Center for Teaching Excellence
Hampton University
Teaching Matters

Secrets to Successful Proposals and Grants Management
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The most important thing for grant-writers to remember is that they might submit a perfect application and still receive a rejection. Most foundations and agencies have limited resources with which to fund projects. Do not get discouraged if you get a rejection from a possible funding source.

Read the grantor's guidelines and instructions carefully. Do not try to make the grantor's program fit what you want to do - your program must fit the funding agency's priorities.

Ideas should be innovative, creative and educational. Grantors may fund operating expenses, but they usually invest in supplemental programs. Private foundations often seek creative solutions to problems/needs, but they usually do not wish to fund projects that appear to be a risk. Try proposing a project that makes a new contribution to an existing idea.

Keep your goals realistic! It is important to have an evaluation plan. Grantors want to know if the projects they fund are successful--that your project is meeting the goals.

Is your project replicable? If so, tell the grantor how you plan to extend the project to other populations.

Have a reasonable, detailed budget. Examine costs prior to submitting your application and be certain to explain your budget even if there are no requirements to do so.

If possible, **cite research that supports the program** for which you are requesting funding.

Clarity in communicating your ideas is very important. Have someone who is not involved in the project read and critique your draft application.

Proofread! Spelling and grammar errors do not convey a positive image.

Follow the grantor's instructions completely. Applications are turned away when they do not exactly meet the funding agency's requirements.

If your project is rejected, ask the grantor for reviewer comments. The comments can offer invaluable information for improving your future grant applications.

ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR GRANT WRITING SUCCESS

Research before beginning. Do not submit a proposal to any foundation or funding agent without first verifying that your project fits within the funder's guidelines. **Read the grant guidelines.** Many foundations have detailed guidelines available to grant-writers. These guidelines are made available so that proposals submitted to them will meet their funding initiatives. Applications that carefully follow the published guidelines allow them to easily determine if your project is one that matches their interests. **Be concise.** Put yourself in the place of the foundation's/agency's proposal reader. They receive and must review hundreds of proposals. The more easily and quickly they can determine if your project meets their objectives, the more likely they are to consider your proposal. **Clarity is important.** Keep in mind that acronyms and terms specific to your profession may mean nothing - or may mean something different - to the foundation/agency. Write your proposal as if you are communicating with someone who knows nothing about your field. **Proofreading is imperative.** Have someone who was not involved in the writing process proofread your proposal before it is submitted. Typographical errors, poor grammar, and other errors that are easy for a separate set of eyes to recognize are easy to overlook in your own work.. **Collaboration is vital.** Foundations often prefer to fund projects that have the greatest impact for the community and that are non-duplicative in nature. **Realistic budgets are a necessity.** Research your budget needs carefully before submitting your proposal. Do not ask for more - or less - than you feasibly need to ensure your project's success. **The evaluation component is imperative.** Your proposal should include methods for evaluating the effectiveness of your project. Evaluation is a necessary component of all projects - without it you will not know if your project is progressing as it should. **Address project sustainability.** Foundations and governmental agencies want to know that, if your project is successful, it will be continued even after their financial support has ended.

Much of your work really begins after you write a successful grant proposal and receive funding for your project. Managing a grant can be a tedious process and as much time is needed for an effective management plan as with the initial program planning prior to writing your proposal. An organized system of grants management should be in place that is coordinated from the beginning of the project to the end. Effective grants management includes: continuously **monitoring** how well the project is meeting its goals and objectives; **verifying** that all expenditures of grant funds are allowable and appropriate; **completing** required programmatic and fiscal reports on a timely basis; **conducting** a thorough project evaluation - including the distribution and submission of any agreed upon reports; **preparing** for audit visits which the grantor may wish to conduct during and/or after the project; and **closing** out the project according to the grantor's guidelines. Remember that how well you manage your grant will shape your reputation and may determine whether you receive future funding.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Call for Entries: In the February 2007 issue of the CTE Newsletter, we will be featuring our first in a series of white papers written by our faculty across the campus. We encourage you to submit a brief article or white paper examining some aspect of teaching and learning, research and grantsmanship and/or technological instruction no later than February 23, 2007 for consideration. We look forward to hearing from you.