

CACSI Grant Writing Best Practices & Tips

Lessons Learned at a National Grant Workshop

There are Three Approaches to Grant Writing

1. “My work is so important that someone should give me money for it.”
2. “No one is going to give me money for my work.”
3. Best Approach - find the sweet spot somewhere in between #1 and #2 to build a case for your project , apply intentionally, be patient and persistent!

Do the right thing—avoid preventable mistakes!

- Pay attention to details.
- Proofread your application!
- Plan ahead - don't do it at the last minute.
- Send a draft to the program officer for big applications—get their feedback. Get feedback from your peers.
- Keep your bibliography updated. This helps to make a case for your project!

Understand the evaluation criteria

- “This project is significant because...” Align the choice of wording to the criteria.
- “How does it advance scholarship?” Make a clear case for significance, define the target audience for the work and be clear of the outcomes.
- Put in broad context. How does it relate to other work in the field?
- Demonstrate that you know where you are positioned in the field.
- What is unique about your project and how does it advocate for current scholarship?
- Pay close attention to the layout of the work plan. Be clear and specific. List the activities that will be involved.
- What is the work that will be accomplished?

Know your audience

- Your audience will include peer reviewers, staff, and members of the funding agency.
- Inform effectively and help folks from diverse backgrounds understand your application. Speak in a language that people outside of your area will understand.
- Avoid any jargon! This is a turnoff for many reviewers. Don't assume that the reviewers know the big names or the lingo in your area.
- Show actual examples—not just theory.
- Demonstrate that you have conducted research, know sources, and are capable of doing the work within the grant period.
- While 'need' is not considered grant criteria, do exhibit the connections between your research and your courses so the reviewer understands the potential impact of the grant.

Letters of Reference

- Don't use a grad school professor—ask for a letter from someone in your field.
- Talk to your references—help them understand why the project is important so they can help make a case for you.

If turned down

- Reapply if you are turned down. Don't take the rejection personally.
- Request comments from your evaluators or if comments are unclear, follow up with the staff.
- Reflect and resubmit-second applications are likely to be more successful!

On-Campus Support...

Pre-Award Services (ORSP)

- Identify possible sources of funding
- Distinguish gift from grant https://www.westga.edu/academics/research/orsp/assets/docs/Gift_or_Grant.pdf
- Interpret sponsor guidelines and requirements
- Create clear, concise narratives for their proposals
- Refine big ideas to suit the specifications of the RFP
- Edit proposal such as grammar, usage
- Assist with budget preparation
- Provide guidance on being compliant via CITI training, effort reporting, financial conflict of interest, research integrity, responsible conduct of Research, subrecipient monitoring, and institutional review board

- Help with internal routing forms <https://www.westga.edu/academics/research/orsp/pre-award.php>
- Submit proposal on behalf of faculty to funding agency

Award Management (ORSP)

- Fiscally administer funded grants and contracts according to university and sponsor rules
- Setup grant budget according to sponsor approved budget
- Meet with PI to discuss award conditions to ensure all spending is allowable, allocable, and reasonable for project
- Review financial transactions
- Prepare financial reports

Award Closeout (ORSP)

- Provide the PI a checklist to ensure the orderly close out of the project (https://www.westga.edu/academics/research/orsp/sets/docs/Closeout_Check_List_for_PIs.pdf)
- Complete all steps of the closeout including reviewing project expenditures, collecting sub-recipient documents, resolving open commitments, and preparing required financial and project reports, invention/equipment statements, and deliverables for submission to the sponsor

The CACSI Leadership Team can help! We can...

- Involve your Program Coordinator, Department Chair, Associate Dean, and Dean
- Provide course buyout from grant budget
- Assign staff for daily grant management
- Write letter of support for the grant

Budget Prep

- Plan ahead to avoid any financial surprises for the department or college. Please be aware that the college and/or department will not automatically cover the payment of any items associated with the grant but not paid for by the grant.

Resources

Tips for Successful Grant Writing

- Debunking Some Myths About Grant Writing, by Kenneth T. Henson (Chronicle of Higher Education) <http://chronicle.com/jobs/2003/06/2003062601c.htm>
- Ten Ways to Write a Better Grant: Sure You Need a Good Idea, But it's More than That, by Alison Snyder (The Scientist) <https://www.the-scientist.com/pulse-oximeter/ten-ways-to-write-a-better-grant-46931>
- Guide for Writing a Funding Proposal, by S.J. Levine (Michigan State University) [http://www.learnerassociates.net/proposal/Proposal_Writer's_Guide_by_D._Thackrey_\(University_of_Michigan\)_http://www.research.umich.edu/proposals/PWG/pwgcontents.html](http://www.learnerassociates.net/proposal/Proposal_Writer's_Guide_by_D._Thackrey_(University_of_Michigan)_http://www.research.umich.edu/proposals/PWG/pwgcontents.html)
- Highly recommended - UWG Office of Research and Sponsored Projects (ORSP) training <https://www.westga.edu/academics/research/orsp/training.php>
- ORSP Training Page (<https://www.westga.edu/academics/research/orsp/training.php>)
 - Finding Funding <https://prezi.com/view/H612KPopW1j2ZtZl20qq/>
 - Reading a RFP (<https://prezi.com/view/Rolc2zpwv2oPNNFAnmJ/>)
 - Writing Literature Reviews <https://prezi.com/view/uhKwSEYMHFk1meY1yXxl/>

Sources of Funding

- Funds to support research, curriculum development, travel, conference support, fellowships, equipment acquisition, outreach
 - Search Engines/Databases to look for funding
- Grant Forward search engine (<https://www.grantforward.com/index>)
 - Foundation Center worldwide grant database (<https://learning.candid.org/>)
- Federal Support
 - Federal agency grants portal (<https://www.grants.gov/>), National Science Foundation (<https://www.nsf.gov/funding/>)
 - National Endowment for the Arts (<https://www.arts.gov/grants/apply-for-a-grant>)
- Corporate, Foundation and Nonprofit Support
 - <https://www.westga.edu/academics/research/orsp/nsf.php>
- Fellowship Program
 - Supports digital dissemination, ebooks, video, audio, etc.
- Public Scholar Program
 - For faculty that are writing a book for general readers.

Questions?
[westga.edu/cacsi](https://www.westga.edu/cacsi)
[westga.edu/orsp](https://www.westga.edu/orsp)