

# Proposal Review Notes

There is a multitude of funding streams, each with individual priorities and biases. While it is impossible to develop absolute rules when writing a proposal, there are some general qualities that can make a proposal more competitive. The following questions are a distillation of the learning from proposal review notes and highlight some of the universal traits important to funding agencies:

## 1. SIGNIFICANCE

- a) Does the study have the potential to be a building block for future research?
- b) Is long-range planning evident in the application?
- c) Is the analysis plan fully developed? Does it provide detailed illustrations of how the analytic strategy will unfold and how early results will influence later analyses?
- d) Are hypotheses well justified? Do they tightly link back to the projects conceptual approach?
- e) Does the work outlined in the proposal seem realistic? Is this a highly significant area of study?
- f) Is this a compelling idea with well-directed questions that identify the major issues of importance?

## 2. INNOVATION

- a) Does the approach creatively address a core research problem?

## 3. INVESTIGATOR

- a) Does the team leader have collegial support and the qualifications to conduct the proposed research?
- b) Is the investigator's training consistent with the proposed work?
- c) Does the investigative team have experience working together?
- d) Is the investigator's publication record strong?
- e) Has the investigator received funding from the funding agency before?
- f) How established are the investigator's ties to the agency providing services?

## 4. ENVIRONMENT

- a) Does the proposal capitalize on existing strengths within the School and the Jordan Institute? Does the proposal capitalize on the existing interests of the School's faculty and build on their past endeavors?
- b) Is the proposal compatible with the funding agency's objectives?
- c) Is the number of named faculty capable of carrying out the work proposed?
- d) Is the research team qualified and inter-disciplinary?
- e) Do the letters of support have concrete commitments? Are the letters consistent with the duties outlined in the proposal?
- f) Is it clear how senior members of the research team will be involved? Is it clear how non-local advisory committee members will be involved?

## 5. APPROACH

- a) Is the proposed research design described in sufficient detail to determine feasibility? Are the methods and analyses feasible?
- b) Is the structure multidisciplinary in nature with good collaboration with agencies and governmental entities?
- c) Does the proposal have the involvement of a statistician to assist with issues of statistical power and analysis design?
- d) Is the model grounded with existing and tested models?
- e) Is there evidence to support the reliability or validity of proposed measures in the data sets?
- f) Are the conceptual model, selection of variables and assessment measures fully developed and tightly articulated?
- g) Is there a clear indication of how previous conceptual and empirical work leads logically to the proposed project?

- h) Would the application benefit from the inclusion of a timeline for completion of each set of analyses?
- i) Does the principal investigator have a realistic understanding of the complexities and likely complications in the analyses/topics for analyses proposed?

**6. BUDGET**

- a) Is the budget defined and reasonable?

**7. HUMAN SUBJECTS**

- a) Is there a clear and detailed discussion of sample selection procedures?
- b) Are the conditions under which data are to be collected and the steps that will be taken to obtain informed consent clearly articulated?

**8. GENDER/MINORITY SUBJECTS/CHILDREN**

- a) Does the research sample include a cross-section of women, minorities and children when applicable?