TIPS FOR TIMELY AND SUCCESSFUL SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

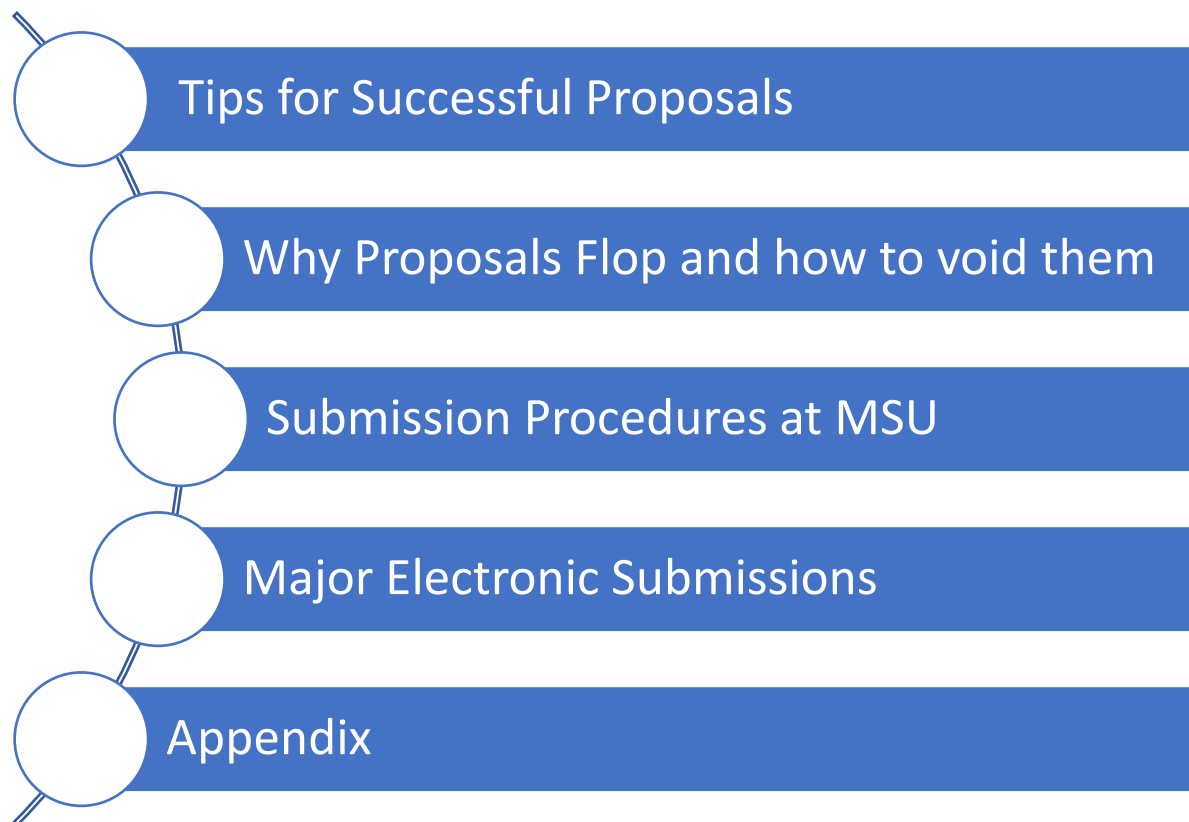MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY™

Ailing Zhang, MS

October 13, 2021

D-RED

Division of Research & Economic Development

Agenda

- Tips for Successful Proposals
- Why Proposals Flop and how to void them
- Submission Procedures at MSU
- Major Electronic Submissions
- Appendix

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Tips for Successful Proposals

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➤ **Start Early**

As soon as you have a good idea for a project, begin checking out possible funding sources, application deadlines, and guidelines for your proposal preparation.

➤ **Know your target**
Study the funding agency to find the appropriate program for your project. Understand the agency's research priorities and goals and figure out what it considers a good proposal.

➤ **Do your homework, but don't be afraid to reach out**
Study recent research awards in your field. Learn what's already been done and by whom. If you want to pursue research that doesn't fit a particular RFP, contact a program manager to assess interest. It's expected, and program managers are often very helpful.

➤ **Write well and think about your audiences**
Your proposal should be clearly written, grammatically correct, spellchecked, and proofread.

Tips for Successful Proposals

➢ **Follow instructions exactly**

Follow instructions exactly. Some 15% of proposals miss important parts of instructions. Read the announcement carefully to grasp exactly what it seeks. And check for updates, because deadlines can shift.

➢**Don't skimp on Education**
For proposals that must have an educational component—such as NSF Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) proposals—make it substantive.

➢**Be excited-and upfront about your idea**
State the research objective in the first sentence of the proposal. Describe the state of the field and its direction, and how your work is going to move it forward. How will your research impact society and address a national need?

➢**Be Smart with Money**
Budget realistically. Know the size of grants an agency typically provides and use that as a guide. Include money to pay graduate students.

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Tips for Successful Proposals

➢ **Credit others as well as yourself**

List your credentials, publications, awards, and experience, but only in your bio, not in the proposal. Correctly reference the cited work of others.

➢**Play well with others**
Find collaborators, inside or outside of Morgan. It also helps to show that you found partners in gathering supporting material

➢**Ask for a pre-submission review**
Get an experienced colleague to review your proposal. before the deadline!
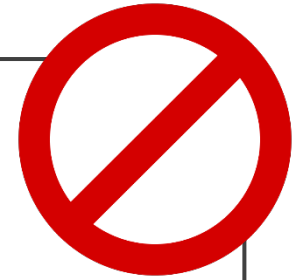
➢**Give back**
Volunteer to serve on a review panel. This won't give your own proposal special treatment, but it will expose you to others' proposals, peer reactions, and the process of acceptance and rejection—which can be a great learning experience for your next proposal!

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Proposal Guidelines Not Followed

It is the PI responsibility to know what is required by the sponsor.

This is the top reason proposals are rejected

Returned Without Review

The departmental support staff and Office of Research Administration can assist by understanding the sponsor's general guidelines.

TIP: Follow the guidelines exactly!

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Sponsor and Project Goal Mismatch

- It is the PI's responsibility to ensure that the project goals match the sponsor's funding agenda.

- Most sponsors know what they want to fund.

- What is the sponsor's funding history?

- Is this in response to an RFP?

- Does the response to an RFP match the request?

TIP: If it is not clear what the sponsor wants to fund, contact the Office of Research Administration for assistance.

Deadline Not Met

- Meeting the submission deadline is the responsibility of the PI.

- Most sponsors have little sympathy for late submitters.

- Errors encountered during the submission process must be corrected before the deadline.

TIP: Know the deadline for the submission and ensure there is enough time to review properly for errors.

Budget is Unrealistic

- The PI is responsible for making sure the budget reflects all the costs associated with the project.

- Most sponsors can tell if a project is padded, based on the scope of work or the goals and objectives.

- Most sponsors are not going to object to budgets that are less than expected. The overruns will be the responsibility of the Institution.

TIP: Look for the obvious omissions and additions by comparing the budget to the proposed project goals.

Budget Does not Include Required Elements

- Justification is not included
- Justification does not clearly explain the budget item
- Effort is not clearly allocated
- Sponsor's required forms are not completed correctly

TIP: Include all the required items in the budget.

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Documents are Missing

- It is the PI responsibility to provide all non-standard documents as required by the proposal guidelines.

- Sponsor requests for special documents should be sent to the Office of Research Administration for processing.

- Biosketches of staff members assigned to proposed program

- Contact person and information

- Letters of support from collaborators

TIP: Keep documents up to date for immediate use.

Documents in the Wrong Format

- It is the responsibility of the PI to ensure all documents submitted with the proposal package are in the correct format.

- ORA will review for proper formatting.

- But revisions of proposals, due to formatting issues, can be avoided.

TIP: Follow the format requirements

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Unusual Clauses

- The PI is responsible for the terms and conditions of the award.

- Unusual clauses need to be reviewed and there needs to be agreement before the proposal is submitted.

TIP: Don't skip the clauses.

Last Minute Response to RFP

- We know that there are often last-minute requests from sponsors to submit a proposal in response to an RFP.

- The more prepared the PI is to respond to these requests, the easier it will be for us to help with the submission.

TIP: Keep documents up-to-date.

Submission Procedures at MSU (1)

- Searching for Funding Opportunities
  - Grants.gov
  - NSF
- Morgan Office of Research Administration Website

Submission Procedures at MSU (2) Limited Proposal submission

Procedure:

A. Summary of Proposed Project

B. Selection of Project

C. Full Proposal Submission

D. Resubmission

E. Failure to Submit Full Proposal(s)

Please go to ORA website for details

Submission Procedures at MSU (3)
Develop an internal strategy

1

Contact Office of Research administration

2

Start to route [Internal Routing Form](#)

3

New Faculty and Researchers need to contact Ms. Ailing Zhang for transferring information from your previous universities.

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Internal Routing Form

INTERNAL ROUTING FORM

Proposal#: _____
Date Received: _____

The purpose of this form is to ensure that Morgan State University administrators are aware of the grant requirements (e.g., release time, cost share, indirect cost rates) and are in agreement. For questions regarding the completion of this form, please contact:

Grants Manager: **Ms. Ailing Zhang**
Phone: **443.885.4118**
Email: **ailing.zhang@morgan.edu**

Research Budget Specialist: **Ms. Deshun Li**
Phone: **443.885.3309**
Email: **deshun.li@morgan.edu**

Section 1. The MSU Principal Investigator *required

- MSU Principal Investigator Name (Last, First):*
- MSU School/College:*
- Department:*
- MSU Center or Institute:
- Other Department:
- Other Center:
- Email Address:*
- Cell Phone:
- Office Phone:*
- Preferred Method of Contact:*

Section 2. The Funding Opportunity & Sponsor *required

- Funding Announcement URL or Program Name:*
- CFDA Number:
- Announcement Number:
- Type of Funding:*
- Sponsor Type:*
- Sponsor Agency:*
- Funding Subunit: e.g. NIGMS
- Other Sponsor Type:
- Other Sponsor Agency:
- Proposal Due Date:*

Section 3. The Application *required

- Proposal Title:*
- MSU Role in Application:*
- Primary Location of Work:* On Campus / Off Campus
- Submission Type:*
- Other Role:
- Off-Campus Site:
- Type of Activity:*
- Indirect Cost Rate:*
- Total Funding Requested:*
- Proposed Start Date:*
- Other Type of Activity:
- Other Cost Rate:
- MSU Share of Funding:*
- Proposed End Date:*
- Type of Organized Research:
- Other Institution in the Application? Yes No *If YES, complete Section 4.*

Section 4. The Partner PI & Institution

- Partner Role in Application:
- Partner PI Name (Last, First):
- Partner PI Affiliation (University):

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*If **YES** to any of the questions in **Sections 5 & 6**, please attach additional sheet(s) to explain.*

Section 5. Restrictions all required

	Yes	No
Have you been barred, suspended or excluded from participating in Federal or State funded projects/programs?	Yes	No
Have you been convicted in the preceding three years of any offenses listed in 2 CFR part 180.800(a) or had a civil judgement for one of those offenses within that time period?	Yes	No
Are you presently indicted for or criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (Federal, State, Local) with commission of any of the offenses listed in 2 CFR part 180.800(a)?	Yes	No
Does your project (including research personnel, subrecipients, or contractors) anticipate utilizing foreign national(s) in the performance of the award? *A foreign national is defined as any person who is not a U.S. citizen by birth or naturalization.*	Yes	No
Is this project receiving any funding from a foreign government or institution? Is any sensitive information being shared with a foreign government or institution?	Yes	No
Do you have any conflict of interest?	Yes	No

Section 6. Requirements

Please indicate if any of the following apply to the project:

Cost share: Yes No If yes: In-kind time Indirect cost Cash If cash: $

	Yes	No
Need for resources, renovation, construction, or space:	Yes	No
Purchase or maintenance of equipment, apparatus, or furniture NOT included in the proposal:	Yes	No
Expanded utility (or network) services to support project (e.g., computers, fume hoods, air-conditioning):	Yes	No
Additional personnel requiring funds NOT included in the proposal or likely to require support of space AFTER the project:	Yes	No
Human subject research Yes No If yes, has protocol been reviewed by IRB?	Yes	No
Animal research Yes No If yes, has protocol been reviewed by IACUC?	Yes	No
Planned or potential use of radioactive materials: *PI must be a permit holder or authorized under a current permit*	Yes	No
Planned or potential use of (a) ionizing radiation device: *e.g., accelerators, x-ray machines [diagnostic, therapy, diffraction], electron microscope, reactor or fusion devices, non-ionizing radiation devices [laser, ultraviolet, microwave, radio, ultrasonic frequency]*	Yes	No

Faculty release time: Yes No *If **YES**, complete below for **each faculty** member (attach additional sheet if needed):*

Last name, First name	Role	%	Last name, First name	Role	%

Section 7. Certification

I, the PI, certify that:
1) This project has been thoroughly discussed with my Department Head, and that I have not committed the institution to expenses which are not covered in the grant except for "in-kind" contributions or cost share which I have thoroughly discussed with the Department Head and the Dean, who both have agreed to fund such expenses from their budgets;
2) The information submitted within the application is true, complete, and accurate to the best of the PI's knowledge;
3) Any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement or claim may subject the PI to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties of local, state, and federal statutes;
4) The PI agrees to accept responsibility for the scientific conduct of the project and to provide the required progress reports if a grant is awarded as a result of the application.

Name	Signature	Date
Primary PI (or Project/Program Director)		
Department Chair		
Dean		
Research Budget Specialist		
Grants Manager		
AVP for Research Administration		

Submission Procedures at MSU (5)

MSU PI Submission with an external Co-PI (Morgan is the prime)	PI informs the Grants Manager if a collaborator or non MSU Co-PI will be included in the proposal	The Grant Manager will receive the following from either the PI or the external Co-PI organizations:
		• MSU Subrecipient Compliance Form (The OAR will email it to the PI or external OSP Office) • Scope of Work • Budget and budget Justification • Copy of the Approved/Provisional Indirect Cost Rates • Signed Letter(s) of Commitment • Biographical Sketches (CV) • Current and Pending Support Form • *And check with Grant Manager to make sure ALL other materials have been submitted.* • PI will send the budget and budget justification to the budget specialist for review • Grants Manager will do the submissions

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Submission Procedures at MSU (6)

MSU PI Submission with an external Co-PI (Morgan is the sub)

PI needs to give the Grants Manager contact information to the lead organizations

PI will provide the following information to the Grants Manager

- **Scope of Work**
- **Budget and budget Justification**
- **Draft Letter(s) of Commitment (support)**
- **Biographical Sketches (CV)**
- **Current and Pending Support Form**
- ***And check with Grant Manager to make sure ALL other materials have been submitted.***

The Grant Manager will fill the Subrecipient Compliance Form and get all required documents to the subs

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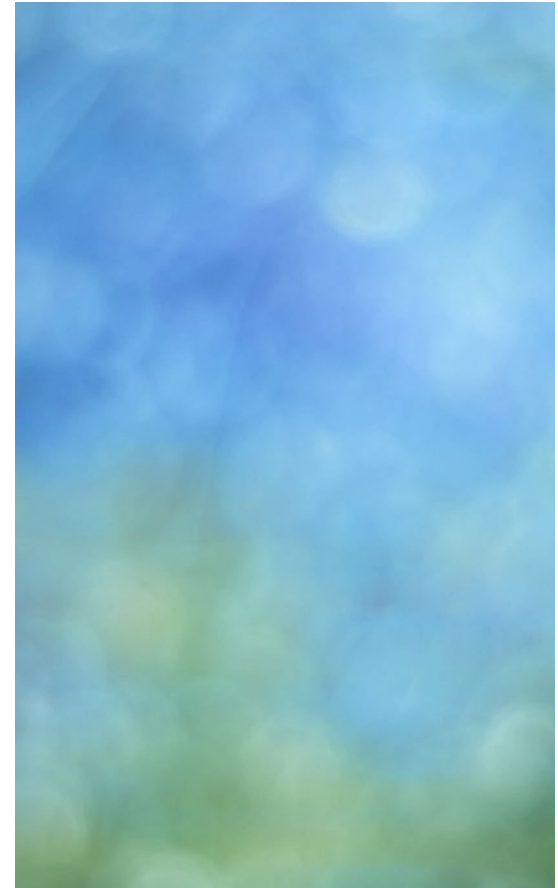
Electronic Submissions

Major Electronic Submissions:

➢Grants.gov submission (for most federal agencies)

➢Research.gov submission (National Science Foundation (NSF))

➢ASSIST Submission (National Institutes of Health (NIH))

➢NSPIRES Submission (National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA))

➢Other submission (Foundations)

Grants.gov submission

REGISTER EARLY – Grants.gov registration may take five or more business days to complete.

Create a Workspace: Creating a workspace allows you to complete it online and route it through the Office of Research Administration for review before submitting.

Complete a Workspace: Add participants to the workspace to work on the application together, complete all the required forms online and check for errors before submission.

Research.gov (NSF)

Registration

[Fastlane](#) submission

Research.gov submission

[Research.gov](#)

ASSIST Submission (NIH)

- Registration (Office of Research Administration will initiate the registration)

- NIH Assist

Budget Template

	Base Salary	Year 1	Year 2	Total
MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY				
Agency/ Solicitation:				
Project Title:				
Project/Budget Period:	Base Salary	Year 1	Year 2	Total
A. Senior Personnel				
PI				
B. Other Personnel				
Technician, Programmer				
Personnel Sub-total				
C. Fringe Benefits				
Fringe benefits @ 9%				
Fringe benefits @ 42%				
Fringe benefits @ 9% + $1000/month				
Fringe Benefits Sub-total				
D. Equipment				
Equipment Sub-total				
E. Int'l/Domestic Travel				
Domestic Travel				
Foreign Travel				
Travel Sub-total				
F.Participiant Support Costs				
1. stipends				
2. Travel				
3. Subsistence				
4. Other				
Participant Support Sub-total				
G.Other Direct Costs				
1. Material and Supplies				
2. Publications/Exhibitions				
3. Consultants				
4. Subwards				
5. Other				
Other Direct Costs Sub-total				
H. Total Direct Costs				
I. Indirect Costs				
Modified Total Direct Costs MTDC (Rate: 51%, Base:)				
J. Total Project Costs				

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Budget Justification Sample

Title of the Proposal

BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

This project is anticipated to go from June 2015 to June 2017 (2 years).

A.   SALARIES AND WAGES

- **PI Wages:** Each of the six principal investigators (XXX, XXXX ,XXXX ,XXXX, XXXX, XXXX) will receive a salary in the summer only for efforts outlined in the program description. Such duties include the development of modules, integration of modules in classrooms, and the gathering and dissemination of findings. Each will receive $4000 for 8 weeks of work during the summer per academic year

- **Year 1: 6 x $4,000 = $24,000**

- **Year 2: 6 x $4,000 = $24,000**

B.   SALARY AND WAGES – OTHER PERSONNEL

- **External Evaluator:** An external evaluator is hired to ensure that the project is developing measureable objectives and is meeting the goals outlined in the proposal. They will receive $2000 per year.

  - **Year 1: $2,000 = $2,000**

  - **Year 2: $2,000 = $2,000**

- **Two Graduate Student Assistant:** Two graduate students will be hired assist in the maintenance of the blackboard site and will assist the coordinators of the program. They will get paid $15/hr for 20 hours per week over the two year duration of the project.

  - **Year 1: $15 x 20 hrs/week x 52 weeks x 2 students = $31,200**

  - **Year 2: $15 x 20 hrs/week x 52 weeks x 2 students = $31,200**

C.   FRINGE BENEFITS

- Fringe benefits during the summer are 9%.

  - **Year 1: 9% x ($24,000 + $2,000 + $31,200) = $5,148**

  - **Year 2: 9% x ($24,000 + $2,000 + $31,200) = $5,148**

D.   EQUIPMENT

- None

E.   TRAVEL

- **Domestic Travel:** The results of the project will be disseminated at a domestic conference pertaining to engineering education – like the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) Annual Conference. It is estimated that the cost of a conference is as follows: registration $600, flight $400, hotel $150 per night for three nights, meals $45 per day for 3 days. Three of the PIs will attend each year.

  - **Year 1: $600 + $400 + 3 nights x ($150/night + $45/night) = $4,755**

  - **Year 2: $600 + $400 + 3 nights x ($150/night + $45/night) = $4,755**

F.   PARTICIPANT SUPPORT

- Merit-based participate support will be granted to the top performers of the initial cohort of the program. $1000 scholarships/stipends will be given to the top 10 performers in year two.

  - **Year 1: $0**

  - **Year 2: 10 x $1000 = $10,000**

G.   OTHER DIRECT COSTS

- **Materials and Supplies:** Softchalk software will be bought so that the team can develop interactive learning modules. 5 licenses per year (one per PI) will be purchased at the education rate of $495/license/year.

  - **Year 1: $495 x 5 = $2475**

  - **Year 2: $495 x 5 = $2475**

- **Graduate Student Tuition:** Graduate student fees are $8046/year assuming 18 credit hours per year. In year two, a 4% increase is assumed bringing the total to $8368/year. The two students in item B will be funded.

  - **Year 1: $8,046 x 2 = $16,092**

  - **Year 2: $8,368 x 2 = $16,736**

Checklist for Proposal Budget Items
(Not an inclusive list)

A. Personnel Costs
1. Senior Personnel Salaries
PI and Co-PI
2. Other Personnel Salaries
- Graduate Assistants
- Student Assistants
- Computer Programmers
- Secretaries
- Editorial Assistants
- Administrative Aides
- Technicians
- Other Hourly Personnel
- Other Salaried Personnel

B. Fringe Benefits
- Reassigned Time
- Those employed on the grant
- Health Insurance

C. Materials and Supplies
- Office Supplies
- Test Materials/Instruments
- Animals
- Animal Food
- Laboratory Supplies
- Chemicals
- Electronic Supplies
- Project-related Books and Periodicals

D. Travel
- Transportation/Mileage
- Per Diem: Meals and Lodging
- Administrative Travel/Mileage
- Field Work
- Professional Meetings
- Participant Travel/Mileage
- Vehicle Rental
- Project Director's Meeting
- Parking Tolls and Taxis

E. Equipment (including shipping and handling)
- Special Purpose/Research Equipment
- General Purpose/Office Equipment
- Equipment Rental
- Equipment Installation
- Accessories Included with Equipment Acquisition
- Computers

F. Contracted and Campus Services
- Photographic Services
- Consultants (honorarium fees, travel, per diem)
- Subcontractors
- Printing
- Report Preparation/Editorial Services
- Audio-Visual Production
- Central Computer Use
- Duplication Services
- Printing Services
- Library-Interlibrary Loan, On-Line Databases, Searches

G. Other
- Communications (long distance phone, postage, fax, express delivery service)
- Software
- Space Rental
- Alterations and Renovations
- Tuition/Fees
- Journal Page and Charges
- Recruiting Costs for New Personnel (advertising, etc.)
- Maintenance Contracts

H. Indirect Costs
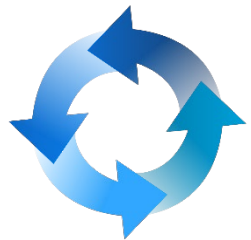- Negotiated Allowable Rate (or the maximum permitted if less than the negotiated rate)

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Elements in a Typical Proposal

Common Heading	Who Completes	Answers the Question
Cover Sheet	Division of Research and Economic Development (DRED)	Who are we?
Table of Contents	DRED/PI	What's in the proposal?
Abstract	PI	What's the big picture?
Problem Statement	PI	Why should we do this now?
Goals/Specific Aims	PI	What are we trying to accomplish?
Measurable Objectives	PI	What will be different?
Procedures	PI	What exactly are we going to do and when?
Evaluation	PI	How will we know if our idea works?
Dissemination	PI	Who else will benefit? How will we share data?
Facilities	PI	Do we have the necessary tools/resources/capacity?
Personnel	PI	Who will do the work? Are they qualified?
Budget/Budget Justification	DRED/PI	How much will it cost?
Biographical Sketch	PI	Who are the players?
References	PI	Whose work are you building on?
Appendices (LOS, IDC, etc.)	PI/DRED	What else do the funders need to make a decision?

Check Again Before the Submission

- ✓ Check spelling.

- ✓ Check calculations.

- ✓ Check due dates.

- ✓ Check the submission package and make sure all required forms and necessary attachments are included, page number and font size requirements are followed, and all documents are in the order described in the RFP and FOA.

- ✓ Review the scoring criteria of each section and gauge how your proposal measures up.

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Appendix

Life Cycle of a Grant Proposal Pre-award Activities

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Idea/ RFP

Contact DRED

PI should start the routing process: Routing Forms for University Approvals: PIs, co-PIs, Chair, Deans, Budget Specialist, Grants Manager, AVP

Narrative— draft, get feedback, revise

Draft budget (get permissions if needed)

Narrative finalized

Budget finalized

DRED Submits proposal to Agency

Days before agency submission deadline (Ideal Time)

Business Days

| 90+ | 60 | 30 | 14 | 7 | 5 | **3** | **0** |

13 Issues to Think About Through The Process!!!

1 **Develop a good idea and operationalize your idea**

2 **Develop a 1-page description**

3 **Avoid being a naysayer!**

4 **Create a good institutional fit**

5 **Assemble a motivated and INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM!!!**

6 **Match/Link your idea to a potential funder/sponsor**

7 **Read carefully the proposal guidelines**

8 **Re-read them again and again!**

9 **Contact the Program Official and ask questions!**

10 **Develop proposal planning outline in detail**

11 **Develop the budget from the detailed plan**

12 **Read the guidelines again with the proposal narrative/summary in mind**

13 **Be persistent— plan to revise and resubmit**

ORA Contact

Contact:

Ailing Zhang, MS (for all submission issues)

443.653.2272

Deshun Li (budget and budget justification)

601.953.0275

Matthew Lee (Contracts)

410.382.9430

Farin Kamangar, MD, PhD (AoR)

301.655.9280

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