OVPR Web Site
Large Proposal Development
Proposal Coordination for Small Proposals

The OVPR proposal coordinators (grant writers) are available, on a limited basis, to consult individually with faculty, primarily assistant professors, who are writing small grant proposals for external funding.

Possible services provided in these consultations include:

- Discussion of the call for proposals and its requirements
- Help in developing a timeline for the project
- Discussion of an outline
- Discussion of a specific area of the proposal, such as the problem overview

The process for requesting this assistance is:

- No later than one month prior to the proposal deadline, send an e-mail to proposalcoordinator@purdue.edu to request a meeting. Please attach the sponsor's call for proposals, a draft or outline of your proposal, if available, and any other relevant documents. If the proposal is a resubmission, please also include any reviews you may have received. In the body of the e-mail, please describe the help you would like.
- The OVPR proposal coordinators will review your request, and as much as time allows, the person whose expertise most closely matches your project will contact you to set up a meeting.
- The designated proposal coordinator will review your materials prior to the meeting and discuss possible improvements at the meeting.

Although this service does not include writing or editing of small proposals, those who have utilized it have found it to be helpful.
Three High-Value Ways to be Intentional

“And so you just threw everything together? ... Mathews, a posse is something you have to organize.”

From The Far Side by Gary Larson
Have good idea?

#1: TELL A COMPELLING STORY
Focus on the problem not the hypothesis or activities

- Think big picture first
- Identify a clear problem to be solved
- Use “op ed” language
Many proposals have perfectly good science but broach the topic in very unexciting ways. If you can’t tell the reviewers why your work is significant, then your work has no sizzle and won’t sell. You must relate your research to a real problem.

—quote from a real, live NSF program officer
A Compelling Storyline

• **Every** proposal should tell a story
• Think op-ed
• Use active and not passive voice
Building the Storyline

• What is the problem?
• What has been done already to address the problem?
• What is the gap that remains?
• How do you propose to address this gap?
Benefit?

• You show the significance of your idea in the big picture
• You inspire the reviewer and give them a reason to be your advocate
• Builds a logical rationale for your specific aims/goals and methodology = less red flags
#2: ANSWER ‘WHY PURDUE?’

Identify your win differentiators….

• Researcher expertise
• Equipment, facilities, resources (HUBzero)
• Purdue experience and campus environment (Discovery Park)
• Uniqueness of academic schools (ENE)
• Uniqueness of programs (EPICS)
• Prior work
#3: GET INDEPENDENT FEEDBACK

Email your program officer and tell us about your idea. We can tell you if you are heading down the wrong track, or if we just funded three million projects with the same idea. We can save you a lot of time and effort.

—a real, live NSF program officer
• Ask your program officer if you can email a **one-page** project description
  – Storyline, vision, goals, concise methodology

• Allow time for formal or informal internal reviews
  – Adjust general proposal timeline to your time frame. See sample proposal preparation timeline.
  – Convene internal review panel or ask colleagues informally