TCNJ | THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

Office of Grants & Sponsored Research

PRE-AWARD GUIDE

Basics of Proposal Writing, Submission, and Follow-Up

May 2016

INTRODUCTION

This guide is intended to provide to faculty and staff seeking grants with an introduction to grant proposal writing, submission, and follow up.

Guide Contents:

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

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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. OVERVIEW OF CRITERIA FOR SUCCESSFUL PROPOSALS

In general, successful grant proposals:

- Begin with an idea that the potential principal investigator (PI) is most interested in pursuing.
- See funders as prospective partners in implementing that idea.
- Are written with the proposal reviewer* in mind. Note: Not all readers of a given proposal will have subject knowledge/expertise in the PI's field. Therefore, it is essential to write for clarity for a lay audience.
- Are clear, direct, and logically sequenced, making it easy for a reviewer to follow.
- Include clearly defined goals, objectives, or hypotheses.
- Are written as a persuasive document, incorporating general rhetorical principles of persuasion.
- Follow the funding announcement guidelines (e.g., request for proposals) meticulously.
- Respond to each item in the proposal review criteria section of the application guidelines, if such section is included in the funding notice. Consider adapting review criteria from major sponsor application guides (such as NSF) when specific criteria are not provided by the sponsor.
- Are developed with enough lead time to thoroughly describe the project. An early start is the key to ensuring that a proposal has the best possible chance of success.
- Are discussed with a program officer from the funding agency, when possible. Discussing the basic concepts of the proposal and strategies for approaching the funding agency may improve chances for success.

E. THE IDEA – CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

Successful grant writing begins with a good idea. The idea can manifest itself as a research, scholarly, or artistic project, or as 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. Ideally, concept development is undertaken as a distinct exercise, separate and apart from writing a proposal in response to a specific grant opportunity. Read more about concept development in the *OGSR Pre-Award Guide to Grantsmanship, Concept Development, and Prospecting*.

F. KNOW YOUR FUNDER AND YOUR OPTIONS

Funder's Focus

A good proposal recognizes and addresses the vision, mission, and goals of the funding agency, providing appropriate data to justify the alignment of a proposed project with that mission and vision, and those goals. Funders have self-interest and they use their available funds to engage in activities (grantmaking) to exercise that self-interest. In all cases, a proposed project should also align with the mission and goals of your department and school, as well as with the College. It is helpful to think of the search for a funding source as the search for a partner with a common goal. Therefore, proposing a grant project is not entirely about what you can get from a funder, i.e., money, but what you can give in return, i.e., what your project will do to help advance a funder's mission, support its vision, and achieve its goals. This is true for foundation funders and government funders as well. In the latter case, the mission, vision, and goals might ultimately be good for the interest of the general public, but still a government funder will have a unique charge, or a unique niche, in addressing the general good.

A well-crafted proposal presents a detailed, systematic plan for implementing the idea, which usually includes well-defined goals and measurable objectives, a work plan and timeline, biographical sketches of the key personnel, an appropriate budget, and a strong evaluation plan.

Contacting a Funder/Program Officer

Contact with a funder prior to the submission of a formal proposal can be beneficial. Principal investigators are encouraged to initiate contact with funding agencies. Initial contact can help you determine the fit of a prospective project with the sponsor's funding interests.

A sponsor may request a letter of intent, letter of inquiry, or a preliminary proposal before accepting a full proposal. These introductory submissions give the sponsor enough basic information about a project to make preliminary recommendations to the proposer without having to make a formal commitment of funding. In some cases, a full proposal may be submitted by invitation only after a letter or preliminary proposal has been accepted by the funder. Letters of intent, letters of inquiry, and preliminary proposals may be optional or required. Be sure to check the funder guidelines for this information.

Renewal Applications

In some cases, funders permit the submission of renewal applications. For example, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) sometimes allows grant renewals. You will find this information in the NIH funding opportunity announcement "Application Types Allowed" section. Renewal applications are requests to continue to pursue the same goals that were pursued under the previous award, but with new short-term objectives. So, if your long-term goal remains the same, but you have identified new objectives to achieve incremental movement toward that goal, then a renewal application (where permissible) might be appropriate.

If you checked your funder's guidelines and have determined that renewal applications are permitted, contact the funder's program officer to discuss submission of a renewal application versus submission of a new application.

Resubmissions

It is not unusual for first-time proposals to a particular funder to not receive an award. Often, the proposal writing and submission process is an opportunity to help you clarify and strengthen your research agenda and, ultimately, achieve funding success. If your proposal is not funded, it is important to secure the reviewer feedback on the proposal to help inform your subsequent submission (to the same funder or another). Talking or meeting with the funder's program officer is also a critically important step that will help to clarify anything in the feedback that is not understandable. It will also show to the funder that you are committed to your research and to doing what is necessary to secure funding to support it.

Funders have different application submissions cycles, e.g., some accept applications only once a year for a given program, while others offer multiple opportunities within a single calendar year to submit an application. Also, resubmissions may be accepted on a schedule different than that for new applications. In any case, there are usually 'second chances' (and, often, third chances) in the grants world. The key is to focus on refining your proposed project, taking into consideration the feedback received from reviewers.

G. LETTERS OF INTENT, LETTERS OF INQUIRY, AND PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS

Think of letters of inquiry, letters of intent, and preliminary proposals as that one chance to make good first impression on a funder. These letters and preliminary proposals are not mere formalities; therefore, attention to their preparation is essential. (Note: As indicated above, letters of intent may be optional in some cases. Be sure to check the funding

announcement to make that determination. Preparation of a concept development paper (as discussed above), should help you in writing these advance descriptions of your proposed project.

Letters of Intent

Some federal funders (e.g., National Science Foundation) may require or request submission of a letter of intent in advance of submission of a full proposal. A letter of intent is not binding. The predominant reason for its use is to help NSF program staff to gauge the size and range of the competition, enabling earlier selection and better management of reviewers and panelists. In addition, the information contained in a letter of intent is used to help avoid potential conflicts of interest in the review process.

A letter of intent normally contains the PI's name and co-PI's name (if applicable), a proposed title, a list of possible participating organizations (if applicable), and a synopsis that describes the work in sufficient detail to permit an appropriate selection of reviewers. A letter of intent, in these cases, is not externally evaluated or used to decide on funding. The requirement to submit a letter of intent will be identified in the program solicitation, and such letters are submitted electronically to NSF.

Failure to submit a required letter of intent identified in a program solicitation will result in a full proposal not being accepted or returned without review.

Letters of Inquiry

Letters of inquiry are often used by foundation funders. Some are required and, often, decisions about whether one can proceed to submission of a full proposal depends upon the content of the letter of inquiry. Guidelines are provided by the funders for the content of such letters. As in the case of mandatory letter of intent, discussed above, failure to submit a required letter of inquiry identified in a program solicitation will result in a full proposal not being invited for review or, if submitted, being rejected and returned without review.

Preliminary Proposals

Some federal funders (e.g., NSF) may require or request submission of a preliminary proposal in advance of submission of a full proposal. The three predominant reasons for requiring submission of a preliminary proposal are to:

- Reduce the proposers' unnecessary effort in proposal preparation when the chance of success is very small, e.g., when competitions that will result in a small number of awards.

- Increase the overall quality of the full submission.
- Assist NSF program staff in managing the review process and in the selection of reviewers.

H. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Funding Opportunity Announcements

Most federal and state agencies, and many private agencies, in addition to their general funding areas, solicit proposals on predetermined areas of need through publication of a funding announcement sometimes called a request for proposals (RFP), request for applications (RFA), notice of funding opportunity (NOFO), etc. In the case of federal grants, the funding announcement requirements normally take precedence over the requirements found in generic grant guidelines for a particular agency; however, both must be reviewed carefully. It is very important that the guidelines be followed precisely. Most agencies will not consider a proposal that is incomplete, late, or not in compliance with application guidelines.

In addition to basic proposal content and format instructions, most funding announcements include a section outlining the review criteria that will be followed by reviewers. To ensure a competitive proposal, be sure to carefully review and respond to every item in the review criteria section of a proposal preparation guide. This will help you to target your proposal directly to the concerns of the reviewers.

Proposal Format Guidelines

Proposal format is usually determined by a sponsor's guidelines. The major federal agencies have general guidelines available in print and online. Review these guidelines carefully for requirements such as font size and type, limits on document length (either by page number or word count), line spacing, page margins, pagination, ordering of proposal sections, etc. Uniformity in presentation of proposal format facilitates the review of large numbers of applications by a single funder. While these format guidelines might sound trivial or a mere formality, funders do take seriously adherence them.

Common Proposal Elements

Below is an outline of the most common elements of grant proposals and some suggestions for their preparation. This section can be used as a template to create a proposal when specific guidelines have not been provided by the funding agency, or as a guide in completing parallel sections when using specific agency guidelines. For those working

from agency guidelines and/or an RFP, first and foremost, we recommend a careful reading of the application and instructions. The language is usually thoughtfully chosen to guide the applicant in a specific way. It is crucial to pay particular attention to page limitations and budget instructions.

<u>Project Abstract</u>

The project abstract is an important part of an application, and serves as an introduction to the proposed project. Funders may use the project abstract for a number of purposes, including assignment of the application to an appropriate review panel. If a proposal is funded, the project abstract may become public information and be used to describe the project.

<u>Project Description</u>

The project description (or project narrative) often has a page limit to ensure a concise presentation. Generally, proposals should address such elements as the following:

1. *Importance*

   A proposal must show clearly how the proposed project addresses a critical need and has the potential for broad impact. The proposal should provide a rationale for how the project will address the identified need. Additionally, it should address how the proposed project innovations or approaches differ from existing practices and why the proposed project has the potential to make improvements toward addressing the need beyond what current practice provides, i.e., it should tell what is different and/or new and promising about your project.

2. *Research and Development Design*

   The proposal should articulate a plan of work that describes research and development strategies appropriate for attaining its goals consistent with the type of study proposed. Proposals must demonstrate how the work is related to similar research and development. The proposal should also:

   - Address how the major design iterations and resulting evidence will be developed to support or question key assumptions underlying the research and development plan.
   - Identify all measures to be developed or employed in generating evidence of the project's success and provide evidence of or plans to establish the technical quality (e.g., validity and reliability) of each measure.

- Include detailed descriptions of the study goals, design and implementation processes, data collection and quality, and analysis and methods for producing findings.

3. *Project Assessment*

   A proposal often must include appropriate methods to assess success through project-specific external review and feedback processes. These might include an external review panel or advisory board proposed by the project, or a third-party evaluator. The external critical review should be sufficiently independent and rigorous to influence the project's activities and improve the quality of its findings. Successful proposals will:

   - Describe the expertise of the external reviewer(s).
   - Explain how that expertise relates to the goals and objectives of the proposal.
   - Specify how you will report and use results of the project's external, critical review process.

4. *Dissemination*

   A proposal often must include a communication strategy for reaching a broad audience for the findings of the project, including, where appropriate, scholars, practitioners, policymakers, and public audiences. While the potential results of the proposed research are expected to be of sufficient significance to merit peer-reviewed and broader publication, approaches that reach broader audiences are usually strongly encouraged. Proposals should identify the key elements of a communication plan, e.g., target audiences and identification of the channels/media/technologies appropriate for reaching specific audiences.

5. *Expertise*

   The proposal should include a narrative describing the qualifications and expertise of personnel and their contributions to the proposed work, including those responsible for the external review.

6. *Broader Impacts*

   Broader impacts may be accomplished through the project itself or through activities that are supported by, but are complementary to the project. Generally, broader impacts may address such questions as:

- What impact will the results of the proposed research exert on the research field(s) involved?

- Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the field? Is there a strong scientific premise for the project?

- If the aims of the project are achieved, how will scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice be improved?

- How will successful completion of the aims change the concepts, methods, technologies, or services that drive this field?

- Does the application challenge and seek to shift current paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions?

- Are the concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions novel to one field of research or novel in a broad sense?

- Is a refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions proposed?

Review Criteria

The following elements are often considered in the review process:

1. What is the potential for the proposed activity to:

   a. Advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields?

   b. Benefit society or advance desired societal outcomes?

2. To what extent do the proposed activities suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts?

3. Is the plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well-organized, and based on a sound rationale? Does the plan incorporate a mechanism to assess success?

4. How well qualified is the individual, team, or organization to conduct the proposed activities?

5. Are there adequate resources available to the PI (either at the home organization or through collaborations) to carry out the proposed activities?

I. DEVELOPING THE PROJECT NARRATIVE

Basic Approach to Writing the Proposal

Writing a grant proposal can be daunting, and the information you have gathered for your proposal can look overwhelming. However, if you prepared a carefully composed *concept paper* prior to writing the actual grant proposal, the task will be much more manageable. There are also are some basic guidelines to keep in mind as you prepare for and write your proposal.

1. Read the funder's guidelines carefully. In almost all cases, those guidelines will tell you specifically what you need to tell a funder and, often, in what order you need to tell it.

2. Stop, think, and organize your ideas. After you have gathered all the information you think you will need, go back and re-read the funder's guidelines so that you are providing exactly the information the funder wants. Next, identify the main point, concept, or theme of your proposed project. All of the points that come after will follow logically from that central idea. Write down those broad concepts first.

3. Take the time to write an outline of your proposal. For some writing projects, putting down on paper whatever comes to mind first works; however, for a grant proposal, you will save time by carefully outlining what you will write and in what order you will write it. If you have prepared a *concept paper* in advance of applying for any funding opportunity, you will be a big step ahead at this point. In that case, it will be only a matter of filling out that concept with the details.

4. If "writer's block" hits, move one. General writing principles apply here, i.e., if you get stuck on one section of a proposal, move on to another part. You can go back to other sections when you are ready. Again, having a *concept paper* prepared in advance can help you avoid, or move more smoothly through, bouts of writer's block or the feeling of being overwhelmed by too much information.

5. Remove jargon. Use language that anyone can understand, not just specialists in your field. Write for a 'lay audience'. As note previously, not all reviewers assigned to evaluate your proposal with have expertise in your particular field.

6. Include clear statements of the potential impact of your project. People, even institutional funders, want to know that they are supporting efforts that will make a positive impact in some way. Even though you must include solid data, try to translate that data into clear statements of the potential impact of your project.

7. Be realistic and practical. Keep the problem and the solutions realistic. Describe problems (needs) that you can reasonably address, and propose solutions that you can reasonably implement.

8. Simplify. The length and complexity of your proposal will not affect the amount of money you may receive. Stick to the main points, eliminate wordiness, and present your ideas as concisely as possible. Being short and succinct will serve your purposes far better.

9. Revise, edit, and clarify. After writing the best draft you can, put it aside. Then, go back later (depending on how much time you have before the submission deadline) and re-read the document. Ask yourself if what you have written makes sense? Are there gaps in the information or data you presented? Is the language and grammar appropriate and correct? It is recommended also that you ask your colleagues to review and provide feedback on your draft. The staff in the Office of Grants and Sponsored Research will also review your draft for 'lay audience' clarity and for consistency with the funder's guidelines.

J. DEVELOPING THE BUDGET DETAIL AND BUDGET NARRATIVE

The budget planning process should parallel planning for and development of the proposal narrative. This will ensure that the costs associated with the proposed activities do not exceed the maximum allowable request.

Budget Detail

Determine your budget requirements for the program for which you are seeking funding. In other words, figure out how much money you need to implement your program or project. Identify all the costs that are **necessary** and **reasonable** to complete the work described in your proposal.

- *Prepare a draft budget.* Prepare a budget for each year of the project. Use any required budget forms made available by the funder. For all proposed costs, provide the costs basis, i.e., identify how the cost was arrived at. For example, in the case of

supplies, the cost basis will be in the form of an itemization (e.g., unit costs x quantity = total cost).

- *Add any allowable indirect costs.* Calculate indirect costs using the institutional indirect costs rate for the funding agency as directed by the funding opportunity announcement.

- *Identify matching/cost share requirements.* If matching/cost share is required by a funder, identify the source and amount of non-grant funds to be applied toward the project. All match/cost share must be approved by the appropriate chair and dean. Note: TCNJ does not permit voluntary cost sharing.

For a complete discussion on grant budgeting, see the OGSR Post-Award Guide: *Sponsored Project Budget Planning and Development.*

Budget Narrative

The process for developing a budget narrative is essentially the budget planning process in reverse. Thus if the budget planning process is orderly and documented, developing a budget narrative will be straightforward. The purpose of the budget narrative is to describe to reviewers specifically how the budget is directly related to the proposed activities.

Unless otherwise directed by the funding opportunity announcement or grant application package, the budget narrative should include separate statements for each project year. Within each project year, identify the line items in the overall budget and describe and justify the expenses included for each.

For a complete discussion of budget detail and budget narrative development, see the *OGSR Pre-Award Guide to Sponsored Project Budget Planning and Development.*

K. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION AND REVIEW

After the completed proposal narrative and accompanying proposal budget have received chair, dean, and final OGSR approval, the proposal is ready for submission to the sponsor. Note: OGSR is responsible for the online submission of all federal grants on behalf of the College.

Sponsor Review

In general, large foundations and federal agencies review proposals at three specific levels: (1) independent ad hoc reviews by several investigators; (2) meetings of standard review

panels; and (3) evaluation by chief administrators or boards of directors. These levels are incorporated into two basic review systems: internal review and external review.

Obviously, an awareness of the type of review and the criteria for evaluation will contribute to your ability to write a successful proposal. (See sample review criteria above in this guide.)

Internal Review

When an agency's own staff of full-time, trained personnel is responsible for the technical review of proposals, the agency is said to have internal proposal review. These personnel, called program officers, determine which projects will receive funds by considering each proposal's excellence and suitability to the agency's program needs. Several levels of administrators within most agencies must also approve those proposals selected for funding. Sometimes internal reviewers seek outside opinions from other agency scientists, other agencies, and universities.

External Review

When the evaluation of proposals is conducted by professionals not within the agency's employ, the agency is said to have external proposal review. External review is often referred to as peer review since reviewers are chosen from different parts of the country and from special segments of the population of scholars in a particular field.

External reviews may be conducted through the mail or e-mail (reviewers selected by the agency are mailed or e-mailed the proposal for evaluation), through meetings (reviewers meet with agency and staff several times a year to evaluate proposals that have been circulated prior to these meetings), or through a combination of these two methods. External reviewers advise the agency on the appropriateness of the budget and make recommendations for funding; however, final funding decisions often rest with agency officials.

L. FUNDER DECISIONS

Funding Notification

A significant amount of time can pass between the submission of a proposal and announcement of funding decisions (up to six months is not unusual). For federal funders (through Grants.gov and NSF Fastlane), confirmation of online proposal receipt is generated automatically. Proposal status can also be tracked through those systems. An

announcement of the expected decision date may be a part of the guidelines for application or may be communicated with the acknowledgement of receipt of the proposal. When seeking information about the status of a proposal to any funder, consult with OGSR staff rather than contacting the funder directly.

Funding Awarded

In some cases, projects are approved with no modifications to the budget or to the project plan. In other cases, the principal investigator is asked to submit a revised budget (which may require a revision of the project plan) or a revised project plan (which may require a revised budget). Contact OGSR for assistance in meeting the agency's requests. All revised project plans or budgets require OGSR approval before they are submitted to the sponsor.

When notification of an award is received, OGSR must be contacted immediately and the original award notice sent to the OGSR office. The Office of Grants and Sponsored Research arranges for formal acceptance of the award, which also initiates the formal set up of the grant account (through the Office of the Treasurer) and the Award Implementation and Management (AIM) Meeting with the PI to discuss award management responsibilities.

Even when a proposal has been funded, reviewers' comments should be requested from the sponsoring agency. These comments provide valuable information on strengths and weaknesses of the project. Finally, the principal investigator should thank the sponsoring agency and keep the agency informed of progress in implementing the project by completing all required reports in a timely manner.

Funding Declined

The principal investigator must notify OGSR also when an award is not made, and send a copy of the letter of denial so that the file is current and alternative sources of support can be investigated. Frequently, a proposal is declined, not because of any defect or lack of merit, but because the agency received a large number of excellent proposals requesting an amount of funding greater than the amount available.

The letter of denial should be read carefully to identify the reasons why the proposal was not accepted. The principal investigator should consult with OGSR regarding the possibility of resubmission of the proposal to the same funder at a later date. The chances of success increase with each resubmission.

When a proposal is denied funding, reviewer comments and assessments are especially important in improving the proposal and preparing it for re-submission. If they are not provided, the PI can write or call the agency and request them. Reviewers' comments

should be reviewed carefully and the revised proposal, where applicable, should respond to the reviewer comments appropriately.

M. GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

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 the Pre-Award Specialist.

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

Principal Investigator/Project Director (PI or 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 Officer - 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.

Proposal - a formal request for financial support from a specific sponsor for a research, instructional, or public service project. It identifies a need or a problem and offers a persuasive plan to resolve it.

Reassigned Time – Time and effort for an employee who is temporarily reassigned from normal duties to other approved assignments such as, for faculty, research or administrative duties. See also the [Reassigned Time and Course Buyout guidance](#).

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.