The Grant Application Writer’s Workbook

Workbook Descriptions

National Institutes of Health Version
The December 2021 edition has been updated to comply with the instructions and review criteria language for NIH grant applications due on or after January 25, 2022. This includes updated FORMS-G general and program-specific instructions. In this Workbook edition we refer to the research-specific set of instructions. Additional updates and information include: updated format and content instructions for the NIH Biographical Sketch; amended guidance on how to formulate specific aim statements for research projects not involving hypotheses; limitations regarding the use of hyperlinks and URLs, information on the shortened review cycle for New/Early-Stage Investigators, how NOSIs are increasingly being used by NIH to highlight areas of scientific interest; and much more. All URLs and screenshots have also been updated.

National Science Foundation – FastLane and Research.gov Version
The October 2021 edition has been updated to comply with the revised version of the Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide (PAPPG) (NSF 22-1) - effective for all proposals due or submitted on or after October 4, 2021. Some changes for this revised version are updates to: the chapter on how to write an Expected Significance section, including a new example; use of an NSF-approved and required format for the Biographical Sketch, as well as formatting of publications under Products; info on submitting via Research.gov; Reviewers Not to Include language that eliminates requirement to provide an explanation; Current and Pending Support Information; reference to a new table – NSF Pre-award and Post-Award Disclosures; and more. All URLs and screenshots have also been updated.

USDA/NIFA Version
The October 2021 edition has been extensively updated with additional content on strategic presentation of background literature and supporting preliminary data; creation of compelling arguments for project significance and novelty; and biographical sketches. Additional samples, sentence starters, and other practical tools/resources are now included throughout the workbook, along with complete examples of the Overview, Rationale and Significance, and Project Summary parts from a funded AFRI proposal. Other features include modifications for proposals that do not involve traditional hypothesis-testing work, and additional consideration of integrated proposals and those with stakeholder engagement. All URLs and screenshots have also been updated, and this edition is congruent with the new NIFA Grants Application Guide, released October 5, 2021.

Successful Proposals to Any Agency (For proposals other than NIH, NSF, or USDA)
The grant applications of most agencies contain basically the same sections – only the specific names for the sections and the order in which they appear in the application are different. In addition, the principles and fundamentals of good proposal writing are the same for all agencies. Given these two facts, we have written a “generic” workbook that can be used to write a proposal to any granting agency. It walks the applicant through the preparation of each section and is meant to be complemented by the specific instructions of the agency that is being targeted. September 2016 edition.