

# Grants Writing

To be used for educational purposes only  
All rights reserved – India Alliance

# Planning a grant application

- What agency/foundation/etc.? Research it.
- Is this against a specific call (RFA) or an open grant scheme?
- Who is likely to review my grant?
- What is the key question I will address?
- Do I have a hypothesis?
- Do I have the necessary expertise / experience for this work?
- Should I include collaborators?
- Personnel and Budget?

# Elements of a grant application

- **Title** – choose carefully; should convey in one line what you wish to do.
- **Summary** – should convey in one paragraph what you wish to do. And how you plan to do it.
- **Background** – what has already been done.
- **Hypothesis**
- **Key Questions(s)**
- **Work Plan** – strategy, preliminary data, methods, possible outcomes, potential problems, alternate strategies
- **Budget**

# What happens to your grant at the funding agency?



# How to influence reviewers and win grants

- The **reviewers** of your grant are more likely to be people who have a general awareness but are not necessarily experts in your area of research.
- Explain in **clear** terms and **simple** language
  - What you want to do?
  - why you want to do it?
  - how will you do it?
  - why are you the best person to do it?
  - how much will it cost?

# How to influence reviewers and win grants

- Limit your **CV** to the most essential elements needed to convince the reviewer that you are a good bet.
  - Cut out unnecessary parts like the debating prize you got in High School or editorship of your college magazine.
- Reviewers like to see **preliminary data**.
- How do I generate preliminary data when this is my first grant?
  - Start with related data from your PhD/postdoc to demonstrate your technical proficiency
  - Choose good collaborators who complement your expertise

# Common problems in grants

## Most proposals have the same flaws

- Research protocol shows insufficient planning
- Work plan too ambitious
- Language is too technical for non-specialist reviewers
- Text fails to convey the novelty and urgency of the research

## All applications benefit from editing

- Vocabulary and grammatical errors have negative effects
- Scientists are not trained writers; benefit from feedback
- The important point of research is buried in the proposal
- “Everyone knows that” syndrome – being too close to your own work you lose objectivity
- **Don't plagiarize**

# It takes time and a team to win grants

## Allow enough time

- Finish your draft well in advance of submission date
- Time is required to get useful inputs and polish drafts
- Plan protocols for hypotheses, goals, controls, methodologies, analyses
- Write, edit, proof-read, copy edit, charts, graphs, past work, preliminary data
- Is all this possible on your own? Research Office?

## Pay attention to detail

- Poorly planned and explained research is a common problem
- “Shooting for the moon” does not always work. Justify, justify, justify
- “Letter of Intent” usually a good idea
- Use sub-heads as navigation tools

# Highlight your grant application

## Illustrate well

- Use photos, charts, graphs to highlight importance of work
- Use for information, not decoration
- Photos, charts, graphs will be seen before text is read; use captions to underscore significance

## Explain future ramifications

- What are the potential outcomes?
- Will your research change the status quo?
- Be reasonable

## Keep engaged

With funding agency even after your funding is over

# Bottom line

- Plan your grant well – protocols, controls, etc
- Be clear and highlight importance of the work
- Allow sufficient time to seek advice and correct errors
- It's a competitive world out there!!

