



National Center for
Family & Marriage Research
Bowling Green State University

GRANT WRITING 101 SEMINAR: WRITING A FUNDABLE GRANT

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Overview of the Workshop

- Preparing to write a grant
- The proposal process
- The review process
- Funding sources
- Concluding remarks

Why Write a Small Grant?

PI

- Research support
- Salary support

Institution

- Indirect funding
- Salary savings
- Prestige

Science

- High quality research
- Advance the field

How to be Competitive

Be a productive scholar

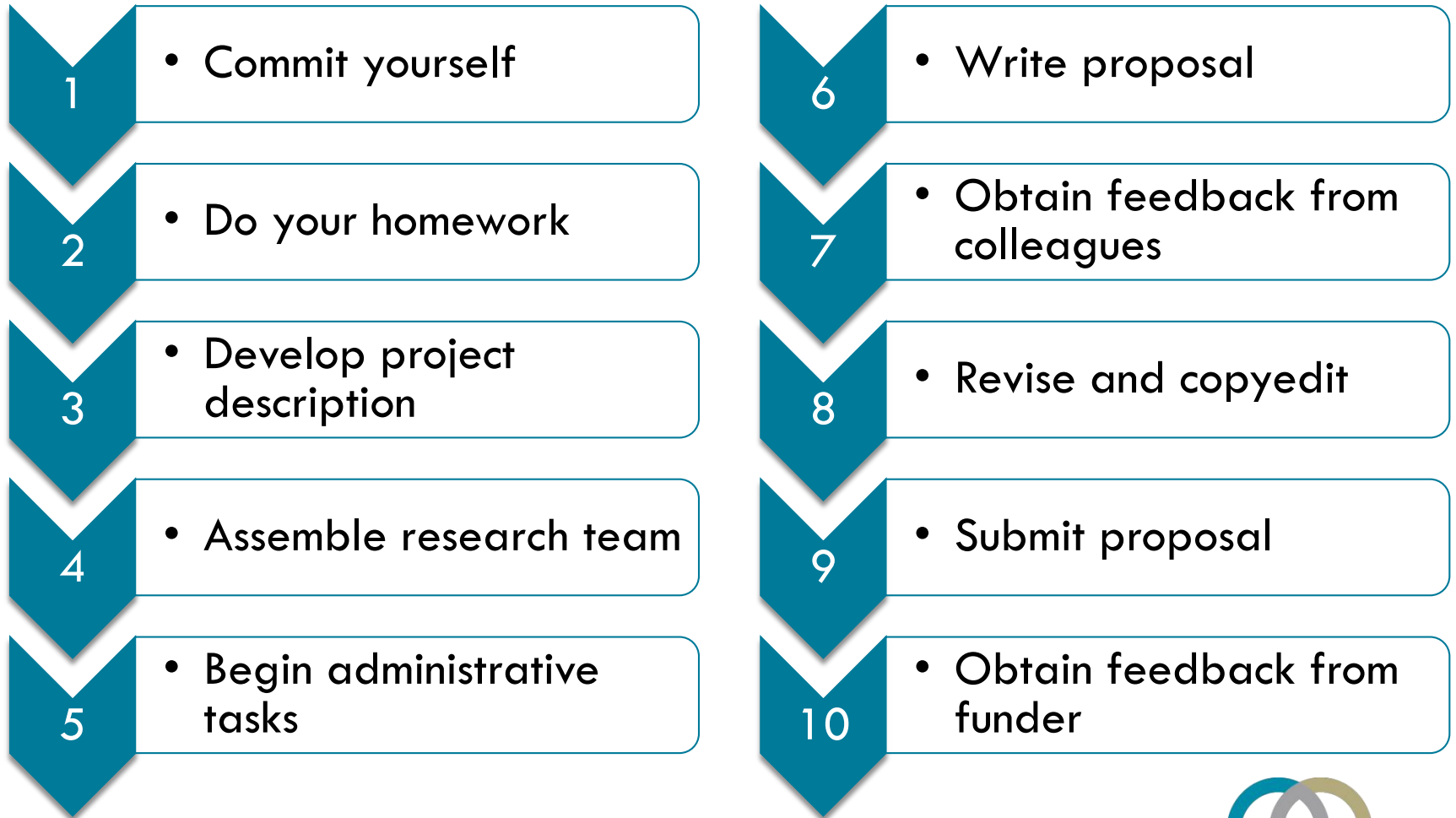
Network with colleagues

Be ready to respond to opportunities that arise

Identifying Opportunities



The Proposal Process



Step #1: Commit Yourself

- Begin with an idea that evolves from your prior work and expertise
- Choose a deadline well in advance (if possible) and stick to it
- Send a letter of intent if necessary

Step #2: Do your Homework

- Review funder's list of supported projects
- Read a successful proposal
- Begin to update your review of the literature on the topic (venture beyond your discipline)
- Identify data source/subjects

Step #3: Develop Description

Write a one page project description that includes:

- Research topic, primary research questions
- Significance of the research
- Theoretical framework

Step #3: Develop Description

- Specific hypotheses
 - ▣ Specify independent and dependent variables
 - ▣ State directional hypotheses
 - ▣ Identify mechanisms Methodology and data collection methods
- Estimated budget (direct costs)
- Time line for the project completion

Step #3: Develop Description

- Plan for disseminating research (and data, if applicable) findings

THEN—

- Circulate your description to colleagues for feedback
- Email funder if you have questions

Step #4: Assemble the Team

- Consider whether you will conduct this research solo or with others
- Size of team will vary by the scope of the grant
- Complementarity is critical

Team Members

- Co-investigators
- Statistical programmer
- Interviewers
- Graduate research assistants
- Consultants

Step #5: Administrative Details

- Carefully review the application instructions
 - ▣ Substantive topic
 - ▣ Length and formatting
 - ▣ Budget (restrictions, maximum amount, indirects allowable)
 - ▣ PI qualifications
 - ▣ Due date and submission method (paper, email)

- Create your own checklist with all of the components of the grant

Step #5: Administrative Details

- Seek HSRB approval
- Begin developing and drafting your budget
 - Consult with department chair, other administrators
- Initiate contact with campus grants office to
 - Prepare budget
 - Submit application (what is the lead time?)

Step #6: Write the Proposal

- Follow directions!
 - ▣ Pay attention to the application instructions and conform to all requirements

- Use the format provided by the funder. Otherwise, use NIH sections as a guideline:
 - ▣ Specific Aims—what are your research questions?
 - ▣ Significance—why is this topic important?
 - ▣ Innovation—what is unique about your approach?
 - ▣ Approach—how will you conduct the study?
 - ▣ Prior studies—what are your qualifications?

Step #6: Write the Proposal

- Anticipate making several rounds of revisions
 - ▣ Aim to be logical, concise, and compelling

- Avoid fatal flaws:
 - ▣ Incremental contribution or failure to adequately articulate the potential impact of the project
 - ▣ Incomplete or outdated literature review
 - ▣ Inconsistencies in the proposal
 - ▣ Unrealistic goals; not feasible
 - ▣ Failure to follow application instructions

Step #7: Obtain Feedback

- Ask colleagues to provide feedback on your proposal (plan ahead to ensure enough time)
 - ▣ Ask both an expert and a generalist
 - ▣ Ask colleagues who have successfully competed for grants and/or serve on grant review panels
- While others are reviewing your proposal, you can be working on the administrative aspects of the application

Step #8: Revise and Copyedit

- This is likely your only chance to submit this application—make sure it is the best it can be
- Revise your proposal in response to suggestions from colleagues
- Set aside and re-read with fresh eyes
- Give the application a final review for editorial issues (check references carefully)

Step #8: Revise and Copyedit

- Prepare a cover letter that briefly states:
 - ▣ Your topic
 - ▣ Why it is well-suited for this funding agency
 - ▣ Why it is significant and likely to move the field forward

- Spend some time on the abstract—it is the first (and could be the only) part of the application that gets read

Step #9: Submit your Proposal

- Be sure the complete application and materials are viewed and approved by various offices on campus
- Plan to be in the office on the day that the grant will be submitted so you can assist with any problems

Step #10: Obtain Feedback

- Even if your grant is not funded, the agency will likely provide some substantive feedback
 - ▣ Review the comments and think about how they would strengthen your research
 - ▣ Use the comments as a way to assess which parts of your application were weak

- Many good applications are not funded
 - ▣ NICHD payline is roughly 10%
 - ▣ NCFMR funds top 4 out of 25-35 applications

How the Review Process Works

- Top scholars in the area serve as reviewers
- Each reviewer is asked to evaluate multiple applications
- The evaluation form includes specific and general ratings as well as an overall assessment
- Overall ratings are summed across reviewers to rank order proposals

Small Grants Competition Reviewer Form, 2011

PI INFORMATION					
PI Name					
Project Title					
Reviewer Name					
RATINGS					
	1 – Poor	2 – Fair	3 – Satisfactory	4 – Good	5 – Excellent
Overall quality of research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments					
Significance of research topic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments					
Innovative approach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments					
Appropriateness of methodology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments					
Feasibility of proposed project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments					
Investigator(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments					
OVERALL REVIEW					
<i>Please indicate your overall assessment of the proposed project. Only 4 projects will be funded.</i>					
Outstanding-definitely fund	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Recommend funding	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Proposal is acceptable, but low priority for funding	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Proposal should NOT be funded	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Funding Sources

□ Research Centers

■ NCFMR

■ Poverty Research Centers (Wisconsin, California-Davis, Stanford)

■ Center for Violence and Injury Prevention

■ Building Careers for Research in Child Maltreatment and Intimate Partner Violence

(http://www.savirweb.org/assets/416_earlycareerscholarapplica.pdf)

Funding Sources

- Professional Organizations
- State and local funding opportunities
- University support for research and grant activities
- Private foundations
 - ▣ Robert Wood Johnson, WT Grant, Spencer
- Federal funding
 - ▣ NIH, NSF

Conclusions

Be aware

- Pay attention for funding opportunity announcements

Be ready

- Establish a strong research record to ensure you are well-equipped to respond to calls for applications

Be organized

- Create a checklist and budget your time

Conclusions

**Be
compelling**

- Sell your idea—describe how will your work impact the field

**Be
responsive**

- Share your application with colleagues and revise it according to their suggestions

**Be
determined**

- If you are not successful the first time, don't give up

thank you!

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The NCFMR is funded by a cooperative agreement (5 U01 AE000001-05) between ASPE/HHS and BGSU.