# What Makes a Good Grant Proposal?

- **A good idea or compelling project**
  - Does it address an important problem?
  - Will scientific knowledge be advanced?
  - Does it build upon or expand current knowledge?
  - Is it feasible …
    - ◊ to implement?
    - ◊ to investigate?
- **Research addresses a significant problem**
- **Clear description of the research activities**
- **A good fit with funding agency's priorities**
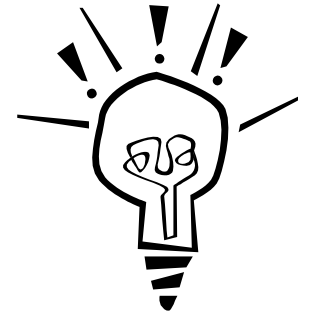
What Reviewers Look For **First**

More is <u>not</u> better! Make it easy for the reviewers to evaluate your proposal

- **What's the title? Is it interesting?**

- **Who is the applicant?**

- **Which institution(s) is the applicant affiliated with?**

- **What's the basic idea? Is it within my area of expertise?**

- **Is the application "Reviewer-friendly"?**

Writing Tips: Tricks of the trade

- **Read successful grants**

- **Sit in on mock reviews**

- **No typos, <u>each page a thing of beauty</u> . . .**

- **Tell a story . . .**
  - **Build your argument**
  - **Help reviewers care**

- **Involve mentor, co-investigator, biostatistician early (6-12 months)**

The key to success in grant writing is to engender enthusiasm in the reviewer – who then becomes an advocate for your proposal. Therefore, always write your application for the reviewer, NOT yourself

Factors We Can't Control

- Internal politics within the funding agency

- Stiff competition from other applicants

- Limited availability of funds for certain program areas within funding agency

Common Components of a Research Proposal

- **Summary / Abstract**
- **Introduction / Statement of the Problem**
- **Review of the Literature**
- **Methodology**
- **Data Analysis**
- **Bibliography**
- **Organizational Capability**
- **Timeline**
- **Budget/Cost Effectiveness**
- **Appendices**

Cover/Title Page

- **Use sponsor agency form if applicable**
- **Use required guidelines**
  - Project title
  - Organization name
  - Sponsor agency name (if applicable)
  - Submission date

Project Summary / Abstract

- One page
- State problem
- Propose solution
- State project objectives and significance
- Some organizations requires statement of intellectual merit and broader impacts

Making a successful application: The Abstract

- Summary of the entire proposal – write it last!

- Understandable by researchers outside the field – don't underestimate the importance of the lay abstract either!

- Will be the first thing read by primary reviewers

- May be the ONLY thing read by other committee members

- Will influence the way reviewers approach the rest of the proposal

Introduction

- **What specific need or problem does your research address?**

- **How was the need identified and its significance?**

- **Who will benefit from the proposed research project?**

- **What are the research questions and/or objectives of the proposal**

Project Research Questions / Objectives

- Bullet list research questions or objectives

- Should be action-oriented

- Relate to identified needs

- Relate objectives to sponsor agency's goals and priorities

Review of the Literature

- **Literature review should relate to:**
  - **The topic or problems area**
  - **Theory area**
  - **Methodology**

Methodology

- **Subjects – Describe Sample**
- **Design – Type of Design Used and Sequence of Events**
- **Data Collection – Description of variables, control, measurements**

Data Analysis

- **Describe how collected data will be analyzed**
- **What are the effects to be analyzed**
- **Analysis should meet project objectives or**
- **Should be linked to the hypotheses and clear how each hypothesis will be tested**

Plan of Operation

- Describe activities to be undertaken
- Identify person responsible for each
- Describe oversight and management of project
- Describe qualifications of key personnel

Organizational Capability

- Describe your organization, its history, and its mission
- Describe organization's strengths in terms of staff, facilities, resources
- Describe prior experience relevant to the proposed project

Timeline

- **Use chart or table**
- **Illustrate each phase of implementation**
- **Show when results will be achieved**

Budget and Cost-Effectiveness

- **Make sure budget coincides with narrative**
- **Make sure sponsor will support budget categories you propose**
  - Some sponsors may disallow equipment, overhead or other costs

- **Provide a budget narrative**
- **Explain how you arrived at figures in each category**
  - How fringe benefits are calculated
  - How you calculated travel costs
  - How you estimated equipment costs