

# 2020-2021 Collaborative Grant Writing Workshop Series

## Session 2 – Proposal Development



## Welcome & Ground Rules

*Poll #1*

### • Co-Presenters

- Bemidji: Jenna Trisko, Grants Specialist
- Mankato: Kristel Seth, Director of Research and Sponsored Programs
- St. Cloud: Jodi Kuznia, Director of Research Development  
Megan Robillard, Associate Director of Research Development
- Winona: Brett Ayers, Director of Grants & Sponsored Projects  
Katie Subra, Grants Specialist

### • Interactive Format

- Ask questions as they arise. We will use breakout rooms for final Q/A.
- Authentic examples, Useful infographic, and polls

## Learning Objectives

- Introduction to proposal sections
- Become familiar with typical narrative components
- Consider your project/program design
- Increase your funding competitiveness
- Importance of and how to build collaborations

## Priorities

- ✓ Communicate idea clearly, concisely. Create title and short abstract:
  - ✓ Purpose – why? what?
  - ✓ Significance – why? what? for whom?
  - ✓ Methods – how? when? who / with whom?
  - ✓ Evaluation – how? what next?
- ✓ Identify and connect:
  - ✓ Stakeholders (department chair, Dean, business office, grants office)
  - ✓ Collaborators (co-PI's, partner institutions)
  - ✓ Granting agency contacts
  - ✓ Diverse audience of experts, non-experts to gather insights
- ✓ Create a timeline for drafts, internal review, and submission



## Sample Timeline – Working Backwards

- 1-3 days prior to submission deadline – submit early!
- 7-10 days prior to submitting, complete external funding request / transmittal form through sponsored projects / grants office
- 2-4 weeks prior to submission – finalize proposal and all required documents
- 3-12 months prior – develop project ideas, research grant opportunities, discuss plans with potential co-PI's, internal and external stakeholders, read RFP / NOFO / NOA carefully
- NOTE: You can request copies – Freedom of Information Act

## Building Collaborations

*\*Join Pop-ups on 11/20:  
2.1: Project Design  
2.2 Identify Stakeholders*

- Identify what partnerships are needed for the project, co-PI's and others...
  - Can be based on expertise, equipment, access to participant population, etc.
  - Can be a way to secure required matching contribution
- The guidelines may also mention necessary collaborations
  - School districts, local county agencies, etc.
- Making those connections through:
  - Professional relationships
  - Cold calling, but check with University to see who can help (i.e., University Advancement for Foundations, Strategic partnerships for industry)
- Allow time to get their contribution on specific project-related involvement

## Writing Tips

### When you write:

- Follow guidelines explicitly (READ RFP)
- Address review criteria
- Use their headers and titles, they are looking for their words
- Draw on your strengths, strengths of the institution
- Use clear, precise language – avoid jargon!
- Make use of bullets, tables
- Include a Table of Contents, identify proposal sections that meet the criteria
- Ask colleague or someone outside your area of expertise to read it

## Components: Cover Sheet

- Information requested is usually on behalf of University
- Authorizing signatures:
  - Will be those for University
  - Start thinking about signatures now
  - Work through sponsored program / projects offices to secure
  - Person who accepts the award on behalf of the University (e.g., VP of Finance & Administration)
  - Take into consideration collaborating universities, agencies, and their review / timeline requirements



## Components: Project Summary / Abstract

- Overview of the project, cover all key elements, answer all questions from Priorities (slide 4)
- First (sometimes only) point-of-reference for reviewers
  - Engages them and provides basic road map
- Agency-required sections (e.g., NSF's requires you to address broader impacts, intellectual merit, intellectual property; regional impacts)
  - Can also be requested in narrative too; duplicate when requested
- Could also be published (if funded)

## Components: Proposal / Narrative

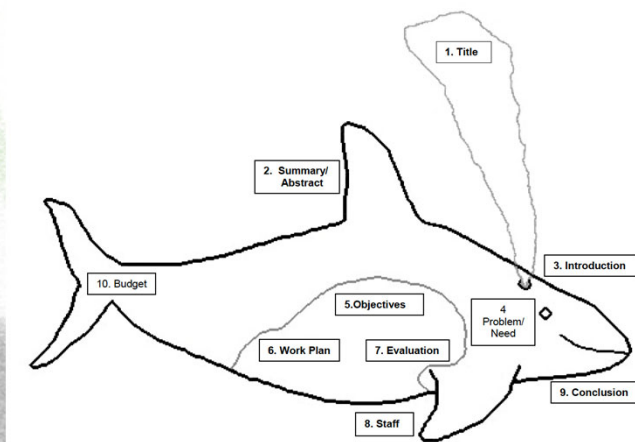
- Address what you want to do, how you plan to do it
  - Statement of need
  - Overall goals, objectives
  - Plan of action, methodology, timeline
- How you will know if you succeed (assessment plan – not just at the end)
  - Include potential pitfalls and contingencies
- What benefits will be realized if successful (broader impacts)
- And remember to include:
  - Reporting, deliverables
  - Qualifications of project personnel
  - Sustainability

## Examples: Local & Federal

Let's pause to look at two example application requirements for project description and narrative :

1. "FY21 Early Care & Education Wrap Around Grant Application"  
MDE GEER Fund 2020 through Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation  
<https://smifoundation.org>  
Funding amount: up to \$10,000
2. "Maternal and Child Health Bureau Division of Maternal and Child Health Workforce Development"  
U.S. Department of HHS – Health Resources & Services Administration  
<https://mchb.hrsa.gov/training/healthy-tomorrows.asp>  
Funding amount: up to \$50,000/year for 5 years

## Great Grant Whale Metaphor



1. **Project Title** – Plume announces whale's presence
2. **Project Summary** – Whale is approaching
3. **Introduction** – Blowhole provides scope
4. **Problem/Need Statement** – Eye-to-eye understanding of situation
5. **Objectives** – Core / belly of the beast
6. **Work Plan** – Core / belly of the beast
7. **Evaluation** – Core / belly of the beast
8. **Staff** – Flippers steer through rough seas
9. **Conclusion** – Last thing prey sees
10. **Budget** – Flukes power the project



## Components: Budget & Justification

*\*Join Session 3 in February*

- Think about this right away:
  - Personnel
  - Subawards
  - Match requirements
  - Indirects (aka Facilities & Administrative costs)
- Realistic and reasonable – establishes your credibility
- Well-justified, establish need – tells a story & your project's organization
- Complies with all agency guidelines – what's allowable, what's not
- Make updates as the scope of work changes

## Components: Bibliography, Biography, Appendices

- Bibliography / References Cited
  - Follow scholarly practice for providing citations
  - Should be current, to-date references
- Biographical Sketches / Resumes / CVs
  - Format varies by agency, can change annually or by program / call
  - Senior personnel and external consultants (relevant experiences only)
- Appendices / Supplementary Documentation (if allowable)
  - Materials that add important data but are cumbersome in a narrative
  - Can include: Letters of Collaborations / Support / Commitment, Documentation to identify unusual circumstances, Postdoctoral Mentoring Plans, Data Management Plans

## Components: Agency-Specific Requirements

- These can also be requested in abstract too, duplicate when requested
- Examples:
  - Current & Pending Support
  - Facilities, Equipment, and Other resources
  - General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)
  - Research on Human Subjects
  - Conflict of interest
  - Disclosure, certification forms

## Occasional Components

- Letter of Intent
  - Provides agency an idea of what the review panel needs will be
- Preliminary Proposal
  - Reduces effort if chance of funding is small
    - i.e. Exploratory initiatives where there is a major new direction but small number of actual awards
  - Will have minimal components
    - Total budget amount requested, rather than detailed annual
  - Increases overall quality of a full submission



## Resources

- AASCU Grant Resource Center. (2009). *Developing Competitive Proposals*.
- Bhargava, E. (n.d.). *Preparing a Strong Proposal*. Connection Lab, LLC. [https://www.chna15.org/images/pdfs/Grant\\_Writing\\_Tips\\_and\\_Tricks.pdf](https://www.chna15.org/images/pdfs/Grant_Writing_Tips_and_Tricks.pdf)
- Greater Public. (n.d.). *Grant Seekers Toolkit Step 5: Write the Proposal Narrative*. <https://www.greaterpublic.org/resources/grant-seekers-toolkit-step-5-write-proposal-narrative/>
- National Science Foundation. (2015). *Proposal Preparation*. Grants Conference. [PowerPoint slides]
- University of Washington. (n.d.). *Writing Your Proposal Narrative*. <https://www.lib.washington.edu/commons/services/workshops/funding/human-socsci/narrative-handout>
- Winona State University. (n.d.) *Proposal Tips*. <https://www.winona.edu/grants/proposalstips.asp> [The Grant Grant Whale, Writing for the Reader, etc...]

## Wrap-up / Closing Thoughts / Survey

Contact us as soon as you start thinking about external funding.

- BSU Grants Office  
[jenna.trisko@bemidjistate.edu](mailto:jenna.trisko@bemidjistate.edu)
- MSU Research & Sponsored Programs  
507-389-5275 or [RASP@mnsu.edu](mailto:RASP@mnsu.edu)
- SCSU Research & Sponsored Programs  
320-308-4932 or  
[ResearchNow@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:ResearchNow@stcloudstate.edu)
- WSU Grants & Sponsored Projects  
507-457-5519 or [grants@winona.edu](mailto:grants@winona.edu)
- Time for large group general Q / A
- Breakout session - institution-specific Q/A:
  - Potential collaborators
  - Who signs?
  - Timelines
  - Types of awards

