

# TIPS FOR GRANT PREPARATION

## I. To be successful, your application must possess two characteristics:

1. Excellent science.
2. Flawless packaging.

### Excellent science

Without excellent science, there is no possibility of funding. Excellent science contains the following three elements:

1. A basic idea that is novel, significant, and based upon sound, logical principles.
2. An experimental approach that is technically feasible.
3. A study design that is adequate to achieve an answer (adequate number of experiments, suitable planning for controls, and a workload that is appropriate both to the dollars requested and the time).

### Flawless packaging (preparation of your application)

Flawless packaging includes the following:

1. Follows all technical rules to length and type size.
2. Is absolutely clear, concise, and lacks needless repetition.

## II. Seven fundamental questions grant reviewers ask about an application:

- Is the hypothesis valid?
- Are the aims logical?
- Are the procedures feasible, adequate, and appropriate for the research proposed?
- Is the research likely to produce new data and concepts or confirm existing hypotheses?
- What is the significance and originality of the proposed study in its scientific field?
- Are the principal investigator and staff qualified to conduct the proposed work, as judged by their demonstrated competence, academic credentials, research experience, and productivity?
- Are the facilities, equipment, and other resources adequate for the proposed work, and is the environment conducive to productive research?

### **III. Specific pointers to keep in mind:**

1. State your study objectives and specific aims clearly.
2. Use the literature review to justify the need for a proposed project.

Provide a concise summary of the literature. You can group this section by subtopics. Be efficient and conserve space, but at the same time be sure that the reviewer is 1) convinced you know what others have done and 2) can discern your thought process.

3. State the general strategy of the study, including a discussion of the rationale for the choice of methods, e.g., historical study, survey, experiment, use or not of comparison group.
4. Seek expert consultation, with a biostatistician, methodologists, grant office personnel, ethics committees, or others who have well-developed skills in the field of grantsmanship. Reviewers look very carefully at your consultant or mentor. Make sure that your application includes a letter of agreement from each consultant as well as his/her CV. Letters should indicate what the mentor or consultant will do and what facilities he/she is prepared to let you use. A sense of enthusiasm should be communicated.
5. Specify the criteria you will use to evaluate the answers to your study question and the success of your project. Keep in mind: The success of a study or project is not determined by the verdict it yielded but by the quality of the evidence it produced.
6. Be clear and concise. Organize paragraphs to permit intelligent skimming. Tell reviewers up front what is in each paragraph. Reviewers don't want creative writing; they want accuracy, clarity, and brevity. Misspelled words, typographical errors, and poor grammar reflect a careless attitude, not exactly what reviewers are looking for in investigators.
7. Keep appendices and supporting documents to a minimum.
8. Be realistic and honest in your assessment of the available and required resources.
9. Follow all instructions to the T and meet all deadlines.