



Proposal Writing: Helpful Tips & Fatal Flaws

Antioch University
Institutional Advancement
May 2019

Adapted from NSF Division of Undergraduate
Education, Directorate for Education and Human
Resources

Proposal Writing: Helpful Tips & Fatal Flaws



- Setting a Timeline

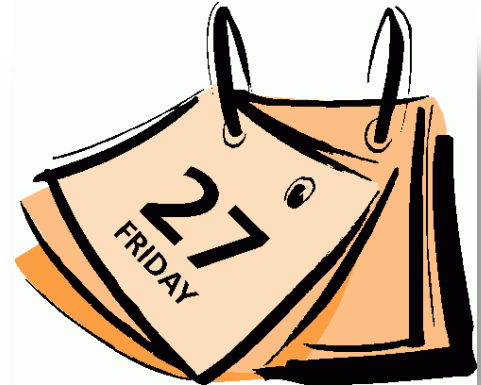
- 10 Proposal Writing Tips



- Fatal Proposal Flaws

Setting a Timeline

- 12 -18 MONTHS AHEAD
 - Identify opportunities from prior years, read award abstracts and outcome reports.
- 6 MONTHS AHEAD
 - Begin discussing with any partners.
- 3 MONTHS AHEAD
 - Read final solicitation carefully. Make a checklist of proposal requirements and names of people who can work on each part. Alert sponsored projects office that you plan to submit a proposal.



Setting a Timeline

- 1.5 MONTHS AHEAD
 - Share draft proposal for feedback with colleagues. First draft of budget. Begin developing subaward/subcontract agreements, if any.
- 2 WEEKS AHEAD
 - Upload everything except narrative, if possible. Ensure subaward/subcontract paperwork done.
- 1 WEEK AHEAD
 - Final edits by PI, partners, and sponsored projects. Obtain any last supporting docs.
- DAY BEFORE DUE DATE
 - Submit if possible.



10 Tips for Writing the Proposal

1. Read the Program Announcement

- Contact the program officer via email.
- Talk to the program officer to ensure your ideas fit with the program.
- Ask if you can send a one-page summary.
- Be patient.



10 Tips for Writing the Proposal

2. Work on Projects You Care About

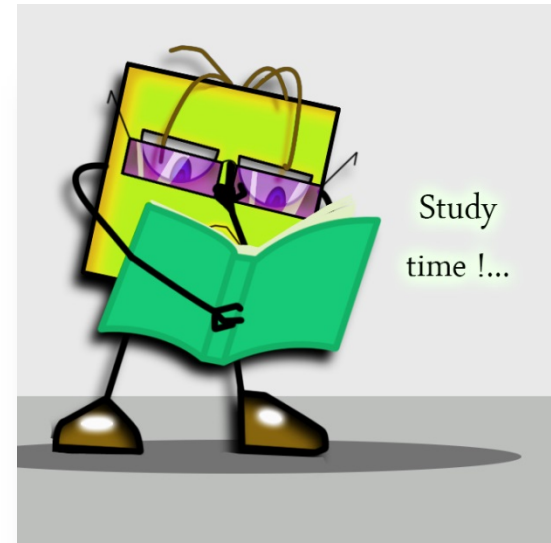
- Let your commitment come through.
- Make a compelling case for the **NEED** and **IMPORTANCE** of the work to your institution and to others.



10 Tips for Writing the Proposal

3. Do Your Homework

- Build on what others have done, know the literature and be current.
- Add to the body of knowledge.
- Discuss the value added of your project: what are you adding to the knowledge base?



10 Tips for Writing the Proposal

4. Think Broader Impacts

- Your project must have more than just a local impact (your students and your institution).
- How can others use and build on your work?
- Think about what is transferable.



10 Tips for Writing the Proposal

5. Have Measurable Goals and Objectives

- Avoid goals that are lofty but not measurable.
- Focus on activities that align with measurable goals and objectives and expected outcomes. Consider a logic model.
- What will be delivered? What is needed to convince others that this works and is worth supporting or emulating?



10 Tips for Writing the Proposal

6. Think Teamwork

- Successful projects are team efforts.
- Identify your support network and keep them engaged. Your project team should be greater than the sum of the parts.
- Get a good group of internal and external advisors and an outside evaluator (or evaluation team).

10 Tips for Writing the Proposal

7. Use Good Management Skills

- Develop a realistic timeline with milestones and key deliverables.
- Develop a strong management plan (team and project).
- Engage and empower your team (with accountability built in).



10 Tips for Writing the Proposal

8. Evaluation is about *Impact and Effectiveness*

- How will you know the project goals are being met?
- You need evidence to know your project is making an impact and it is effective.
- You cannot evaluate yourself. External validation is key.
- Build in evaluation from the beginning.

10 Tips for Writing the Proposal

9. Spread the Word

- Have a proactive dissemination plan. A website is necessary, but not sufficient.
- Disseminate within your scholarly community and beyond (reach other disciplines).
- Share the materials developed widely.



Helpful Tips: Recap

- Set a Timeline
- Read the Program Announcement
- Work on Projects you Care About
- Do Your Homework
- Think Broader Impacts
- Develop Measurable Goals & Objectives



Helpful Tips: Recap

- Think Teamwork
- Use Good Management Skills
- Evaluation is About Impact & Effectiveness
- Spread the Word
- Serve as a Peer Reviewer



Fatal Flaws

- Assuming deadlines are not enforced
- Ignoring program guidelines or assuming they haven't changed
- Assuming page limits and font size restrictions aren't enforced
- Substituting flowery rhetoric for good examples
- Failing to check speeling, nor you're grammer



Fatal Flaws

- Asserting: "Evaluation will be ongoing and consist of a variety of methods"
- Assuming a project website is sufficient for dissemination
- Assuming your past accomplishments are well known
- Not including letters of commitment
- Inflating the budget to allow for negotiations



Helpful Tips: Other Resources



Helpful Tips: Other Resources

- Grants and Foundation Relations web page:
<https://www.antioch.edu/resources/general-information/grants-foundation-relations/>
- GrantSpace free online courses (registration required):
<https://grantspace.org/training/search/form-at/on-demand/>
- The Grantsmanship Center, Inc. Proposal Writing and Grantseeking blogs:
<https://www.tgci.com/taxonomy/term/29>



Ready to Write a Proposal?

Contact me for Resources, Tools and Assistance:

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