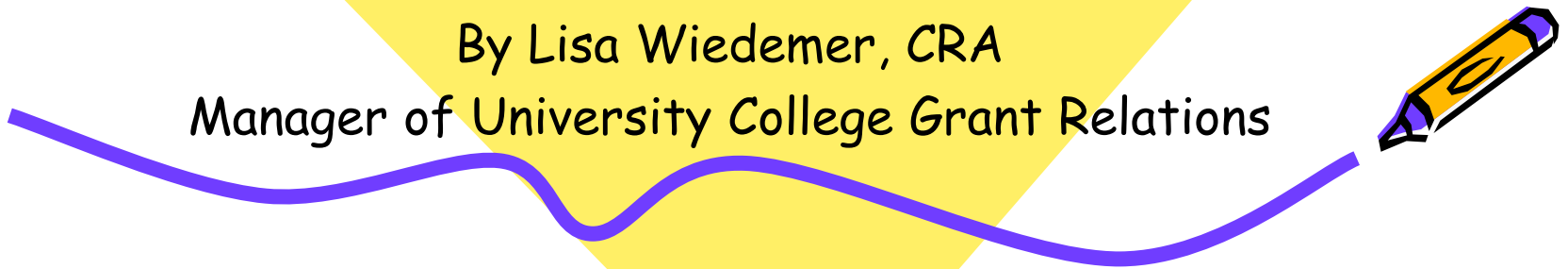




Basic Proposal Writing at Penn State

By Lisa Wiedemer, CRA
Manager of University College Grant Relations



What we'll be discussing

- Writing your idea down
 - Content
 - Budget

Writing the Proposal

- Follow the guidelines exactly
 - Guidelines can usually be found on the web, or from the funder. Use them to craft your outline and refer to key words from the guidelines in your narrative.
- Walk the fine line between being compelling and overselling
- Avoid jargon
 - Remember—generalists and not experts may be reading your proposal. Explain jargon and acronyms.
- Do not insert extraneous verbiage
 - Don't be wordy! **Remember the reviewers!!!**

Writing the Proposal

Standard proposal elements

- Executive summary
- Statement of need
- Organizational information
- Project description
 - Objectives
 - Evaluation
 - Timeline
 - Budget

Writing the Proposal

- Executive summary
 - Most important proposal element because it's usually the weed-out point.
 - Summarize all key points of proposal: statement of need, proposed project, funding requirements, organizational history
 - Keep to one page (or as guidelines indicate)
 - Write last
 - If you write it last, you'll capture any proposal evolutions that may have occurred.

Writing the Proposal

- Statement of need
 - Brief statement of problem
 - Discussion of relevant literature, if appropriate
 - Current data corroborating need
 - Avoid circular reasoning
 - (In other words, the problem is not the lack of a solution: “We need scholarship money because we don’t have scholarship money.” Scholarship money is needed because students are lower-socioeconomic level, first generation students, non-traditional, etc.)

Writing the Proposal

- Organizational information, if needed
 - Even if not required, be sure to explain that this proposal is from a PSU undergraduate campus, not UP (to illustrate difference in student and institutional resources).
 - Placement in text and content depends upon guidelines
- Basic information on websites
 - PSU: <http://www.psu.edu/ur/about.html>
 - Campuses: at individual campus websites

Writing the Proposal

Project description

- Cover all points listed in guidelines
- **Remember the reviewers!!!** Use:
 - Bullet points
 - Section headings
 - Bold face type for key words and phrases
- Include:
 - Objectives
 - Methods
 - Evaluation
 - Timeline

Writing the Proposal

- Project Description
 - Objectives
 - Not goals! (Goals are general and not measurable)
 - Use measurable outcomes:
 - Tangible
 - Specific
 - Achievable
 - Rest of proposal ties directly to objectives
 - Can be formative or summative
 - Only need one or two good objectives for a proposal

Writing the Proposal

- Project Description
 - Methods
 - Specific activities tied to each objective
 - Only describe major activities per objective
 - How will these activities meet your objectives?
 - Why have you chosen these objectives?
 - Do they reflect the importance of your objectives?

Writing the Proposal

- Human or animal subjects approval:
 - <http://www.research.psu.edu/orp>
- Statistical Consulting Center
 - Consulting services available
 - Visit <https://scc.stat.psu.edu/>

Writing the Proposal

- Project Description
 - Evaluation
 - Describe how evaluation will occur
 - Internal? External?
 - Some funders are now recommending proposals be written around the evaluation
 - Commonly, evaluations either measure product or analyze process
 - Tied to activities
 - Can be formative or summative

Writing the Proposal

- Project Description
 - Timeline
 - Divide project into appropriate sections
 - Include major goals for that period of time
 - Include entire grant period

Developing the Budget

- Budget
 - Must relate to narrative
 - Elements of most budgets
 - Personnel
 - Travel
 - Materials/supplies
 - Equipment
 - Facilities and Administrative (Indirect) Costs

Developing the Budget

- Personnel

- Percentage of effort

- Full-time personnel salary reimbursement estimated on the percentage of time and effort needed for the project

- Fringe benefits

- Current rates found at:

- <http://www.research.psu.edu/osp/commonly-requested-Information>

- Cost-of-living**

- Salaries/wages normally inflated for periods after the first year of an award. Rate changes; check OSP rate page for current one:
 - <http://www.research.psu.edu/osp/commonly-requested-Information>

Developing the Budget

- Equipment
 - Defined as:
 - Unit value of \$5,000 or more
 - Lifespan of two or more years

Developing the Budget

- Other Direct Costs
 - Services
 - Consultants, professional services
 - Printing/Copying
 - Materials and Supplies
 - Specific supplies needed for project
 - Computers/software generally not allowed

Developing the Budget

- Budget Justification/Narrative
 - One- or two-line descriptors explaining the item's relevance to the project and how the figure was calculated
 - Must address every line item in budget

Developing the Budget

- Cost-sharing, or matching costs
 - Contact DAA as soon as possible
 - Often a requirement, especially of government funders
 - Could be:
 - In-kind (salary + fringe benefits, supplies or services purchased by the campus specifically for the project, etc.)
 - Cash (from partnering organization, campus funds, etc.)

Developing the Budget

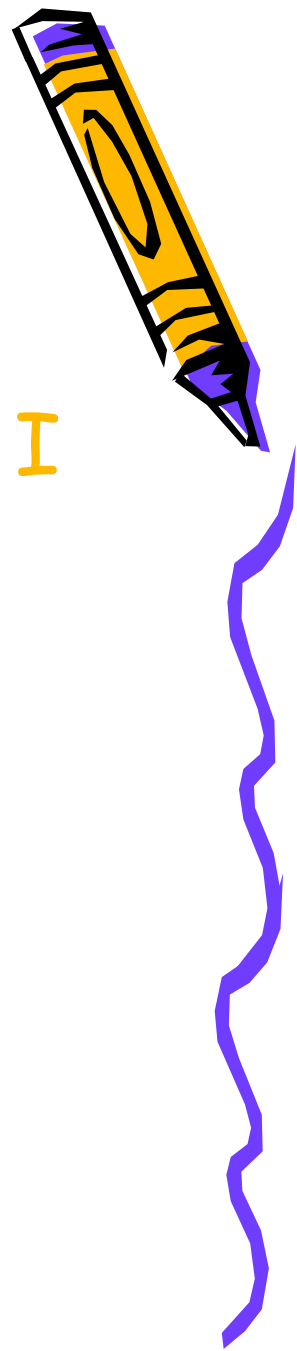
- Indirect costs
 - Also known as Facilities and Administrative (F&A)
 - Usually added on top of grant request
 - Way for university, college and campus to recoup wear and tear, utility usage, salaries, etc., associate with administering the grant

Developing the Budget

- F&A Rates—negotiated with Office of Naval Research, PSU’s cognizant federal agency
 - Organized research
 - Continuing Education & Instruction
- Current rates found at:
<http://www.research.psu.edu/osp/commonly-requested-Information>

Help!

- I sat through this whole thing and I **STILL** have questions!
 - Lisa Wiedemer, Manager of Grant Relations
 - llw13@psu.edu
 - (814) 865-6014



And if you need more....

- Fax number
 - (814) 863-5513
- Address
 - 204 E. Calder Way, Ste. 208
 - State College, PA 16803

