Effective Grant Proposal
Writing Strategies

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Proposal Components

- Variations in Proposal Components:
  - Different agencies: different description, different function, different information
    - Cover sheet
    - Application Form
    - Title Page
    - Institutional Information
    - Transmittal Form
Proposal Components

- Abstract can be called:
  - Project Summary
  - Executive Summary
  - Technical Abstract
  - Project Overview
  - Proposal Abstract
Proposal Components

- Problem Statement can be called:
  - Needs Assessment, Needs Statement
  - Research questions to be addressed
  - Background: Institution, project, applicant
  - Project Introduction
  - Literature search, location of project in field
  - Research Hypothesis
  - Capabilities and Experience
Proposal Components

- Goals/Objectives can be called:
  - Project Objectives/Measurable Objectives/Specific Objectives
  - Solutions to the Problem
  - Project Outcomes/Expected Outcomes
  - Proposed results
  - Long-term benefits
  - Health-related benefits
  - Contributions to scientific infrastructure
Procedures

- Research plan
- Methodology
- Project narrative
- Activities
- Operating plans
- Action plan
- Strategies
- Work plan, work requirements
Evaluation

- Formative/summative evaluation
- Assessment procedures
- Measurements, instruments
- Qualitative/quantitative evaluation
- Analysis procedures
- Use of evaluation to improve performance
- Reporting outcomes
- Performance measures
- Project monitoring and reporting
Dissemination

- Transferability
- Distribution/publication of results
- Utilization plan
- Replicability
- Infrastructure impact
- Health-related impact
- Follow-up plans
Things

- Facilities and resources
- Space and equipment requirements
- Institutional Infrastructure
- Project technology
- Applicant contribution to project
- Floor plans, maps
People

- Capability of staff
- Project/Key personnel
- Human resources
- Project staff
- Quality of management plan
- Operational quality
- Special competencies
- Organization charts
Money

- Fiscal requirements
- Project costs
- Estimated costs
- Line-item budget
- Detailed budget narrative
- Applicant’s contribution
- Indirect (facilities and administration) costs
People, again

- Resume
- Curriculum vitae
- Biographical sketch
- Narrative biographical information
- Project staff
- Position descriptions
Appendices

- Letters of support/commitment/invitation
- Pilot research data
- Institutional information: not for profit status, articles of incorporation, accreditation
- Selected publications: printed and pre-prints
- Sample measures to be used
- Transcripts, other certification
- Sample syllabi
The Review Process

- Review process differs by funding agency:
  - Government vs. private funders
- Peer review is the standard in academia:
  - Reviewers can be internal or external or both
  - Reviewers can be published/known or anonymous
  - Reviewers can be suggested by applicant
- Application should be tailored to the review process and the level/types of reviewers:
  - Technical, non-technical, generalists, lay, multiple
The Review Process, continued

- Reviews may include any/all of these steps:
  - Internal review by agency staff
  - Selection of external reviewers by agency staff
  - Distribution of applications to selected reviewers
  - Return of anonymous reviews to agency
  - Convening of review panel (in person, by phone)
- Recommendation of review panel:
  - Funded; not funded; funded with changes
The Review Process, continued

- Multi-tiered agency review process:
  - Peer Reviewers’ comments/scores/recommendations
  - Program Officer/Executive Secretary of Review Group
  - Agency Council/Internal
  - Advisory Board/External Group
  - Head of Agency

- Agency decision to fund, not fund, fund with changes

- Communication of decision to applicant:
  - Telephone call
  - Written reviews (summary, individual) by hard copy or e-mail

- Budget, project and start date revision, if requested

- If not funded, project revised and resubmitted
Project Abstracts

- General guidelines: one or two sentences on:
  - Subject: What is the project about?
  - Purpose and significance:
    - Why is the project being done?
    - What is to be accomplished?
    - Why is this important—to funder, to discipline, to society?
  - Activities:
    - What will be done? What methods will be used?
  - Target population: what group is being studied or served?
  - Location of project, if necessary or important to the project
  - Expected outcomes:
    - What types of findings or results will be produced?
    - How will results advance knowledge or state of art in the discipline or profession
Writing the Abstract

- Under 200 words, under 20 words per sentence
- Each sentence adds specific new information
- No introduction or conclusion
- Generally one paragraph long, unless agency requires/allows more
- Written last, after entire proposal is written
- Not lifted whole from the proposal
- Language is usually non-technical, third person
- Usually no mention of budget, project dates, literature citations, name of applicant or institution unless requested by funding agency or important
Importance of Abstract

- Immediately shows agency the topic, approach, relevance
- Helps determine selection of reviewers
- Most-read section of proposal
- Entered into permanent electronic database
- Becomes primary identifier of project
- Often used by agency as press release or other publicity
For Questions and Follow-up
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