another institution, and who will participate in the project being supported.
- **Postdoctoral Associates** - Any postdocs who may be working on the project.
- **Research Support Staff** - Staff that will be responsible for working on the project - data collection and analysis, etc.
- **Technical Staff** - Data managers and computer technicians working directly on the project.
- **Wages**
 - part/time non-benefited employees.

■ Fringe Benefits

- The institutional rate charged on salaries and wages. Will be lower for part-time/wage employees.

Basic Elements of Budgets (cont'd)



■ **Equipment**

- Item of property that has an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more (unless your institution has established lower levels) and an expected service life of more than one year.

■ **Travel**

- Includes local travel to research sites; travel for collaborative meetings/travel to conferences relevant to the project.
- Prior agency approval may be required for Foreign Travel.

■ **Participant Support Costs**

- Cost of transportation, per diem, stipends and other related costs for participants of trainees (not employees) for agency funded conferences, meetings, symposia, training activities and workshops.

■ **Other Direct Costs**

- Costs must be reasonable and directly allocable to the supported activity. Examples are: space rental at research establishments away from the grantee organization, minor building alterations, payments to human subjects, service charges, tuition remission, lab fees.
- **Materials and Supplies**
 - Expendable materials and supplies required for the project.
- **Publication/Documentation/Dissemination**
 - Funds for making available to others the finds and products of work conducted under the grant. Generally includes: reports, reprints, page charges, storage and indexing of data and databases, documentation of debugging software, page charges.

Basic Elements of Budget (cont'd)



■ Consultation Services

- Must be justified and information furnished on each individual's expertise, primary organization affiliation, normal daily compensation rate, and number of days expected services. Travel costs, including subsistence, may be included.

■ Computer Services

- Includes computer-based retrieval of scientific, technical and educational information, as well as reasonable costs for leasing computer equipment.

■ Subawards

- NOT TO BE USED FOR PROCUREMENT OF COMMERCIALY AVAILABLE SUPPLIES, MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT OR GENERAL SUPPORT SERVICES.
- Used when a substantive part of the research is being conducted by individuals at other institutions.
- Require a budget from the institution along with the justification for the budget.

■ Indirect Costs/Facilities and Administrative Costs

- The institution's cost of doing business. Expenses that colleges incur in *support* of the institution's major, mission-related activities, primarily identified as instruction, organized research, and public service. They are real operating costs based on actual previous year's expenses.



Basic Elements of Budget (cont'd)

- **Direct costs** are considered **primary** costs because they are attributable to a specific project. **Indirect costs** are considered **secondary** costs that cannot be directly assigned and so are automatically applied to a project as a percentage of direct costs. Although they cannot be directly assigned, they are necessary to a project's success.
- Negotiated with the institutions federal cognizant agency (agency that the institution receives the most funding \$\$ from). This expense covers university operating costs (electricity, heat, etc) and administrative costs (salaries, benefits) that cannot be attributed to one specific projects but are necessary for all research projects.
- **Onsite** - Costs of doing research at the university/organization primary site.
- **Offsite** - Cost of doing research away from the university/organization primary site.
- *Work with the Grants Office/SPO to make sure that these costs are charged correctly. Policies for charging onsite/offsite rate may vary by institution.*
- **Cost Sharing**
 - Some funding agencies/or programs may require cost sharing. Please check with your institution to get approvals for cost-sharing. All cost sharing (either voluntary or mandatory) must be documented.
- **NOTE:** *All awards (with the exception of some fellowships) are usually made to the Institution (not the PI(s)). Please familiarize yourself with your institution's policies and procedures before you transfer from one institution to another. Talk with your Sponsored Projects/Grants office well in advance of any move or if you have any questions or concerns about institutional policies. Do not submit any proposal without the proper institutional approvals.*
 - **READ AND FOLLOW DIRECTIONS!!!!!!!!!!**