ADVANCED GRANT WRITING

How to Read Requests for Proposals and Write a Strong Proposal
• **Grant Development Supports**

  • Help researchers understand funding guidelines
  • Find funding and offer individual training on Pivot (online funding database)
  • Critique and edit researchers’ grant narratives
  • Review and edit ancillary documents
AGENDA

- How to navigate a grant solicitation
- Walk-Through of American Council of Learned Societies, Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Innovation Fellowship
- Tips for Writing Grants

NOTE: This session is being recorded. Please mute your microphones.
HOW TO READ A SOLICITATION

Proposal fundamentals
• **Who Can Apply?**
  - Does the funder make grants to academic institutions or individuals?
  - Are you eligible? At the right stage of your education. A member of a target group? Any limitations on citizenship?
  - Double check that the opportunity isn't a limited submission.

• **Why it matters**
  - Eligibility is the first thing to check - don’t waste precious time reviewing guidelines if you or UO doesn’t fit the strictures of the funder.
  - If you or UO is ineligible, your application would be automatically rejected.
SECOND: SPONSOR FOCUS

• **Priorities**
  • Sponsors have their own goals
  • Priorities may change from one year to the next
  • Look for words like *purpose, goals, objectives, seeks to*

• **Why it’s important**
  • Reveals fit with your own research topic
  • Projects not in alignment with the funder’s goals won’t score well
• **Assess whether the grant provides enough funds for your project**
  • External funds can bolster an existing GE appointment by providing money for participant incentives, or research materials.

• **Review allowed vs. unallowable costs**
  • Not all funders will pay for all aspects of a project.
  • Understand what you are allowed to put into your proposal budget
FOURTH: APPLICATION COMPONENTS

• **Structure:** Look for what information is sought, and in what format
  - CV or Biographical Sketch?
  - Letters of support?
  - Writing samples?
  - Special forms needing institutional signatures?

• **Compliance**
  - Read for obligations—words like *must, required, may only, restricted, limited to, prohibited*
FIFTH: REVIEW CRITERIA

• Common measures used for assessing / scoring applications
  • Need for the Project
  • Significance/ Impact of the work
  • Novel / Innovative nature of the proposed research/ project
  • Expertise of the applicant
  • Feasibility of the project – design, timeline, budget
SIXTH: SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

- **Format**
  - PDFs uploaded into a portal?
  - Short answers typed into online system?
  - Emailed application?

- **Who Submits?**
  - Individual researcher may submit for some applications
  - Nearly all federal applications are submitted by SPS
WALK-THROUGH OF FUNDING SOLICITATION

Reading and interpreting the American Council of Learned Societies, Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Innovation Fellowship
THE ART OF PREPARATION

• Register on a funder’s site well in advance of the deadline.
• Read guidelines, start to finish. Note any eligibility limitations.
• Review past successful proposals.
• Coordinate with faculty advisor and RDS to review your work.
• Start early! Time for multiple drafts.
• Use active voice. Be concise.
• Write both for specialists and generalists.
• Avoid technical language or jargon. Define it where it must be used.
• Proofread. Sloppy applications don’t impress the reviewers.
THE ART OF PERSUASION

- Address all evaluation criteria.
- Explain / foreground project’s significance!
- Locate project in larger scholarly context.
- Locate project in your scholarly trajectory.
- Provide snapshots/stories that intrigue the reader.
THE ART OF PERSUASION (CONTINUED)

• Provide a realistic timeframe & workplan.
• State the expected outcomes of your work clearly.
• Describe project with enough concrete detail to be convincing. Don’t exaggerate.
• Make no assumptions about the readers’ knowledge of your research.
OTHER ARTFUL TIPS

• **Start Early**
  • Reviewers will spot a rushed proposal.

• **Save effort**
  • Apply to multiple funders for the same project.

• **Remember Writing Style**
  • Grant writing is persuasive and has a particular form and style. Do not write as like a scholarly article.

• **Keep Trying**
  • Successful applicants often fail at first. Try and try again!
QUESTIONS?

rds@uoregon.edu