TIPS FOR GRANTWRITING

CONTACT YOUR SPONSORED RESEARCH OFFICE AND TELL THEM WHAT
YOU WANT TO SEEK FUNDING FOR. ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROCESS.

Writing proposals can be a time consuming and frustrating experience. Deadlines have a tendency to fall at a time when schedules are hectic. However, if a little time is taken to carefully plan grant seeking efforts in advance, the task can be tolerable and rewarding.

When planning a proposal, define the most pressing problems to be addressed by the proposal. Successful grants present a clear picture of why a program is necessary, what

x   Don't ask for more than you need.

x   When dealing with any funder, but especially federal agencies, remember to read the instructions before applying for support. It sounds simple, but federal competitions live by two rules: 1) The agency is always right, and 2) When in doubt, refer to rule 1.

x   If your proposal doesn't get funded, try to find out why, use that information to strengthen the proposal, and apply again.

Proposals fail because:

x   The research is not well thought out, has obvious flaws in the logic, or doesn't demonstrate need or importance.

x   The research subject falls outside of explicit program guidelines.

x   The proposal failed to persude the funder of three factors: 1) what you want to do; 2) why you are qualified to carry out your research design; 3) why the topic is

You can do it:

Grant funding is often vital to continued scholarship but faculty are sometimes reluctant to write a proposal. They are concerned about the time it will take or even if they can write a fundable proposal. Yet these same faculty write publishable papers on a regular basis.

Writing a proposal is very similar to writing a publishable paper. It begins with an idea -- an idea that takes a familiar topic and expands it, takes it in a new direction, or examines it in a new light. The primary difference between writing a paper for publication and writing the narrative is that the research for the paper has already been done. A proposal suggests what direction your research will take and how you will go about reaching your proposed goal.

Use the same methods that you would use for a paper. Make an outline of what you know of your topic, make an outline of what you want to know as a result of your research and then outline how you will accomplish the research. When converting these outlines to narrative, enclose them between a strong opening paragraph explaining the importance of your work and a concluding paragraph summing up the work and its importance. Once the proposal is written, do as you would do for a paper, ask others to read it and make suggestions.

Some things to remember when writing the narrative or body of the proposal:

- x It must convince the reader that completion of your proposed research will be important to the enhancement of general knowledge in your field.

- x It must adequately document and support statements through citation of sources, etc.

- x It must make clear the relationship between events since the reader may not be familiar with your particular topic's background. That doesn't mean that you must write a history, but certainly the main

x   Write only enough to clearly communicate your message but don't omit important details. On the other hand, don't overwhelm the reader with unnecessary detail. Reread your proposal several times to make sure that you have included only what is necessary but that it is inclus.

x   The first and last paragraphs of your narrative are perhaps the most important. The first paragraph should make clear the problem you are addressing, tell why it is important to examine it and give a brief statement (no more than two to three sentences) of the project. This is the first impression the reader will have and it must convince him/her that he/she wants to know more. The last paragraph should provide a brief summary of the project and its importance. This paragraph is the last impression the reader will have of the proposal and is the culmination of your argument. It should be comprehensive and leave the reader with a belief in the value of the project and your ability to complete it.