Proposal Revision

- Don’t give up!
- Read the reviews carefully or ask the sponsor for clarification.
- Answer all pertinent questions or criticisms and correct errors and omissions.
- If one component of your proposal is clearly undesirable, remove it and improve on other aspects.
- If reviewers criticize your budget or resources, consider revising them to eliminate excess costs.
- Get advice from colleagues and mentors in your own field, in related and unrelated fields, and from administrators at your own institution and the granting agency.

Helpful Web Resources

- Community of Science www.cos.com
- Federal Grants www.grants.gov
- National Science Foundation www.nsf.gov
- National Institute of Health www.nih.gov
- Grants Alert www.grantsalert.com

And remember, OSP is here to assist with all parts of proposal preparation. Just give us a call!

The Office of Sponsored Programs
Melanie Hicks, Director
Plant Hall 204, ext 3889, mhicks@ut.edu
Helpful Tips for Proposal Writing and Preparation

**Developing Your Idea**

- Keep in mind that sponsors fund activities, not ideas. No matter how good your idea is, if you aren’t able to translate that into a specific set of activities it will not get funded.
- Be objective when analyzing your idea’s merit — is it innovative? Will others support this idea?
- Look at what has been previously funded by the organization and see how well your idea fits into their mission.
- Know and be able to articulate why your idea is important to others outside of academia.
- Always try to attend Request-For-Proposal workshops to introduce yourself to staff and orient yourself more closely with the program.
- Don’t be afraid to talk to program officers and grant givers. It’s always a good idea to call the person in charge of a grant program, introduce yourself and discuss your project idea and why you want to see it funded.

**Writing Your Proposal — Some Practical Guidelines**

- Start early.
- Read the guidelines carefully
  Not including all required information or not following the designated format will be noted by reviewers and program officers.
- Keep the narrative “reader friendly”. Don’t exceed maximum page limits, avoid jargon and unnecessary abbreviations and be liberal with headings to break up text.
- A winning proposal is always specific and to the point. Every aspect of the project—from getting started to budget development to long-term goals—must be addressed in the proposal to lend credibility to a project.

**Proposal Rejection— What Happened?**

Keep calm— It is not uncommon for proposals to be revised and resubmitted before they are accepted. Here are some common reasons proposals are declined according to reviewers.

- Absence of innovative ideas and/or hypotheses.
- Errors in presentation and expression, sloppily written, or lacking sufficient detail.
- Unrealistically ambitious, too procedurally focused or not specific enough on objective achievement.
- Unjustified budget or no plans for sustainability once the grant funding is completed.
- Proposal incomplete or incorrect (e.g., lack of information on current and pending support, no letters of support from named collaborators, etc.).
- In the wrong program or not directed toward the mission of the granting agency.