Office of Grants & Sponsored Research

PRE-AWARD GUIDE

Grantsmanship, Concept Development, and Prospecting

January 2018

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:

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 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, assist in the use of office resources (e.g., the Grants Resource Center), assist in finding funding sources, and assist in using TCNJ's internal electronic grant proposal development 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 Office of Grants and Sponsored Research (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 (OGSR) 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 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 Finance and Business Services 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.

About OGSR

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. The Office of Grants and Sponsored Research continues to contribute to support the efforts of the faculty and staff and to provide leadership in developing ever new avenues for funding.

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, Provost, Vice Provost, Vice President for Advancement, and 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, The College of New Jersey 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.

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 department, school and 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 thing to do is identify the kind of funding you need and for what purposes. 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?

- What is the overarching purpose of the project (e.g., what do you want to achieve through this project, what are the anticipated outcomes)?

- Why do you want to carry out this project (e.g., what is the need for the project and what data do you have confirming that need)?

- 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?

- How will grant funding help you to achieve your purpose (e.g., what areas/items of cost are associated with the project)?

It is critical that you are clear about the scope of your organization's work so you capture the best matches for your needs.

E. PROSPECT RESEARCH

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 doesn't matter how many state and federal grants, foundation grants, or other funding opportunities are out there if you don't know about them. Researching grants is the first step in the process.

Research involves a certain amount of strategy and thoughtfulness, which no software can provide for you. But a number of tools on the market 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.

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.

As part of the prospect research process, you will need to consider what type(s) of support you require (e.g., funding for research, program development, evaluation, equipment, etc.). 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 for your organization 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 (<u>unrestricted funding</u>) is a grant to an organization 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 <u>restricted</u> 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. Program development grants provide funding for a specific purpose or project (also known as restricted funding).

A Few Key Words

Another important step in the prospecting process is to identify the keywords that describe your project. You will use these keywords 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 giving to the poor under "poverty," some under "impoverished," and others under "needy," 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. You must understand how, why, and where your organization provides services to prepare properly. You may want to keep a notepad handy to keep track of your keyword combinations.

F. GRANT FUNDING RESEARCH TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Grant Resource Center

The Grants Resource Center (GRC), a subsidiary of the AASCU, provides resources and information to assist educational institutions apply for and receive grants (http://www.aascu.org/grc/Default.aspx).

The College of New Jersey as a Level B member of the GRC has access to faculty research funding alerts, webinars of program officers and other government officials, and opportunities to coordinate meetings with program officers in DC.

For more information about these resources and to sign up for funding alerts, please contact the grants office at X3255 and/or grants@tcnj.edu.

InfoEd SPINPlus and SMARTS

In order to provide easily accessible funding information for faculty and staff at TCNJ, the College has obtained a membership subscription to InfoEd's SPINPlus. SPINPlus is a Web-based subscription package that bundles Sponsored Programs Information Network (SPIN), and SPIN Matching and Researcher Transmittal System (SMARTS). This system provides effective support for developing sponsored programs.

SPIN 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.

SMARTS is an electronic transmittal service whereby InfoEd will match an individual's profile against the funding opportunities offered through SPIN and e-mail the results on a daily basis.

Sign-Up Procedures

- Go to the OGSR web site and click on Funding Opportunities from the menu at the left. Scroll down to SPINPlus and click. This will bring you to the InfoEd Office menu.
- Click on SMARTS (SPIN is also available at that menu selection site), then on Create New Profile.
- Select The College of New Jersey from the drop down menu, and click continue.
- Complete the requested entries from name to password and click submit.
- A profile summary page will appear.

- A partial profile of basic user information can be completed initially, with additional information added at a later date. Social security number is not required, but may be included at the user's option.
- Initially, at least 15 keywords must be chosen. This may be edited later.
- Upon completion of information entry, click save, and then log out.

Within two (2) days of submission, the profile will be validated and e-mail notices will begin the next day.

Once registered, a user is free to revise the personal information and search for funding opportunities directly through SPINPlus.

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.

To use it from your own computer, you can choose from three subscription plans that you can renew by the month or year. The Foundation Center also 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.

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 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: The Federal Register provides a list of current announcements directed from the federal agencies. Notices contain links to full funding announcements. You can subscribe to the Federal Register online for updates.

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.

Other Tools/Sources

Regional Associations of Grantmakers - In addition, regional associations of grantmakers can be valuable sources of information (visit United Philanthropy Forum for a full 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. 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. Examples of available listserv subscriptions include:

- NIH Listserv
- NSF Listserv
- USDOE Listserv

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.

I.   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*."

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

Instrumentation – Equipment

Logic Model – A graphical depiction of the logical relationships between the resources, activities, outputs and outcomes of a program. The purpose of constructing a logic model is to assess the "if-then" (causal) relationships between the elements of the program; if the resources are available for a program, then the activities can be implemented, if the activities are implemented successfully then certain outputs and outcomes can be expected. Logic models are most often used in the evaluation stage of a program, however, they can be used during planning and implementation.

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.