

AVOID
***“RETURNED WITHOUT REVIEW”*...**
COMPLYING WITH THE RFP
AND
SUCCESSING IN PROPOSAL WRITING

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AGENDA

- Nomenclature (alphabet soup)
- Purpose (why do I care?)
- RFP Common Components
- Other Sponsors
- Writing the Proposal
- Questions?



**WHY DO I WANT TO
DO THIS??**



BASIC PROPOSAL PROCESS



TYPES OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

National Science Foundation

PD-Program Description

PS-Program Solicitation



National Institutes of Health

PA – Program Announcement

RFA – Request for Application

FOA – Funding Opportunity Announcement

RFP – Request for Proposal



United States Department of Agriculture

RFA – Request for Application



Department of Energy

FOA – Funding Opportunity Announcement



Department of Defense

BAA – Broad Agency Announcement

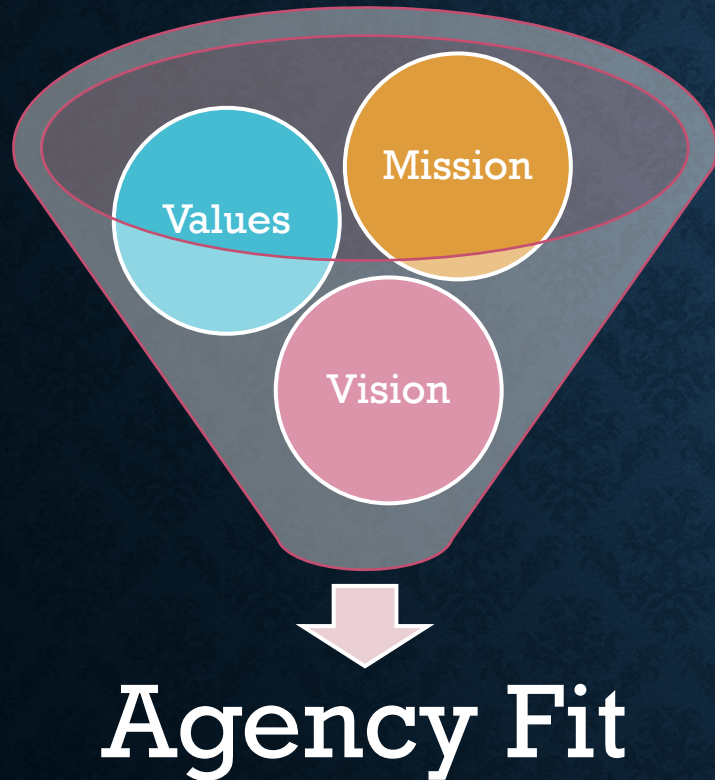


NASA

RA – Research Announcement



Purpose



The success of our proposals depends largely on how well we know our potential funder and on how effectively we match our project to what's important for them (values); what they say they stand for (mission); and their sense of what the future should be (vision).

In addition to doing a little “homework,” the RFP provides much of this information.

KNOW YOUR SPONSOR

- What is the mission of the sponsor?
- What do they typically fund?
- What kind of money do they have and how big is a typical project?
- Who is their customer base or constituency?
- How will this proposal be reviewed?

KNOW YOUR ORGANIZATION

- How does this fit in with the mission of your institution?
- What resources are available to you?
- Who else in the organization could you partner with to strengthen the project?
- Who has to approve your efforts?

KNOW YOUR PROJECT

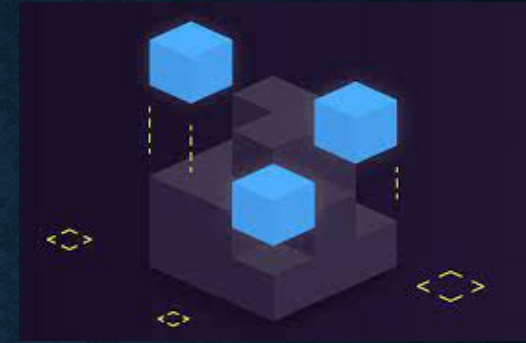
- What are you trying to accomplish and how will you do it?
- Who is your target audience?
- What expertise do you have available to you?
- What else has been done in this area?
- Who will benefit from this work?

COMMON COMPONENTS



- What do you think is the most important component in a funding opportunity announcement?
- Use Zoom Chat to type your responses!

COMMON COMPONENTS



- **General Information**
 - Eligibility, FOA number/name, CFDA
- **Important Dates**
 - Posting/closing/expiration, deadline, letter of interest (if applicable), earliest start date, project period
- **Award Information**
 - Mechanism, funds available, anticipated award amount/number of awards, limited submissions

COMMON COMPONENTS

- **Proposal Elements**
 - Abstract, summary, narrative, references/literature cited, letters of support/commitment, biographical sketches/CV
- **Budget Details**
 - Limitations, unallowable/required items, cost share

COMMONS COMPONENTS

- Organization Registrations
 - DUNS, SAM, Grants.gov, sponsor-specific
- Additional Details
 - Formatting, page limits, templates, program officers/contacts, review criteria
 - E.O. 12372 – depend on state requirements

STUDYING THE RFP

1st Step

- Print out the RFP
- Read CAREFULLY...do not scan
- Highlight specifics
- Use RFP as your proposal outline

Pay Attention To

- Program description (to assess fit)
- Award information
- Proposal preparation instructions (AND proposal guide)
- Review process

Tips

- Note any special requirements
- Ensure PI/Institution eligibility
- Make no assumptions
- Plan your proposal months in advance

SPONSORS



OTHER NON-PROFIT GUIDELINES

- Common components still apply
 - Eligibility, deadline, required proposal elements, submission channel, etc.
- Potential unique circumstances
 - RFP typically driven by foundation's priorities
 - Focus on evaluation, outcomes, and sustainability
 - LOI may be required to move forward

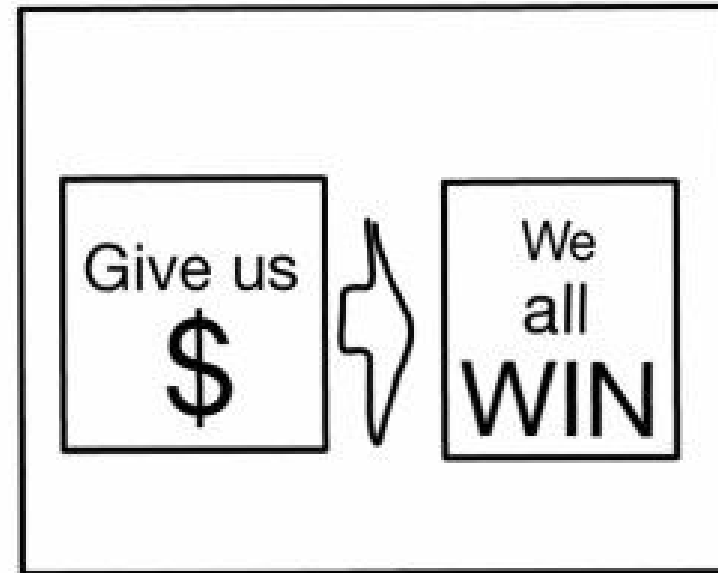
OTHER NON-PROFIT GUIDELINES

- Potential unique circumstances, cont.
 - May not provide earliest start date, but rather timeline for notification/funding to be issued
 - More likely to ask for cost share
 - More likely to disallow indirect costs
 - May not have published policies (F&A, Cost Share)
 - Deadline may be rolling or set
 - Review criteria is often not provided

OTHER – PRIVATE INDUSTRY/FOREIGN

- Potential Unique Circumstances
 - May have specific terms and conditions that need to be addressed at the proposal stage
 - May have special submission requirements (multiple volumes, task-oriented budgets)
 - Sponsor may not specify indirect costs or may attempt to limit costs
 - Guidelines may need translation
 - Deadline for foreign sponsors may affect local processing times
 - May require leveraging resources or cost share

Create a "logic model"



Here is our
new simplified
logic model



WRITING THE PROPOSAL

Writing is thinking.

To write well is to think clearly. That's why it's so hard.
David McCullagh



READABILITY

“...Writing grant applications is like writing short stories...”

“It takes time, effort and practice to write this way. It is really hard work. There is no alternative but to make the necessary investment because poorly written applications are almost preordained to fail.”

S. Russell

WRITING PROSE

Academic

- Scholarly Pursuit
- Work that has been done
- Expository rhetoric
- Explaining to the reader
- Impersonal tone
- Objective, dispassionate
- Verbosity rewarded
- Specialized terminology
- Insider jargon

Grant Proposal

- Sponsor Goals
- Work that should be done
- Persuasive rhetoric
- “Selling” to the reader
- Personal tone
- Conveys excitement
- Brevity rewarded
- Accessible language
- Easily understood

CLEAR AND CONCISE WRITING

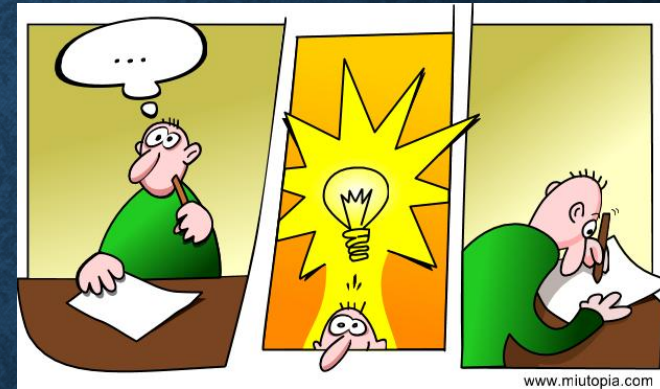
	Poor	Strong
Objective	<p>The objective of this study is to develop an effective commercialization strategy for solar energy systems by analyzing the factors that are impeding commercial projects and by prioritizing the potential government and industry actions that can facilitate the viability of the projects.</p> <p>“LUMPER”</p>	<p>This study will consider why current solar energy systems have not yet reached the commercial stage and will evaluate the steps that industry and government can take to make these systems commercial.</p> <p>“SPLITTER”</p>

TIPS

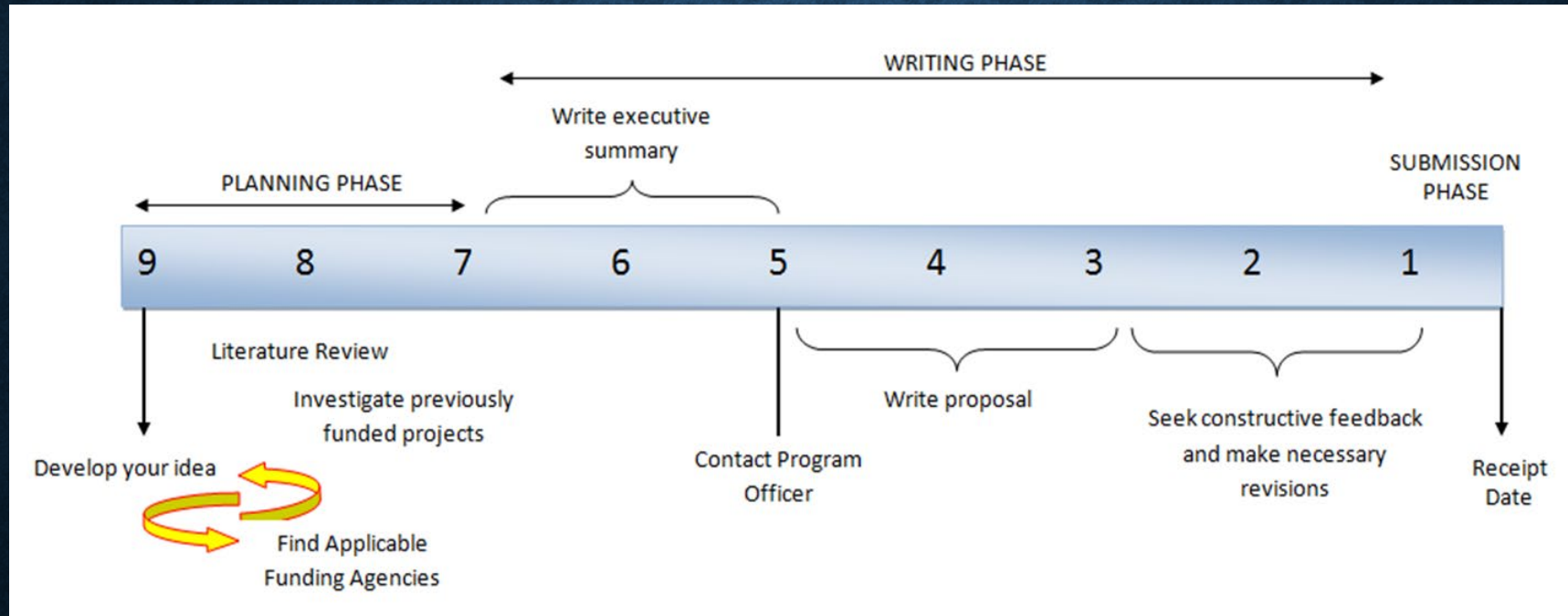
- Avoid weak words
 - if, try, hope, believe, might, could, may
 - substitute with expect
- Don't forget to use proper punctuation and that grammar stuff and Spell check will miss a ton of misspellings and run-on sentences will drown the reader in proposal text so they get bored and move on to the next proposal in the stack.
- Have a technical and non-technical proofreader
- An “excellent” proposal can get knocked down to a “very good” proposal if there are just a small number of easily avoided mistakes.
- Excellence depends on both the intrinsic scientific merit of the work being proposed and the clarity and power with which it is presented.

A GREAT IDEA

- ▶ Solves a real problem/Significant — potential for impact (i.e., making a difference)
- ▶ Innovative— novel/imaginative concepts (NOT a Me2)
- ▶ Well Timed
- ▶ Feasible
- ▶ Measurable Outcomes
- ▶ An idea others can understand... and would be willing to fund if they had the money
- ▶ Makes others wish they had come up with it themselves



PROPOSAL APPLICATION TIMELINE



QUESTIONS?

