OFFICE FOR GRANTS

The Basics of Grant Writing

Eligibility

The very first thing that needs to be determined when considering applying for a grant is if the College is an eligible entity. Potential PIs must take time to review the Solicitation for Grant Award (SGA) announcement, Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) and Request for Proposals (RFP) to ensure that the College is specifically indicated as an eligible entity to apply. Other determining factors to consider before writing a proposal or completing any form are whether:

1. there is a good fit between the goals and objectives of the proposed project with what's stated in the FOA, SGA and/or RFP and the College's mission;
2. the required match (if any) of the specific FOA, SGA and/or RFP is supported by the College/campus leadership and that resources are available to meet that requirement;
3. ample space has been identified and secured for the project should it be funded; and
4. a sustainability plan is in place for continuation of the project at the end of the funding cycle.

Proposal Development Timeline

After assessing the College and program eligibility, the project initiator should note the submittal date. Based on the deadline date, the **proposal development timeline** should be created to help identify, organize and prioritize tasks, forms and approvals that need to be completed, the timeframe for specific activities and the responsible person. The complete timeline helps ensure that the proposal will be submitted on time.

Be sure to determine whether this grant cycle is an ongoing scheduled event or if it is a one-time opportunity. This will help your proposal and timeline development and will help you decide whether to pursue the opportunity this round or at the next round of the FOA, SGA and/or RFP.

Time assessment needs to be carefully measured. If there is not sufficient time to develop a well-written, complete and competitive package for the grantor, then the proposal writer should consider pursuing another source of funds.

The proposal developer needs to be able to answer at least three questions before deciding whether or not to proceed with proposal development:

1. Is there sufficient time to develop the proposal?
2. Is there sufficient support to get required signatures?
3. Is there sufficient time to develop necessary partnerships?

If the answer to these questions is affirmative, the proposal developer should contact their **grants developer** representative and the **Office for Grants** immediately to let them know of your intent to apply for the grant.

The proposal developer needs to develop an earnest timeline that includes:

- every task and element necessary to complete the proposal with sufficient time before the deadline to undergo the internal review process,
- document development in support of statements made addressing the criteria,
- narrative development with time for outside editing,
- relationship development with third parties/project partners were necessary, and
- time to address input and required changes by internal reviewers.

It is imperative that the proposal developer take time up-front to actually plan each task and event, and place it on a real timeline that takes the proposal development from initiation to submittal date.

Project Concept, Goals, Objectives and Outcomes

Once eligibility determinations listed above are met and the Proposal Development Timeline is completed, the Project Concept Author should do the following:

1. Get the Pre-Proposal Request form in motion (see the grant application process on the front page of the Pre-Proposal Request form). Ideally, this form should be submitted **three months prior** to the application due date;
2. While your Pre-Proposal Request form is going through the approval process, familiarize yourself with the FOA, SGA and/or RFP evaluation criteria. Evaluation criteria are key to understanding and developing activities that meets the requirement of the proposal.
3. Design and write the program to specifically respond and meet the FOA, SGA and/or RFP evaluation criteria;
4. Define an overarching goal of the proposed program and develop objectives that meet the goal of the program;
5. Develop tasks with deliverables or outcomes (tangible and/or intangible, but definitely measurable) to accomplish the project's stated objectives;
6. Develop a detailed description on how the program can be replicated when grant funds end, or how it is applicable to other institutions - providing a secondary and tertiary benefit that could be gained when grant dollars and/or program ends is another way to address this issue. Grantors are looking for projects to fund. If funds are sought as something just to "buy time", or to establish something that shall require grant-funded support in perpetuity, then the application is not a likely candidate for funding.
7. Develop a budget that supports all of the program activities in detail. It is highly recommended to always breakdown your costs into units and cost per unit. An accompanying written explanation of how the cost was arrived and why the expense is necessary for the program are also very important as a narrative justification to your program budget.
8. **At least 7 days prior to the submission deadline, provide the completed Final Review and Approval form with all requested information to the Office for Grants.**