



Office of Grants & Sponsored Research

PRE-AWARD GUIDE

Grantsmanship, Concept Development, and Prospecting

May 2016

INTRODUCTION

This guide is intended to provide to faculty and staff who are seeking grant funding with basic information about grantsmanship, developing their project focus, and researching prospective funders.

Guide Contents:

- A. [Grantsmanship](#)
- B. [Research at The College of New Jersey](#)
- C. [Principles Guiding Sponsored Programs at TCNJ](#)
- D. [The Idea – Concept Development](#)
- E. [Prospecting](#)
- F. [Grant Funding Research Tools and Sources](#)
- G. [Glossary of Key Terms](#)

A. GRANTSMANSHIP

Grantsmanship is a strategic, organized process to obtain external financial resources for the work of an individual, group or formal unit of the College. It includes development of an idea, finding appropriate funding sources to support the idea, developing a proposal (making the case to the potential funding agency to fund your idea), and ensuring College approval and support of the proposal.

This guidance is designed to guide faculty and staff through the process of developing a competitive proposal and to make the application process as smooth as possible. The Office of Grants and Sponsored Research (OGSR) staff is ready to assist in the grantsmanship process and has many resources in place to provide the support needed to submit a grant proposal and assist in the use of office resources, including our internal electronic proposal development, approval, and management system.

The Grantsmanship Partnership at TCNJ

Grantsmanship at The College of New Jersey (TCNJ or the College) is a partnership among the faculty, staff, administrators, and the OGSR. Since all requests for external funds are officially made by either the College or the TCNJ Foundation, each party makes unique, critical contributions to a partnership that represents the College, and that strives to foster an intellectually vibrant environment by seeking external resources from public and private agencies and foundations in support of its academic and scholarly endeavors.

Faculty and staff bring a vast store of knowledge and skill pertaining to their discipline and the particular academic or research project they seek to advance. This expertise goes beyond scholarly knowledge of the area to include related information about professional organizations, leaders in the field, networking opportunities, and the like. Deans, chairs, directors, and other administrators offer leadership, expertise, and resources.

OGSR Services

The Office of Grants and Sponsored Research provides the infrastructure to attract external support to promote scholarship at TCNJ. The dual purpose of this office is to (a) inspire and sustain high expectations within the campus community regarding external grants; and (b) provide direct support of fund-seeking and funded activities to enhance research and learning.

In this capacity, OGSR assists with project idea conceptualization; identification of funding sources; project budget preparation; review of draft proposals; provides official approval of all proposal requests for academic grants and sponsored research; reviews and accepts

awards on behalf of the institution; ensures TCNJ's compliance with a variety of federal and state regulations; and develops and refines college policies that affect sponsored projects. The Office of the Treasurer establishes accounts for awarded proposals; reviews and approves grant expenditures, monitors program implementation timeline, prepares required fiscal reports, and officially closes out accounts or awards at the end of the project period.

OGSR Mission, Purpose, and Goals

Mission:

To facilitate an institution-wide environment of excellence that fosters learning, scholarship, engagement, innovation, and health through the pursuit of external funding.

Purpose:

To inspire the campus community regarding external grants by providing direct support of fund-seeking and facilitate the management of funded activities to enhance research and learning.

Goals:

- Advance a culture of grantsmanship at The College of New Jersey
- Maintain a proactive and responsive Office of Grants and Sponsored Research
- Increase positive external awareness of The College of New Jersey

B. RESEARCH AT THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

TCNJ faculty members embrace the teacher-scholar model exemplified by serious and continuing commitment to scholarship that complements and enriches teaching of the first order. The College recognizes a range of scholarly projects, including disciplinary research, applied research, pedagogical research and artistic expression.

For TCNJ faculty, teaching is the primary function of a faculty immersed in the most current knowledge in their fields through basic and applied research and scholarship. Research and scholarly work of the faculty is infused into teaching, directly and/or indirectly, in an unlimited variety of ways.

As the TCNJ community strives to achieve its ambitious goals of becoming a national exemplar in all of its programs, and as state support diminishes, obtaining funding from federal, state and private agencies becomes critical in attaining those goals. OGSR continues to contribute to support the efforts of the faculty and staff and to provide leadership in developing ever new avenues for funding.

Note: Please be sure to also review the [Responsible Conduct of Research](#) requirements.

C. PRINCIPLES GUIDING SPONSORED PROGRAMS AT TCNJ

The College of New Jersey is guided by and adheres to the following guiding principles:

1. External funds are awarded to the institution (either TCNJ or the TCNJ Foundation) and not to individuals. Only the Board of Trustees or the TCNJ Foundation Board has the legal authority to apply for and accept grants, contracts and agreements on behalf of the College. This authority is delegated to the President, the Provost, the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Planning, the Vice President for Advancement, and the Treasurer who may sign these documents as officially designated institutional signatories. This is done only after the documents have been approved through the College's official external funding proposal approval system.
2. The TCNJ Foundation is a single-purpose entity whose sole mission is to support the College by accepting monies from non-public funding agencies on behalf of TCNJ because it is the 501(c)3 (charitable according to IRS definition) arm of TCNJ. The role of the Foundation is simply for fiscal designation and in no way effects any other aspect of the research or scholarly work being conducted by the project.
3. As official recipient of awards, TCNJ is obligated to and will comply with all applicable state and federal laws, rules and regulations governing institutions of higher education and recipients of public support.
4. The Principal Investigator (PI) or Project Director (or the lead PI, where there is more than one) on a sponsored program is solely responsible for every aspect of the project. Therefore, the PI is expected to know or become knowledgeable about all regulations guiding the project and for ensuring that the commitments made to the funding source are fully met and in compliance with all applicable regulations.
5. Grants are prepared and administered with the concern for accountability to the funding agency in mind. Therefore, from the earliest proposal planning stages to the close of the funded project, careful records are kept to document meticulous compliance with the specifications of the funding source and all applicable regulations.

TCNJ is generally guided by federal regulations for all grants, regardless of funding source, except where the funding source or College regulations are more stringent, in which case the more restrictive regulation is followed. See the OGSR website for federal [Uniform Guidance](#) training materials and information.

D. THE IDEA – CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

Successful grant seeking begins with a good idea. The idea can manifest itself as a research, scholarly, or artistic project, an educational program, or a service initiative. The search for funding sources represents the beginning of an important interactive process in which a well-developed idea provides the basis for identifying potential funding agencies. At the same time, the process of reviewing funding opportunities can contribute to new ideas and/or a more focused project. The project should align with the mission and goals of the prospective principal investigator's department and school, as well as of the College. It is helpful to think of the search for a funding source as the search for a partner with a mutual goal. This concept of sponsor-as-partner defines the writer's perspective as the proposal is developed.

The first step is to identify the type of funding needed, and for what audience and purpose. To do this, carefully consider each of the following basic questions to help begin to frame the project:

- Is this a research project or a program implementation project, or some combination of the two?
- What is the overarching purpose of the project (e.g., what do you want to achieve through this project, what are the anticipated outcomes)?
- What is the need for the project? What data do you have confirming that need?
- How does this project link specifically to TCNJ's strategic priorities? (*The TCNJ Strategic Profile 2012-2015 can be found at: <http://strategicplanning.tcnj.edu/>.*)
- Who will the project serve (e.g., who or what audience will benefit from this project or will be the subject of this project)?
- What steps (objectives/activities) will you take to achieve your purpose?
- How will you know your project has been successful (e.g., how do you plan to evaluate your project and 'measure' outcomes)?
- Will you be collaborating with any colleagues internal to TCNJ or external to TCNJ? If so, who are they and what expertise will they bring to the project?
- What will your project cost (e.g., what areas/items of cost are associated with the project)?

It is critical to be clear about the scope of a funding organization's work in order to find the best match for a prospective grant project.

E. PROSPECTING

The Office of Grants and Sponsored Research provides funder prospect research services to the campus community. In some cases, OGSR staff will identify prospects based on knowledge of current campus priorities, faculty member interest, etc. In other cases, individual faculty members and/or staff members discuss with OGSR staff their areas of interest and request that OGSR conduct a 'targeted' prospect search based on those areas of interest.

In addition to the prospect research services provided by OGSR, some faculty members and/or staff members also like to pursue funding research on their own; or, they simply want to know what to look for in a 'good' funding prospect. In either case, the following information will be helpful to those looking to do some independent prospect research.

Note: It is best to think about the prospect research process after you have developed a solid concept for a proposed project.

The Basics of Prospect Research

While compelling grant writing skills are essential, grant prospecting is a first and important step to finding the "best fits" for your funding needs. It does not matter how many state and federal grants, foundation grants, or other funding opportunities are out there if you are unaware of them. Grant "prospecting" is the first step in the process.

Grant prospecting involves a certain amount of strategy and thoughtfulness, and there are a number of resources that can facilitate your efforts to identify and research funders. For example, online search databases are essential to help you find new potential grants by quickly listing local and national foundations sorted by interest area. The OGSR staff can help you identify these prospecting resources.

Good prospect research:

- Identifies the most promising prospects and assesses their capacity and propensity to give to your project,
- Covers a variety of funder types (state government, federal government, foundations), and
- Increases the chances of funding success.

Some funders provide specific support for ‘start-up projects’ in the form of ‘seed’ grants. There are many different ways for a funder to provide support, from paying for staff and hosting conferences to purchasing equipment. However, most funding comes through research support, as well as program development and implementation support.

Some funding also comes through operating support and capital support, but those are less frequent opportunities. Operating support ([unrestricted funding](#)) is funding for day-to-day operating costs or to further the general work of an organization, rather than for a specific purpose or project (also known as [restricted funding](#)). Capital support is most commonly given for a specific construction/renovation project that involves building acquisition, land acquisition, renovations, remodeling, or the rehabilitating of a property.

A Few Key Words

Another important step in the prospecting process is to identify the keywords that describe the prospective grant project. These ‘keywords’ are used when searching databases for funders who support related projects/causes.

In some funding search databases, keywords are called the “Fields of Interest.” There are literally thousands of possibilities in the fields of interest and too many combinations possible to list them all here. Think synonyms when you run out of words; some funders list grants for special education under “children with disabilities,” some under “learning disability,” and others under “special needs,” so you need to try all the synonyms you can think of to make sure you’ve done a thorough search.

Take time to prepare adequately for your prospecting work; the more time you put into preparation, the better your results.

F. GRANT FUNDING RESEARCH TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Grants.gov

[Grants.gov](#) is a free service that provides a searchable database of all federal funding opportunities. The first step is to go to Grants.gov and click on “Find Grant Opportunities” on the left side of the page.

- To search Grants.gov using a keyword or a combination of keywords, select **Basic Search**. You can use your combinations of keywords here to find the right federal grants for your work. If you already know the CFDA (Catalog of Federal Domestic

Assistance) number or FON (Funding Opportunity Number), you can also search by those.

- What is the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance? A CFDA is a catalog of recognized numbers assigned by the government to 2,200 federal programs, projects, cooperative agreements, funding opportunities, and other federal assistance programs. Every federal grant has an assigned [CFDA](#).
- What is the Funding Opportunity Number? An FON is a number that a federal agency assigns to its grant announcement. It is a number used only by Grants.gov.
- You can use **Search by Category** using your keywords list which allows you to whittle down your search under a number of major categories.
- **Search by Agency** when you know the name of the government department or bureau who has grants available or you can match your keywords to the names of the federal agencies.

These methods will likely produce many results that you will need to read thoroughly and assess to ensure they are the “right fits” for your identified funding needs.

You may also want to join the [Grants.gov mailing list](#) to receive a daily or weekly digest of current federal funding opportunities.

Federal Register

[Federal Register](#): List of current announcements directed from the federal agencies. A bit tedious to read but contains links to full announcements. To subscribe to the Federal Register Table of Contents LISTSERV electronic mailing list, go [here](#) and select online mailing list archives, FEDREGTOC-L, Join or leave the list (or change settings); then follow the instructions.

State Sources

New Jersey state departments and agencies provide financial assistance for a variety of programs through grants. The state provides citizens and organizations funds through grants for everything from educational projects to public health initiatives. Information available on the Web about state government grants can be accessed at: <http://www.nj.gov/nj/gov/njgov/grants.html>.

InfoEd

In order to provide easily accessible funding information for faculty and staff at TCNJ, the College has obtained a membership subscription to InfoEd, which is a web-based subscription package that bundles Sponsored Programs Information Network (SPIN) and SPIN Matching and Researcher Transmittal System (SMARTS).

SPIN/SMARTS is a funding opportunities database (with over 10,000 programs) designed to provide up-to-date information on current federal and non-federal program announcements. It allows users to search the database using keywords and other criteria.

The link to [InfoEd SPIN](#) can be found on the [OGSR homepage](#).

The Foundation Directory Online

The [Foundation Directory Online](#) is the Foundation Center's searchable database that provides an unsurpassed level of comprehensive and accurate information on U.S. grantmakers and their grants. You can search based on subject, geography, type of grantmaker, type of support, trustee names, and many other search fields. [See a sample record](#).

The Foundation Center offers the following free online resources for finding grants:

- [Requests for Proposals](#) (RFPs): Announcements of funding opportunities. Also available as an RSS feed or free weekly e-newsletter.
- [Foundation Directory Online Free](#): Search by name, city, state, ZIP, or EIN to get contact details, grantmaker information and links to recent 990s.
- [Map of International Grants](#): Click on a country to see a list of recipients and their funders for recent years. Provides basic contact details for funders.

Other Tools/Sources

Regional Associations of Grantmakers - In addition, regional associations of grantmakers can be valuable sources of information (visit [The Forum of Regional Associations of Grantmakers](#) for a list). Most grantmaker associations, also known as philanthropy centers, will house a publicly available list of foundations specific to a geographic area. Some are print-only, but a number offer online databases as well.

Mission-Focused Associations of Grantmakers - You can also find associations of grantmakers centered around a mission area, such as [Grantmakers in Film and Electronic](#)

[Media](#), or on other criteria, like the [Association of Small Foundations](#). Searching member lists for these associations may help identify potential grant prospects.

Professional Associations - In addition, most professional organizations disseminate information pertinent to members of the field (including grant announcements) through similar e-mail lists.

Targeted Listservs - The following are the most widely used agency listservs. The agencies send our grants announcements, deadlines, and other news about the agencies to all subscribers. Subscription information is available at the URL listed for each.

- NIH Guide
- NSF Newsletter
- USDE List
- NJALL List

[Guidestar](#) – Once you've identified a list of foundations, you'll need to determine their giving histories and grant capacities. Tax records are an important source of information on past grantees, overall budget, granting capacity, and the value of past grants. [GuideStar](#), an "information service specializing in reporting on U.S. nonprofit companies," lets you search a database that contains more than five million IRS Forms 990 — the form the government uses to track financial information about organizations. A number of helpful sites can show you how to find the relevant data in a 990 form, including the [Nonprofit Coordinating Committee of New York](#) and this [archived article](#) at BusinessJournalism.org.

G. GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

BUDGET TERMS

Budget narrative – narrative that describes the specific expenses in each line item of a budget and that describes the purpose of the expenses and how they were calculated; typically presented by line item within each funding year.

Budget period – usually 12 months, one or more budget periods make up the Project Period. See “*Project Period*.”

APPLICATION TYPES

Pre-proposal (preliminary proposal; pre-application) – Solicited or unsolicited, a brief presentation by the PI of goals, methods, personnel and budget submitted to a funding agency. Pre-proposals are used by funding agencies to determine the eligibility of the applicant and the suitability of the proposed project for support. The pre-proposal is usually in letter form for private agencies and can be an abbreviated form of the standard proposal format for public agencies. Unsolicited pre-proposals must include a statement that it is not an official offer and TCNJ reserves the right to submit a full proposal prior to award.

New – A project proposed to a sponsoring agency for the first time.

Non-competing continuation – A request of support for a second or subsequent budget period within a previously-approved project period.

Renewal – A continuation of a project for which the proposal submission is competitive.

Supplement – A request for funding for a new idea related to a funded project, for expansion of the project's scope, or for special purposes which may enhance the progress of the research, such as purchasing a piece of equipment or to support undergraduate and minority students.

AWARD MECHANISMS

The type of award mechanism to be utilized is determined by OGSR based on the requirements of the award, regardless of what it may be called by the sponsor in the application or award documents. PI's should consult with OGSR staff for more information.

Contract – A legally binding agreement to provide expertise to conduct research, training, or other service.

Cooperative Agreement – Legal document that transfers money, property, services or anything of value to the recipient in order to accomplish a public purpose. Substantial involvement is anticipated between the sponsor and the recipient during performance of the activity.

Grant – The purpose of a grant is to request funds from a public or private source to support research, training, outreach, or service.

Subaward (Subcontract, Subgrant) – A document written under the authority of, and consistent with the terms and conditions of an award (a grant, contract or cooperative

agreement), that allocates a portion of the research or substantive effort of the prime award to another institution or organization.

GENERAL DEFINITIONS

Instrumentation – Equipment

Logic Model – A logic model is a graphic representation of a program/project that describes the relationships between resources, activities, and results.

Principal Investigator/Project Director (PI/PD) - The individual designated by the grantee institution to direct the project or activity being supported by the grant and who is responsible and accountable to the institution for the proper conduct of the work.

Program/Project Officer (PO) - A sponsor's designated official responsible for the technical, scientific or programmatic aspects of the award, including monitoring progress and working with PIs on project-related issues.

Reassigned Time – Time and effort for an employee that is temporarily reassigned from normal duties to other approved assignments such as, for faculty, research or administrative duties.

Research – Systematic study of an idea directed toward new and/or more complete knowledge and understanding of a particular subject.

Service/Outreach – Providing services to students and to the community at large.

Training – Providing teaching and learning experiences.