

Getting Started in Grant Writing

WSU College of Education

October 18, 2012

Introductions

- * Welcome!
- * Brief introduction from all attendees and campuses.
- * Research interests? (You might find a new collaborator for a grant project)!
- * Specific challenges in grant writing?

Grant Writing vs. Academic Writing

- * The academic writing style you're used to (for journal articles, etc.) does *not* win grants.
- * It can actually hurt your chances.
- * If a reviewer says a proposal “reads like a journal article,” this is not a good thing!
- * To succeed at grant writing, you need a new set of writing skills.

Comparison of Writing Styles

Grant Writing

- * Easy to understand
- * Brief, concise
- * Personal, enthusiastic
- * “Sell” to the reader
- * Goals, activities, outcomes
- * Action-oriented
- * Agency goals, service
- * Team-focused

Academic Writing

- * Academic language, jargon
- * Lengthy, verbose
- * Objective
- * Explain to the reader
- * Thesis statement, theory
- * Focused on ideas
- * Your own goals
- * Individualistic

How does grant writing style look in practice?

- * Short, clear sentences
- * Key phrases underlined or bolded
- * Lists (bulleted or numbered)
- * Graphs and tables
- * Active voice (I or we), future-focused
- * Strong, persuasive phrasing
- * Conveys enthusiasm
- * Includes goals, activities, outcomes, evaluation plan

Where do I find examples of successful proposals?

- * Many funders post abstracts online
- * COE posts some proposals on Sharepoint
- * Colleagues may or may not want to share
- * Reviewer feedback is also quite valuable
(silver lining to rejection)

Adjust Your Perspective

- * Don't explain why you need funding... Show how you can help the agency further its goals.
- * You and funder are a team, working on common goals.
- * Take reviewer's POV, reading 100's of proposals.
- * Make yours stand out: innovative, brief, clear, exciting.
- * Put essential info on 1st pg (goals, activities, outcomes)
- * Write for generalists, not specialists
- * It's like advertising, but don't sell yourself or your idea
- * Sell your action plan and expected results

Grant Writing Process

- * Read RFP and guidelines, adjust plan to fit
- * Consider alternate sources and grant types
- * Before starting, discuss with collaborators
- * Then contact grant officers to ensure fit
- * Get internal deadline from WSU grant staff
- * Rewrite many times, seek feedback from colleagues and editors

Foundations

- * Often led by wealthy benefactors or those who carry out their wishes
- * Cultivate relationship first
- * WSU Foundation can help establish contact and share success history
- * Often short letter of intent (LOI)
- * Once LOI is accepted, you write full proposal
- * Once proposal is accepted, you may need to jump through another hoop & present at board mtg

Federal Sources

- * Big money, large projects, long proposals
- * Acceptance rate once 1:10, now often 1:60
- * Transformative, generalizable, model projects
- * Partnerships, collaboration valued
- * Detailed RFPs and strict guidelines
- * Often a short LOI first
- * Plan to submit several, use reviews to improve
- * Keep on truckin'! (Workshop 2, Staying the Course)

State Sources

- * Still big money, but can be easier to procure
- * Advantage of regional contacts, partnerships
- * Agency may have funded other WSU projects
- * You may be competing with your colleagues
- * Or you may be collaborating with them!
- * Partnerships are valued (agencies, schools, etc.)

Local Sources

- * Easier to win
- * Easier to write (short application)
- * “Small potatoes” in terms of funding
- * Good for small pilot projects, equipment
- * Can be a single investigators
- * Often offered by local businesses
- * Larger corporate funders with business in our area have more money, use your project to advertise

WSU Grants

- * Challenge Grants (\$100K this year, COE won)
- * Faculty Research Awards
- * Fellowships
- * Travel Grants
- * Clear guidelines, short proposals
- * Good for individuals (except Challenge grants)
- * Provide experience & notoriety for future grants

Assistance with Writing Process

Laura Girardeau, lgirardeau@wsu.edu, x6232

Faculty Research Development Coordinator

*I help COE faculty identify funding sources,
focus projects and edit drafts*

WSU Foundation: helps with contacts, background, success history, etc.

COS Pivot, grants database hosted by WSU.

(Platform may change: use Pivot while you can).

Questions? Shared Strategies?

*Questions? Tips on what's worked for you?

*I'll email you copies of this presentation and useful articles

*I have several grant writing manuals in my office (Cleveland 262) to lend for 1 week

References:

Why Academics Have a Hard Time Writing Good Grant Proposals (2007). Society of Research Administrators, Inc.

Grant Writing in Higher Education, by Kenneth T. Hanson (2004). Pearson Education.

THANK YOU FOR COMING!

Workshop #2, Nov. 15, 12-1 pm: Staying the Course (how to stay motivated)