Module 2
Proposal Preparation, Processing and Submission
• Types of proposals
• Planning
• Proposal components
• Compliance
• Individual responsibilities
• Resources & reference material
Office of Proposal Development

- Staff members specifically dedicated to proposal development assistance
- Offices in Alex West (City Campus) and Ag Hall
- Partner with Office of Sponsored Programs
- Work on all types of proposals and at every stage of the process, particularly on the narrative section
- Offer particular expertise on larger programs and repeat programs
Office of Sponsored Programs

• Staff members dedicated to:
  – Proposal review and submission
  – Contract and grant review and negotiation
  – Financial management

• Partners with:
  – Department and college staff
  – Office of Proposal Development
  – NUtech Ventures
  – Office of Research Responsibility
What is a sponsored proposal?

• A detailed request for funding from a sponsor external to UNL

• An official record of what was “promised” by UNL to a sponsor
Purpose of projects

• Research
• Training/Fellowships
• Equipment acquisitions
• Instruction
• Construction
• Other
TYPES OF PROPOSALS
Types of proposals

• Letter of intent/preliminary
• Solicited
• Unsolicited
• Competing renewal or continuation
• Non-competing renewal or continuation
• Supplemental
• Limited submission
• Other
Preliminary proposal

- Short description of proposed project
- No commitment of university resources; limited or no budget detail
- Not expected to result directly in an award

Contact OSP if an authorized signature is required and/or the pre-proposal includes a detailed budget or cost share
Solicited proposal

• Specific deadline for submission
• Response to a specific work statement expected
• One-time opportunity not expected to recur
Unsolicited proposal

- Areas of interest publicized by the sponsor
- Specific procedures and requirements for submitting proposals
- No single deadline date
Competing renewal/continuation proposal

• Request for continued funding for a project whose funding is about to terminate

• Routed and handled the same as a new proposal
Non-competing renewal/continuation proposal

- Request for the next year’s funding within a multi-year grant
- Typically includes
  - progress report
  - budget
  - biosketch/vita for any new personnel
- Usually requires institutional signature (OSP)
Supplemental proposal

• Request to add funds to an existing project period
• Usually results in amendment to existing award
• Often less formal process for requesting
Limited submission proposal

• The number of proposals one institution may submit is limited
• UNL announces an internal competition to determine which proposals will go forward

Competition information can be found at:
http://research.unl.edu/facultyresources/limited_sub.shtml

Internal competitions for limited submission projects also will be publicized in Today@UNL, Funding Announcements and on the Office of Research website.
Proposals to foundations

• F&A may be limited
• Provide OSP with foundation guidelines along with proposal
• When F&A funding is limited, items normally covered by F&A may be allowable to include in the project direct cost budget
Proposal for government contracts

• Contracts are governed by FARs – more restrictive rules
• Critical that OSP be notified at least 14 days prior to submission
Proposals to industry partners

• Project plan often emerges from informal discussions between PI and industry reps
• Full F&A rate applies to budget
• Almost always result in contract

UNL prefers to start by using our standard Research Agreement template found at http://research.unl.edu/sp1/index.shtml
**SBIR/STTR proposals**

- Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)
- Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR)
  - Requires research institution (university) to play significant role as subcontractor – work with OSP on UNL portion
- Always submitted by the small business

Contact NUtech Ventures for more information about participating in these types of proposals as a small business
UNL serving as subcontractor

- Another entity will submit to the sponsor
- Route through NUgrant like any other proposal, including:
  - Submitting entity shown as UNL’s sponsor
  - Budget & budget justification
  - Statement of work to be done by UNL
- OSP prepares an institutional commitment letter to the submitting entity
PLANNING
Preparing a proposal

• Read and follow ALL guidelines!
• Check sponsor’s site for updates to guidelines
• Notify OPD and/or OSP early – we can help decipher guidelines and requirements

Your proposal may be returned without review if you deviate from sponsor guidelines.
First steps in proposal development

• Read the entire package – more than once
• Make an outline and a checklist
• Review the review criteria
Follow a writing process

Develop a proposal writing process – may be different from a paper or book writing process
– Brainstorming
– Drafting
– Revising
– Editing
Create a timeline

• Make a schedule – and stick to it

• Work backward from the deadline

• Allow time for necessary reviews – particularly if you are utilizing an external reviewer
Working with OPD

• Single-investigator project:
  – Contact a proposal development coordinator as early as possible
  – Establish a schedule for review
  – Send a copy of the RFP and the review draft
  – Expect your OPD coordinator to return a copy of your proposal with changes tracked in Word by the pre-arranged deadline
PROPOSAL COMPONENTS
Contents of a typical proposal

- Cover letter
- Cover page
- Abstract / summary
- Table of contents
- Response to funding agency’s questions and concerns (Revisions only)
- Proposal narrative
- References / literature cited
- Biographical sketches
- Other / pending support
- Budget
- Budget narrative / justification
- Facilities and resources
- Human/animal subjects
- Letters of support / collaboration
- Appendix
Abstract / summary

- Lay language
- Limited number of words
- Good overall picture of project
Proposal narrative

• Specific aims / goals of the project
• Background and significance
• Preliminary studies
• Research design and methods
• References / literature cited
Key personnel

• Principal Investigator (PI)
  – Responsible for design, scientific and administrative conduct and reporting of a research project
  – Must personally participate in the project to a significant degree

• Co-Investigator (Co-I or Co-PI)
  – Responsible for a portion of design, scientific and administrative conduct and reporting of a research project
Biographical sketches

• CV or biosketch for all key personnel
• Biosketch usually more limited than a full curriculum vitae
• Follow the sponsor instructions explicitly!
• If no sponsor guidelines, NIH or NSF format commonly recognized and accepted
Other / pending support

• Other funding key personnel have or potentially could have
• Update regularly as proposal submissions and new funding occurs
• Include time committed to each of the projects
• Ensure key personnel aren’t overcommitted
  – Most faculty have less than 100% of their time available for research
Budget and justification

• Follow sponsor format / guidelines
• If none provided, include:

  – Personnel
  – Benefits
  – Equipment
  – Travel

  – Materials and supplies
  – Subcontracts, if applicable
  – F&A (indirects or overhead)
  – Cost share, only when required

• Budget narrative critical to understanding budget

  – Briefly describe each category/line of costs shown in budget
Sub-award information

• At proposal time, required from sub-recipient:
  – Work plan (statement of work) for sub only
  – Budget and budget justification for sub only
  – Letter of commitment from institutional official

• At award time, contact information required from sub-recipient for:
  – Sub sponsored projects office
  – Sub PI

You can help speed up the sub-award process by providing this information early
Facilities and administrative (F&A) costs

- Overhead or indirect costs
- Costs difficult to identify with a single sponsored project
- Real costs to the university to maintain resources and infrastructure to do research and scholarly activities
- UNL federal rate agreement negotiated through our cognizant agency - DHHS
F&A policy

• Request full negotiated rates on all proposals
• If sponsor has a **published standard** limited rate or does not allow F&A costs, UNL will accept (usually foundations)
• **Waivers of F&A costs are not generally allowed.**
Cost share

- Project costs not borne by the sponsor
- Cannot be met through federal sources, on federal grants
- Two types – mandatory and voluntary
- Voluntary cost share becomes mandatory if the proposal is awarded
- Cost sharing has to be tracked and reported
Cost share

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offered by Grantee</th>
<th>Required by Sponsor</th>
<th>Not Required by Sponsor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory Committed</td>
<td>Voluntary Committed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory Uncommitted</td>
<td>Voluntary Uncommitted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cost share

• Don’t quantify unless required
• Examples of acceptable wording to avoid quantifying
  – The PI will devote the necessary time to complete the project
  – The department of X will provide the necessary equipment to accomplish the proposed research.
  – Computer support for the project will be provided by the College of X.
• You cannot cost share an item more than once
• As a general rule, avoid it, if possible!
Minimum proposal requirements

Three components are required by UNL
1. Proposal routing form (NUgrant)
2. Statement of work
3. Budget and budget justification

Always helpful to include the solicitation number or attach the sponsor instructions
COMPLIANCE
Conflicts of interest / interest reporting

• Conflicts can exist with sponsor and sub-awardees or vendors
• Disclosure is critical and required
• Interest Reporting Forms (IRF) in NUgrant
• UNL is responsible for reducing, eliminating or managing conflicts
Export controls

• Restrict the use of sensitive or controlled information, materials and technology

• Red flags:
  – DoD
  – Industry contracts
  – Foreign partners and/or travel

• Contact Research Compliance if you have questions or concerns
Required protocols

- IRB review and approval – human subjects protection
- IACUC review and approval – animal subjects
- IBC, RSC, EHS approvals to ensure laboratory safety
INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES
Role of PI / department

• Notify OSP pre-award coordinator early
• Prepare proposal according to guidelines
• Complete all sponsor forms
• Route proposal through NUgrant
• Make required copies

Note: UPS picks up at Alex West at approximately 3 p.m. daily (paper submissions)
Role of dean / director

- Review and approve or disapprove proposal in NUgrant
- Sign for cost share, if required, and provide cost object
- Help coordinate collaborative proposals and encourage interdisciplinary proposals (OPD can help)
Role of Office of Proposal Development

- Keep up to date with proposal preparation requirements
- Help conceptualize and compose external proposals
- Compose, organize, and refine information
- Facilitate collaboration for multi-institutional, interdisciplinary projects
Role of Office of Proposal Development

• Answer questions about biographical sketches, current and pending support forms and other supplementary documentation
• Provide graphic design support
• Coordinate expert review of grant proposals
Role of Office of Sponsored Programs

- Review, sign and submit proposals
- Review and negotiate terms and conditions on all awards
- Draft and negotiate contracts and subcontracts
- Manage financial reporting and audit
- Handle problem resolution and coordination of interactions with sponsors
Role of Office of Sponsored Programs

• Director serves as Authorized Official/Signatory for UNL

• On all proposals and awards the official applicant and award recipient is:
  The Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln
  312 N 14th Street
  Alexander Building West
  Lincoln, NE 68588-0430
Steps for submitting a proposal

• Step 1 – Routing
  – Internal routing of all proposals must begin in NUgrant prior to submission to sponsor
  – Ensures institutional approval for the project, cost share and other concerns
  – Cost share approvals must be secured before OSP may submit

Note: Letters of intent and pre-proposals do not require routing unless a detailed budget or cost share is required.
Steps for submitting a proposal

• Step 2 – OSP submits proposal to the sponsoring agency
  – Grants.gov – and other federal sites
  – State of Nebraska departments
  – Foundations/non-profits
  – Industry
Reminders

• OSP/OPD hours are 8-5 Monday through Friday
• OSP must review documents prior to signing – allow plenty of time, minimum 4 working days for proposals

Plan ahead!!
RESOURCES AND REFERENCE MATERIALS
Proposal writing resources

• Foundation Center: A Proposal Writing Short Course
  foundationcenter.org/getstarted/tutorials/shortcourse/index.html

• NSF Guide for Proposal Writing
  nsf.gov/pubs/2004/nsf04016/start.htm

• NIH Grant Writing Tips Sheets
  grants1.nih.gov/grants/grant_tips.htm

• Social Science Research Council: The Art of Writing Proposals
  ssrc.org/publications/view/7A9CB4F4-815F-DE11-BD80-001CC477EC70/

• Corporation for Public Broadcasting: Basic Elements of Grant Writing
  cpb.org/grants/grantwriting.html

• UNL Grant Writing Seminar
OSP and OPD office locations

OSP and OPD
312 N 14th Street
Alexander Bldg West
Lincoln, NE  68588-0463

OPD
310E Ag Hall
472-8058
Tu, Th, Fri
Web sites

**Sponsored Programs:**
http://research.unl.edu/sp1

**Proposal Development:**
http://research.unl.edu/proposaldevelopment