

## E.R.R.I.S. Grants Preparation Workshop

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### Some Personal Perspectives in Grant Writing (1)

- Learn about the priorities of the agency to which you are applying. Are you addressing their needs and objectives?
- Don't be afraid to call the project officer if you have any questions to discuss.
- Find out about who is likely to be on your study section or review panel and learn something about their work.



### Some Personal Perspectives in Grant Writing (2)

- Make a *serious* attempt to write a summary that is interesting and understandable. But, be realistic.
- Write the rest of the proposal that would make it interesting if *you* had to read it as a reviewer. Try to write in the active voice.
- Goal: keep your reviewers awake. Try (real hard) to avoid jargon and excessive use of arcane abbreviations.



### Some Personal Perspectives in Grant Writing (3)

- Keep the background information relevant and focused. Don't ramble; This is *not* a dissertation.
- Remember, sentences don't have to be as long as paragraphs. Don't preach.
- Show some enthusiasm for your ideas and work, but always be factual and don't exaggerate your claims.



### Some Personal Perspectives in Grant Writing (4)

- Be sure your methods and statistics are clearly presented and described in sufficient detail.
- Be certain you know what you are doing in both. Can you *really* do this work? If not, get a *bona fide* collaborator.
- Are your techniques novel and innovative? Have you emphasized this?
- Have you provided preliminary data?
- Can you honestly expect to attain your objectives?



### Some Personal Perspectives in Grant Writing (5)

- Find a way to emphasize your key points and your hypotheses. Define your terms. Help the readers find their way.
- Don't take it for granted that every reviewer is an expert in your field. Make your proposal understandable.
- Don't take a shotgun approach; "A let's see what happens if" approach is not appreciated.



### Some Personal Perspectives in Grant Writing (6)

- Neatness counts. Reviewers are not your personal editorial assistants.
- Make sure your figures and charts are easy to understand *at a glance*.
- You shouldn't need a magnifier to read your legends and you shouldn't need a glossary to figure out your abbreviations.



### Some Personal Perspectives in Grant Writing (7)

- Make sure you follow *all* guidelines for preparing the grant.
- Yes, margins, spacing, font style, paper size, **length of proposal**, are all taken seriously.
- You want your primary reviewers to be friendly towards you.
- This is done by making their lives a bit easier.



## Some Personal Perspectives in Grant Writing (8)

- Make sure that your budget is factual and reasonable, *and easy to follow*.
- Don't pad. Most reviewers know the general costs of research.
- Have a realistic timetable for the research.
- Be sure you can attain your objectives.



## Some Personal Perspectives in Grant Writing (9)

- Be sure your resume is up to date *and factual*. Reviewers do read the bio-sketches.
- Don't be afraid to emphasize your qualifications.
- If you have 'outside' collaborators be sure you have letter(s) of support.
- Keep your 'attachments' reasonable. The application should not double as a doorstop.



## Do's and Don'ts When the Proposal Is Not Funded (1)

- Do not panic. Life is not always fair.
- Don't let your anger and disappointment get the best of you. It (usually) is not personal.
- Read the critiques very carefully and get second opinions on their merit.
- Contact the study section secretary or grants officer if you have specific questions. *Do not hassle them*. It's not their fault.



## Do's and Don'ts When the Proposal Is Not Funded (2)

- In the revision, follow the reviewer's comments very carefully, but don't expect that doing so will guarantee success.
- Add any new data to strengthen your case.
- Think about whether a different agency or institute might be interested in receiving the proposal.
- Try to stick to your principles. Don't just go "where the money is".



## Some Alternative Sources of Funding

- Private funds and benefactors
- Private foundations and local philanthropies
- Charitable organizations
- Pharmaceutical companies
- Venture capital companies
- Your own intra-institutional resources



## Private Foundations and Some Companies Can Be a Funding Resource

- Proposals must be written in an easy-to-understand style.
- Proposals should be short and focused on the mission of the funding source.
- Where possible or permitted, prior contact and discussion with a representative is often very helpful.
- But, companies are there to make money not to do good. This has implications for your work.



## Private Foundations and Some Companies Can Also Be a Resource: Problems and Pitfalls

- Grants/contracts are usually small, of fixed duration and non-renewable.
- Awards may contribute only a small amount for indirect costs or nothing at all.
- Grants/contracts may be very mission oriented and limited in scope.
- Such awards may have proprietary restrictions.
- Reporting and oversight may be difficult.
- Peer review may be very limited, if at all.
- There are no free lunches!

