PROPOSAL WRITER'S HANDBOOK

Office of Research & Sponsored Programs

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Table Of Contents

Introduction

1. Office Of Research And Sponsored Programs

The goal of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) is to make it easier for you to secure external funding for such projects as research, equipment, professional and program development, and conferences. ORSP serves people at all levels of expertise in the grantsmanship process, from those just curious about what a grant is and how it can help them, to seasoned veterans looking for answers to complex legal questions or news about the most recent federal regulations. It is a user-friendly office where ideas are shared and explored.

Services Of ORSP

ORSP staff will identify possible sources of funding and help you tailor your project to meet the needs of a potential funding agency. If collaboration is helpful, connections with colleagues in other departments or at other universities will be facilitated. Once a potential funding agency has been identified, the staff will obtain and help you interpret the materials you need to submit an application. You are welcome to use the ORSP office to call program officers who will answer your questions. Assistance with proposal preparation, budget development, and overcoming writer's block are available. An internal review of your proposal to enhance your chances of funding can be coordinated through ORSP. Office personnel can negotiate appropriate terms and conditions of agreements and will arrange for legal counsel when necessary. The office staff will secure university signatures and letters of support. The staff will help you understand and comply with the policies, procedures, and assurances regarding sponsored programs. Following receipt of your award, you will receive training on how to manage your account, hire personnel, and purchase equipment and supplies. In addition, ORSP can answer questions about matching funds, contracts, copyrights, patents, and marketable products.

Upon request, ORSP staff will make presentations and provide seminars for small groups. These presentations will be planned to meet the needs of individuals, collaborators, departments, or units.

Resources Available Through ORSP

A wide array of resources is available in ORSP to help you at every stage of proposal preparation. Workshops and seminars on grantsmanship are planned throughout the year. They are announced in mailings to deans and department chairs. Notices of grant opportunities are forwarded to the faculty through campus mail and e-mail. To identify who should receive announcements, ORSP maintains the SMARTS database of faculty and their research and programmatic interests, as described below. If you would like to benefit from this service, contact ORSP to obtain a survey for reporting your areas of interest or register on-line.

SPIN

For several years, ORSP has made available the Sponsored Projects Information Network (SPIN). SPIN is a searchable database that provides detailed and up-to-the-minute information about thousands of federal and non-federal funding opportunities (e.g., fellowships, R&D, and curriculum development). SPIN contains information from more than 1,200 different sponsoring agencies, which together fund over 8,000 separate funding opportunities. All of the information on SPIN is obtained directly from the sponsoring agencies to ensure the integrity of the information. Each funding opportunity is coded based

on a variety of criteria, including eligibility, the type of support offered, and discipline(s) of interest (keywords). For assistance in using the SPIN database, feel free to contact ORSP.

SMARTS

In conjunction with the SPIN system, ORSP has also electronically distributed notices of funding opportunities to faculty and staff who have completed a survey indicating the keywords that describe their research and programmatic interests. This service, called the SPIN Matching and Researcher Transmittal System (SMARTS), has a number of advantages of traditional paper-based resources: (1) SMARTS has over 3,000 keywords to describe your programmatic and research interests; (2) SMARTS is web-based, allowing you to select your keywords and, just as important, modify your keywords should find you are receiving inappropriate notices; (3) SMARTS provides information on over 8,000 different funding opportunities; (4) SMARTS e-mails funding opportunities as they arise, rather than once a month; and (5) SMARTS' funding opportunity descriptions are quite comprehensive.

You will find below instructions for registering with SMARTS via the web. The entire process takes no more than 5-10 minutes. We hope you will take advantage of this service. If you have any difficulty, you may contact ORSP via e-mail or phone (774-ORSP) to be registered.

Instructions for Registering with SMARTS System…
  - Visit the SMARTS Registration Page
  - Select "Central Michigan University" and click on "Continue" button.
  - Fill out on-line form and click on "Submit" button.
  - Click on "Applicant Types."
  - Remove checks from inappropriate boxes and click on "Save" button.
  - Click on "Geographical Restrictions."
  - Put checks in boxes next to "No Restrictions," "U.S. Midwest" and "Michigan."
  - Click on "Save" button.
  - Click on "Keywords."
  - For each appropriate keyword category, select the keywords within that category, and click on the "Save Criteria" button.
  - When all desired keywords have been selected, click on "Save" button
  - Click on "Log Out" at the bottom of the screen.

In addition to this valuable electronic resource, there are numerous other resources available to you through ORSP and the World Wide Web. You may also want to view the annotated bibliography in Appendix C, view a list of books and other traditional resources available in our office (feel free to stop by the office and check them out), or visit the ORSP list of external web resources.

To help guide the refinement of your ideas and proposal development, ORSP has abstracts of funded projects, foundation annual reports, and examples of previously funded proposals from around the country. Studying examples of successful proposals will help you see how persuasive arguments are developed, what constitutes compelling content, and the impact of effective organization.

Most of the services of ORSP are optional. If you are an experienced proposal writer, you are likely to require less assistance from ORSP staff, but all proposal writers need to: (a) inform ORSP that he/she is considering submitting a proposal, so that ORSP staff can ensure that it will not conflict with proposals being submitted from other offices; (b) obtain ORSP approval for the budget; (c) return to ORSP a final copy of the proposal with a signed transmittal form prior to submitting the proposal; and (d) obtain ORSP

approval to submit the proposal or have ORSP submit the proposal for you. Also, ORSP will provide assurances and signatures as needed.

Some of your specific questions regarding policies and procedures can be answered by the materials contained in the Grant Manager's Handbook. ORSP staff is available to answer your questions and to put you in touch with people who can help solve problems specific to your proposal. We are only a phone call away at 774-ORSP.

2. Why Bother To Write A Proposal?

Writing a grant proposal is a major investment of time and energy. Why should you bother? What's in it for you?

The most important reason to obtain external funding is because you have a strong desire to accomplish something. You have good ideas with a long-term vision. Often, external funding provides an opportunity to maximize your impact and effect change while creatively solving problems.

External funding brings you in contact with active professionals from outside your department and often from across the nation. It allows you to develop a broader network of colleagues and brings about a real sense of collegiality. Building a network increases your chances for future funding, as the trend is to fund collaborative projects. If you desire a political presence, this might be your opportunity to gain such a position.

Space is a precious commodity at this institution. As part of CMU's support for your project, you might receive office space, laboratory space, or a quiet place to write or pursue creative arts. Undergraduate, graduate, or postdoctoral research assistantships can allow you to expand graduate programs or provide exceptional opportunities for students.

An important reward for most who gain external funding is that your time can be reassigned to a project of your own choosing. Teaching loads may be reduced so that you teach fewer courses and have more time to pursue research, engage in creative activities, explore innovative teaching strategies, or design superior instructional materials.

Travel may be increased through external funding. Money is available for travel to conferences and project director's meetings where you can meet others in your field and exchange ideas. Many have traveled out of the country to pursue research ideas as a result of external funding.

Equally important, but less quantifiable are the satisfaction, professional recognition, and revitalization gained by opportunities provided by external funding.

3. Types Of University/Sponsor Relationships

Three types of university/sponsor relationships are grants, contracts, and gifts. A grant is an agreement to perform a specified activity within a certain amount of time, in other words, to conduct a program or perform a research project. There are few limiting conditions, but the grant is legally binding with regard to budgetary restrictions and agreements for cost sharing. Grants are generally awarded after a review process to identify the best-proposed project(s). A contract, on the other hand, is a legally enforceable promise to deliver a product, usually goods or services, and requires the task to be completed by a certain date. It may or may not involve the exchange of funds. Contracts are often awarded after internal staff review only. Contracts are subject to an extensive body of law and regulations. Only certain university

personnel have authority to sign a contract. The university accepts both grants and contracts on behalf of the project director. A gift of either money or equipment usually has fewer constraints than a sponsored program. While grants and contracts are handled through ORSP, gifts are administered through the University Development Office. While the written definitions of grants, contracts and gifts clearly differentiate between the three types of awards, in reality, the distinction is often blurred. If you are unclear as to whether your proposal will result in a grant, contract, or gift, contact ORSP.

4. Types Of Proposals

While there are many different ways to classify grant proposals, we have opted to describe seven types of proposals. The most common type of grant proposal requests funding to develop programs or provide services or products, including training and education to individuals, families, groups, or communities, as well as projects to improve your own teaching. The second most common type of proposal requests funds for research to support a variety of creative and scholarly activities. If a project requires extensive coordination or networking in advance, a planning proposal requests funding for the initial efforts. Technical assistance proposals seek funds to provide assistance to organizations as they develop, implement, or manage their programs. Other proposals emphasize equipment, faculty development (e.g., exchange programs and fellowships), or student support. The same general principles apply as you plan and write a proposal independent of its main thrust. In the description of how to write a proposal, we note whenever there is a significant difference in the content of a specific type of proposal.

In the section "Writing the Proposal," we describe in detail how to write a complete proposal. However, many foundations and some federal agencies request only a short proposal in the form of a letter or mini-proposal. This allows the agency to more efficiently review the large number of proposals they receive. Advice on what to include and how to structure a letter proposal may be found at the beginning of "Writing the Proposal."

The balance of this Handbook describes the proposal development process from idea to mailing. It includes what to do if you receive funding and what steps to take if the proposal is turned down. The more experienced grant writer might only need to skim this section. The Grant Manager's Handbook presents pre-award and post-award policies and procedures at CMU. The appendices include a budget development worksheet (Appendix A), a glossary of terms (Appendix B), an annotated bibliography (Appendix C), and the Grant Self Assessment Tool (Appendix D).

Remember: For any questions related to preparing a proposal, developing a contract, or implementing a project, feel free to call 774-ORSP.

Getting Started

1. Proposal Development Path

(Remember, help is available from ORSP at each step.)

Develop idea and discuss with colleagues
↓
Write concept paper
↓
Select funding agency
↓
Contact funding agency; request guidelines/annual report
↓
Read abstracts of funded projects; look at funded proposals
↓
Write letter of inquiry; submit preliminary proposal
↓
Draft proposal
↓
Solicit internal review
↓
Revise proposal
↓
Submit proposal
↓
Agency review

Funded	Not Funded
↓	↓
Negotiate award	Request reviewer's comments
↓	↓
Accept award	Revise
↓	↓
Conduct project	Solicit internal review
↓	↓
Close out accounts	Resubmit
↓	
Submit final report	

2. Developing Your Idea

Many creative ideas are generated by people as they solve problems in the daily tasks associated with their work. An idea is something that only exists in your mind. Your task is to present this idea in a written proposal. Although how you present your idea is important, agencies fund quality ideas with the promise of impact. The proposal presents your idea and your plan for accomplishing it, and requests funding based on the promise that you will do what you say you will do. It must be sufficiently persuasive that the agency is convinced that the problem or need is critical and that your plan will impact it

positively. The agency must believe that you can manage the project. You want to present your idea in such a way that the funding agency will ultimately want to aid in implementing it. You are in the business of managing the development of your idea and then marketing it.

The first step is to take a vague idea and identify a specific problem or need associated with it. Funding agencies want to help solve problems, not finance the chasing of ideas. Next, define your objectives, that is, what you want to accomplish. It is important to focus on the product of your project or what it will accomplish, rather than on a need such as equipment or time. Finally, decide which activities are necessary for you to reach your goals.

Discussing your idea with others will help you clarify it. They may indicate ways you can strengthen it. When defining your project, consider whether faculty in other disciplines share the concern. Collaboration often increases the number of sources for support.

Your next task is to flesh out your idea into something fundable. Consider that your talent and expertise are being solicited by government agencies and private foundations to help them reach their goals. You are not asking for money, rather you are presenting a service.

3. Concept Paper

At this point some people find it helpful to sketch out a concept paper, a brief description of the proposed project. It will help clarify your idea and allow you to share it with colleagues, your department chair, potential consultants, and personnel from funding agencies. The concept paper will greatly facilitate your search for a sponsor.

A concept paper is usually two or three pages in length and might be organized into the following four sections:

- Problem Statement defines the problem and provides a context for it.

- Need and Significance section addresses the problems that will be solved by your project and reviews the literature that demonstrates its importance.

- Project Plan describes how the project will be implemented including the procedures needed to accomplish the project goals and how the project will be evaluated.

- Required Resources lists time, space, equipment, personnel, and budget necessary to complete the project.

4. Seeking And Selecting A Funding Source

The more specific you are in describing your needs, the more helpful ORSP can be in identifying an appropriate funding opportunity that matches your project. The choice of the right funding source is a critical step that saves you time and energy.

In addition, knowing who is funding what can help you formulate and make more specific your own program plans. You can get ideas from simply knowing what kinds of projects federal agencies and foundations are funding. This predisposition to think in the direction of agency goals will help you to recognize possibilities in your own work.

The major funding sources for faculty research and sponsored programs at the university level are federal and state programs, private foundations, and corporations. In addition, local agencies, private and professional organizations, public schools, and regional business and industry are potential sources of funding.

Make an appointment to discuss your idea with ORSP staff and request a computer search of a database containing funding sources, i.e. the Sponsored Projects Information Network (SPIN). The intent of this search is to identify sponsors that might match your goals. The computer search is a linkage between keywords; therefore, various searches combining different keywords will result in varying numbers of potential sponsors. You will need to eliminate those clearly outside the goals or focus of your project. You can expand this list and get more information about potential funding agencies through the ORSP web page. ORSP staff will help you identify funding sources most closely related to your project.

Ask colleagues where they have had success securing funding and where they were turned down. Review professional journals in your area of interest. Funding sources are often cited in the published literature. It is generally more effective to channel an idea to the most likely sources of funding.

In order to link your concept to the most likely source of funding, you should study the make-up, structure, and programs of that agency. After you have identified some possible sponsors using a computer search and other resources, request more information about their funding program such as guidelines, annual reports, abstracts of funded projects, and previously funded proposals. It is important to review more thoroughly the most likely sponsors of your project to ascertain their overall scope and mission, understand their current and emerging interests, and assess the likelihood of funding for your project.

Questions to Consider as you Search for Funding…
- Does the funding agency share your goals?
- Is the funding agency interested in the same populations as you are?
- Are there geographic restrictions?
- Has the funding agency funded projects similar to yours?
- What awards have been made to our institution, or institutions similar to ours, in the past? Who received them?
- How many awards are made each year?
- Does the sponsor usually award enough money to fund your project?
- What is the amount of the average award?
- What is the ratio of new awards to continuing awards?
- Does the agency require matching funds?
- What requirements exist for letters of inquiry or intent, preproposals, or full proposals?
- What is the proposal review process? How long does it take?
- When are awards announced?

Public Sector Funding Sources

Many requests are being submitted from CMU to a variety of funding sources. Before you contact any funding agency, notify ORSP. This will allow coordination of requests and will increase the chance of funding for all involved.

Federal Agencies. The largest funding source for extramural funding is the federal government, which sponsors thousands of programs. The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance contains a current listing and description of all federal programs. Specific opportunities for funding by federal agencies are

publicized through agency web pages, the [Federal Register](), and guidelines issued by each department or agency. Many agencies have developed guidelines for submitting proposals, which contain a cover page, budget pages, assurances, directions for preparing the narrative, budget restrictions, and the review process. The government uses uniform procedures for dealing with cost analysis such as consultant fees, overseas costs, per diem, and travel. Government agencies also require us to adhere to standards on [animal welfare](), the use of [human subjects](), and [misconduct in science](). Most agencies at the federal level use a peer review process involving experts at colleges, universities, and national laboratories from the appropriate discipline for the evaluation of proposals. [ORSP]() is familiar with all of this and can help you to understand it.

The entire proposal process, from pre-proposal to submission and review by the federal agency, can take as long as nine months. Generally there are about three months between the time program guidelines are printed and the time proposals are due at the agency. These are only average figures; there is considerable variability depending upon the program and agency.

State Agencies. [State agencies]() receive some of their funding from the state legislature. Ordinarily legislation responds to societal needs in areas such as education, public health, and social services. Funding may also create an infrastructure to support business and industry, commerce, labor, natural resources, or transportation.

The [Michigan Department of Education]() responds to educational needs that originate at the state and national level. The [U.S. Department of Education]() has given the [State of Michigan]() millions of dollars for the revision of the K-12 curricula and for teacher training in science and mathematics. The administration of those grants is turned over to state agencies, which issue program solicitations in the form of Requests for Proposals (RFPs).

Usually, the state advertises new programs through a mass mailing to universities, public schools, and other interested persons. It contains a letter, copy of the guidelines, and a timetable regarding informative conferences, preproposal requirements, and final proposal content. Important information on funding priorities and the preparation of proposals is conveyed at the conferences so those planning to submit a proposal should plan to attend. The proposal review process at the state level is not always the same from program to program. Some departments use a peer review process, while others simply use in-house staff to review projects.

Local Agencies. Some of the most common sources of funding in the public sector are local agencies. Local agency agreements usually reflect a narrower focus and research on a smaller scale. In some instances, these agreements are tailored for a designated service to be provided for the agency. Letters of agreement or contracts are generally brief, setting goals and objectives and outlining the services to be provided. Estimated costs are also included for the services or product.

Typically, these agreements are with colleges and universities, local governments, local health agencies, municipalities, public associations, and public schools. Areas of research at [CMU]() funded by local agencies have included aquatic biology, ground and surface water analysis, wetlands studies, chemical compound identification, computer programming, cartography and remote sensing in land use, mineral studies, robotics creation and simulation, mathematical modeling, and rheometer studies in polymers.

Private Sector Funding Sources

Foundations. A private foundation is a nonprofit, nongovernmental entity with its own funds and governing board. Foundations are most frequently funded by a single source of funds from an individual,

family, or corporation. There are also community foundations that operate with public money making grants for social, educational, religious, or other charitable purposes in a specific community or region.

Foundations are governed by a set of policies set forth by the original donor(s), board of trustees, or officers who determine the types of programs to be supported, the types of institutions to receive funds, the geographical area of support, and the minimum and maximum amount of awards. In general, the larger the foundation, the broader the funding interests. The Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 (ERTA) mandated that foundations give 5% of the market value of their assets each calendar year. By reviewing information from the Foundation Center , Michigan Foundation Directory and copies of annual reports, you can identify the most appropriate foundation to support your project. These directories and others containing information on foundation funding sources are located in ORSP, Foust 251.

Corporations. Since 1935, the IRS has allowed charitable deductions for corporations. In 1982, tax law changes allowed deductions of corporate contributions up to 10% of net income. The 1997 Edition of the Annual Register of Grant Support reports that corporations made the largest percentage of their donations to education over the last several years, with health and human services receiving the second largest percentage. It is important to study the types of contributions made by a corporation in recent years in order to match your request with their objectives. Often corporations are looking for proposals that will assist its company or employees, and improve its image with the public. A letter of inquiry is the best way to approach corporations.

Large and small companies located in local or regional areas may make gifts and grants to educational institutions that provide cooperative internship programs, faculty research support, fellowships, grants-in-aid for graduate student researchers, and general scholarships.

Before approaching any business in the private sector, discuss your plans with ORSP staff who will obtain clearance for your proposal through university channels.

In summary, federal agencies typically focus on areas of national need; state departments prefer to fund projects with a state-wide or regional focus; foundations may be very narrow in scope, sometimes funding single-issue projects, e.g. cultural activities or cancer research; and corporations are interested in public image, goodwill, and tax incentives, with the ultimate goal of marketing their product(s).

While you may submit your proposal to more than one funding agency, it is important to tailor your proposal to match the priorities and guidelines of each agency. In fact, you increase your chances of success by doing this. Do not make several copies of the same proposal and use different mailing labels. Also, you must indicate on the cover page or in a cover letter that you have a funding request pending with another agency. When you receive an offer of funding, notify the other agencies to which you applied.

5. Securing And Reading Guidelines

Government agencies produce guidelines based on legislation that appropriates government funds to meet public needs. Only projects fitting within those parameters can be funded. Foundations have more freedom in what projects they fund, but must meet standards set by the IRS to maintain their tax-exempt status. ORSP will help you secure guidelines from federal agencies, corporations, and foundations that offer grant opportunities of interest to you. It will save you a great deal of time to carefully read the guidelines. Look for the points listed in the following table on your first reading of the guidelines.

As you read the guidelines, begin to develop your outline around the topics that must be covered. You may need to refine your idea to match the interests of the funding agency. Some agencies list funding

priorities that must be included in your proposal for it to be considered for funding. You must follow the guidelines exactly. Respond to all sections and adhere to any format restrictions presented. Often, agencies ask that you cover the topics in the order they are presented in the guidelines. Look for each topic that must be addressed and each subtopic under it. Your outline will direct the reader to the sections under review. You can convey a sense of organization to the reader through your use of headings and subheadings. The distribution of points that may be awarded to a specific topic during the review process gives you an idea of its relative importance.

Those who review proposals are instructed to locate the information in the proposal that is relevant to the selection criteria and then analyze the quality of the response. The reviewer must assess how well the application responds to the selection criteria. Therefore, it is critical that you carefully read and explicitly follow the guidelines. It is crucial that you make it as easy as possible for the reviewer to see how your proposal meets the selection criteria.

What if no guidelines exist? This is sometimes the case for foundations. All agencies need the same basic information including the purpose of the project and how it meets the purposes of the organization providing funding, the need for the project, what solutions and/or products it will offer, how the project will be conducted and how it will be evaluated, who will conduct the work, their qualifications and responsibilities, where this will happen, and the adequacy of the resources. Finally, all funding agencies want to know how much the project will cost.

As you read the program guidelines, look for . . .
- Program Deadline.
  - ❑ Can the proposal be completed on time?
  - ❑ Is it already too late?
- Purpose.
  - ❑ What is the overall aim of the program?
  - ❑ Does it match with your interests?
- Eligibility.
  - ❑ Who can submit proposals to this program?
  - ❑ Are you eligible?
  - ❑ Is there a requirement that this be a joint effort?
  - ❑ Even if you are eligible, are you a primary audience?
  - ❑ What kinds of projects are eligible for support?
  - ❑ Is it a research program, or will it accept education proposals?
  - ❑ Does the program require innovation?
  - ❑ How narrowly and broadly has the eligibility of content been defined?
  - ❑ Are there particular kinds of projects that are not eligible?
- Size of Awards.
  - ❑ How many awards does the program intend to make?
  - ❑ How many did it make last year?
  - ❑ What is the average award likely to be?
- Probability of Success.
  - ❑ How many proposals are funded compared to the number received?
  - ❑ Is it worth the effort to prepare the proposal?
- Proposal Preparation.
  - ❑ How long must the proposal be?
  - ❑ What sections must it contain?
  - ❑ How many copies of the proposal will be needed?

- Proposal Review.
  - ❑ How will it be judged during review?
  - ❑ What are the review questions?
  - ❑ Who will do the reviewing?
  - ❑ Will they be generalists, specialists, or both?
  - ❑ Will review be by mail or by a panel?

6. Contacting The Funding Agency

After researching sponsors and gaining clearance from ORSP, direct contact with the funding agency offers a final and authoritative check that the identified sponsors are appropriate to your project. This contact provides an opportunity to clarify information and to begin to develop a relationship with the sponsor. The program officer might suggest ways to make your project more fundable. Be receptive to the suggestions, as that person knows what he or she wants to support. Studies have demonstrated that direct contact with the sponsor prior to submission of a proposal significantly increases the chances of receiving funding. Some agencies, for example the National Endowment for the Humanities, are unlikely to fund projects unless they have had previous contact with the project director. Although you want to contact a sponsor early in the proposal preparation process, do not do this before you have clarified the idea for your project and can explain why it is worthy of their support.

You might initiate the contact with a telephone call after securing and reading the guidelines. During the phone call, discuss your project in very broad terms. Learn from the program director the agency's priorities. Find out if they will be holding conferences to assist with the proposal process. If the information is not already available in the guidelines, inquire as to how many new proposals they plan to fund and the expected amount of the average award. You should clarify the due date and the review process. Ask if the program director will review a preliminary proposal if it is received well before the deadline. Determine what should be your next step. It might be a letter to follow up and expand upon the phone call, or it might be a concept paper, a preliminary proposal, a visit to the agency, or another phone call later in the proposal development process.

Direct contact with corporations and foundations may not provide much information beyond annual reports and guidelines. The structures of these private entities make written requests the preferred method of initial contact. Direct discussion, however, with local, private and public funding sources such as health agencies, hospitals, and public schools is often useful. These conversations are valuable to discover the funding opportunities available from their supporting agencies and to build future relationships. This process may lead to participation on advisory boards and consulting as well as contracting for services.

7. Letter Of Inquiry

A letter of inquiry should be addressed to a specific person, usually the person with whom you have already talked on the phone. The first paragraph is introductory and explains why you are writing, i.e., to follow-up on a phone call, to inquire about a funding opportunity. The second paragraph focuses on the funding agency and demonstrates why this sponsor should be interested in your project. Relate your project to their areas of interest and to projects they are currently funding. The third paragraph describes the need for your project. Tie this statement to the values of the sponsor and cite relevant literature or statistics. In the next paragraph describe your approach to the solution of the problem. How will you make an impact and what is your timetable? Before closing, include a paragraph telling why you are the best person to conduct this project. What unique qualifications or facilities do you bring that will ensure the project's success? The closing paragraph should indicate your next step. Will you telephone them again, look forward to a letter, or submit a full proposal?

Letters of inquiry are most commonly sent to private foundations or corporate funding sources, but not to government agencies. Preliminary proposals are sometimes requested by federal and state agencies. The writing of preliminary proposals is discussed at the beginning of "Writing the Proposal" in this handbook.

8. Roles And Responsibilities

A grant or contract is executed most often between the funding agency and Central Michigan University on behalf of the project director. This arrangement puts the legal liability on the university. Rarely, a grant or contract is awarded to an individual. Most likely, an award to an individual is in the nature of a fellowship.

Authority over sponsored programs rests with the Board of Trustees, President, Provost, and Vice Provost for Research. In some cases, the Board of Trustees must approve the acceptance of an award before funds can be expended. The President is often asked for a letter of endorsement indicating that the project is in accord with the mission of the university. The Vice Provost for Research must approve all proposals leaving the university and is responsible for all proposal budgets including Facilities & Administrative Costs (formerly indirect or overhead costs) and matching funds. University committees providing assurances of compliance with federal guidelines are convened by the Vice Provost for Research.

ORSP identifies potential sponsors, assists in proposal preparation, reviews and endorses proposals, negotiates and accepts awards, and recommends and implements policies and procedures with respect to sponsored programs. The office coordinates the efforts of all university offices involved with the managing of the award.

College deans and department chairs must work closely with the project director. They coordinate the use of time, space, equipment, and in some cases oversee the research effort or program.

The project director, principal investigator, or program director is the individual who has full and final responsibility for seeing that the project is carried out as proposed. With the help of ORSP staff, that person must comply with the terms, conditions, and policies of both the sponsor and the university, including the oversight of the budget and submission of all reports. If the proposal names two or more investigators as co-directors, most agencies require that one person be designated as the responsible person. That person should be a full-time faculty or staff person. Exceptions to this policy can be made on an individual basis.

From preceding sections, you should understand that proposal writing and project management is a team effort. Many resources are available to help you. Please feel free to seek the assistance of ORSP at any time – from the first germ of an idea to a completed draft of a proposal. The office is in Foust 251 and the phone number is 774-ORSP.

Writing the Proposal

1. Where To Begin?

Now it is time to write the proposal. You have the idea and have settled on a funding source, but where do you begin? The proposal development process is not mysterious. Each agency wants to best fulfill its mission. Your proposal competes in a marketplace of ideas. Your presentation must be sufficiently clear, appealing, and persuasive to convince someone to fund the project. You are applying for competitive funding. Therefore, it is essential to determine the funding agency's priorities before beginning the proposal. Your task is to present what you actually plan to do in such a way that the funding agency can determine whether investing in your project represents an effective use of their resources, whether it helps to achieve their goals.

First define the problem or need you wish to address, and then formulate goals and objectives in response to that problem. Next decide what specific actions have to be undertaken to fulfill those goals and objectives. One way to organize your thoughts into a coherent plan of action is to develop an outline. Then continue working on each section until you have established a strong, logical connection between the activities you propose to undertake and the problem you have defined. In this way you will also muster the arguments you will need to persuade a potential sponsor of the value of your proposed activities. As you review each section, try to look at the project from the perspective of the funding source. Why would someone support this activity? Who might benefit from it, or what might be accomplished as a result of this project?

Proposals can be elaborate or simply written in letter form. In either case, follow the funding agency's guidelines and include all the required information. If something isn't applicable, say so. Organize the proposal logically. Agencies want to award funds to programs that will be successful and effective. Convince them that yours is such a project. State why you are qualified to conduct the project, emphasize the organization's past successes with similar efforts and the expertise of the staff. Include the long-lasting results of the project. Emphasize how the project's performance will be evaluated including the specific plan for data collection and analysis. Prepare a budget that clearly states how the grant funds will be spent. Don't inflate the budget, but don't underestimate the costs involved; that will only set you up for failure. Funding agencies often want assurances that a project they "seed" will continue after the external funding expires. Therefore, explain how the project will be funded when the grant period concludes. Avoid jargon and emotional language; superlatives are ineffective. Define terms and document claims either in the narrative or appendices.

Some organizations allow you to submit a preliminary proposal, which enables the agency to comment on your ideas and evaluate how well they fit their goals. Usually guidelines will clearly indicate if a preliminary proposal is desired and may give a specific due date for it. However, some program officers will review a preliminary proposal if it is received well in advance of the deadline date. Telephone the program officer and ask about preliminary proposal review. Following review of the preliminary proposal, the agency may suggest how you can refine the proposal to make it more competitive or they may suggest other agencies with funding programs more suited to your proposal.

2. Preliminary Proposals And Letter Proposals

A number of foundations and a few government agencies ask applicants to submit a short proposal in the form of a letter or brief statement. Read carefully their instructions to determine the tone for your mini-proposal. Sometimes this brief description of your project is all that will be used to make their funding

decision; other times it facilitates initial screening prior to accepting a full proposal. These proposals are usually 2-5 pages and do not contain attachments unless specifically requested in the guidelines. Title the project and use subheadings to direct the reader's attention. If you are given no guidelines, include the following points, each in its own paragraph.

Include in a Letter or Preliminary Proposal . . .
- Explanation of how your project responds to the sponsor's goals
- Statement of the problem and need for the project
- Statement of project purpose, objectives, and accomplishments
- Description of the proposed activities, including a timetable
- Description of the staff qualifications and responsibilities
- Description of the capability of the organization
- Description of project continuation after funding
- Explanation of the budget request

3. Grants vs. Contracts

Funding agencies provide support for sponsored projects in two ways: through grants and contracts. Both support programs with defined conditions, requirements, and expectations set by the funding agency. The most significant difference between a grant and a contract is the outcome. Contracts specify what particular services or products are expected, typically for the benefit of the sponsor. Grants are awarded to conduct a project based upon a set of priorities, typically for the benefit of the public. They seldom specify final products the way a contract does; and therefore, tend to be more flexible and require less monitoring by the funding agency. Grants are generally awarded as a result of a peer review process based on merit, whereas contracts are reviewed by internal staff and often awarded to the lowest bidder. Some grant award letters require formal acceptance in writing; some do not require a response. Contracts result in a legal document that must be signed by a university official with contracting authority, thus legally binding the university. Generally, faculty and staff do not have contracting authority, and those few who do, have received a letter describing the limits of that authority. Therefore, in most cases, ORSP staff will arrange for signatures on a contract.

4. Task And Time Chart

If you are a novice at writing grant proposals, it might be helpful to prepare a task-time chart showing what you are going to do to develop the completed proposal. It takes about 60 hours of effort to produce a major proposal. Begin with the deadline date and work back from there. Allow time to plan, research, and communicate with colleagues about your idea. Identify a funding agency and make contact requesting the guidelines. Complete the first draft of the proposal and get an internal review. Revise the draft and get another review. Contact people for letters of support and collect materials for appendices. Prepare the final proposal, and then have it copied and mailed. As you read the rest of this chapter on writing the proposal and the next chapter on submitting it, you will get a very clear idea of the task before you. Most people allow about 3 months to write a proposal. Sometimes guidelines are published so close to the deadline date that you must begin writing the proposal before you receive them, but in those cases you will be able to use guidelines from a previous program year to get started.

5. Developing An Outline From The Guidelines

When writing a detailed proposal, always follow exactly the guidelines provided by the funding agency. If you do not have a copy of the guide for the preparation of proposals from a specific agency, write or telephone for a copy. It is imperative that the guidelines be followed exactly. All sections of the

guidelines must be addressed; proposals are very quickly rejected because the writers omit sections. As you read the guidelines, develop an outline that follows the requested sections and the evaluation criteria. Major headings, often having a Roman numeral, are determined by the major evaluation sections. Subheadings address the questions under the main headings or subpoints of the evaluation criteria. A proposal must comply with the format established by the funding agency regardless of how creative or meritorious your idea may be. When evaluators judge proposals, they follow a set of evaluative criteria based on the structure of the guidelines.

If for some reason the guidelines are vague, as is sometimes the case with foundations, use the generic proposal outline shown below to guide the writing of your proposal, adjusting it as you feel necessary after talking with the funding agency. Each of these sections is explained in more detail on the following pages.

6. Writing Style

Remember a proposal is a document in favor of something; therefore, be enthusiastic and convey a tone of confidence. Use the active voice in writing and concentrate on action verbs. Make all words count. Avoid technical jargon and rework sentences for clarity, eliminating all extra words. Write as much as is necessary and as little as possible. Be clear and concise. Clearly present tables and figures, and check the bibliography for accuracy. Use headings, subheadings, bullets, and indentations to direct the reader's attention. Proofread carefully.

Generic Proposal Outline…
- Abstract of the project
- Statement of the problem and justification
- Review of relevant literature
- Objectives to be accomplished
- Procedures or methodology or project plan
- Evaluation
- Dissemination
- Continuation
- Project personnel
- Adequacy of the institution
- Budget and budget narrative
- Appendices:
    - vitae
    - letters of support

7. Proposal Content

Proposal formats vary from one funding agency to another. Always follow the printed guidelines if they are available. Proposals that result in awards to individuals are sometimes short and must follow very specific guidelines. Planning proposals or those providing technical assistance to an organization may follow the general format of either a research or programmatic proposal depending upon the nature of the project. Research proposals are the most unique in format. The following information is generally applicable to the majority of proposals and may serve as a guide as you write your proposal. Where specific differences in proposal preparation occur for research proposals, they are noted. Note that examples of each item can be seen in ORSP (Foust 251).

Cover Letter. Foundation proposals should be accompanied by a one-page cover letter that conveys in simple terms the name of the project and its purpose, the amount requested, the period of the project, and the name of the contact person. It may be signed by the President or by the Vice Provost for Research. ORSP will arrange for the necessary signatures. Cover letters do not usually accompany proposals to state or federal agencies.

Title Page. Most funding agencies will provide a title page or cover sheet. ORSP staff will help you complete a title page or draft one if none is provided, as is often the case with foundations, but you must decide the title of the project. Select words that accentuate the most important aspects of the project. The title should be succinct and descriptive.

Introduction, Summary, or Abstract. This is the entire proposal condensed to its fundamental substance. It may be the only part of the proposal read carefully and thoughtfully in its entirety. Therefore, it should never be thrown together at the last minute. It should draw the reviewer into reading the entire proposal and instill confidence in the project director's abilities.

The abstract should include a summary of each section of the proposal and show how the proposal is responsive to the goals of the funding agency. Describe the purpose of the proposal, why this problem must be addressed, what can be accomplished, and who will benefit. In essence, state who will do what; to whom and with what; when, where, and how it will get done; and what the project's outcomes, accomplishments, and benefits will be.

Write the abstract or summary last. Initially write an abstract that is too long. Then combine sentences, omit unnecessary words, and delete repetitive ideas. Keep in mind that economy and clarity are the keys to an effective abstract. Finally, have someone else read it.

Table of Contents. A carefully constructed table of contents greatly facilitates review of the proposal. List headings down to the first subheading and include beginning page numbers. Be sure that the table of contents matches the headings in the body of the proposal.

Statement of Need or Problem to be Addressed. This section answers the questions "What really needs to be done? What services need to be delivered and to whom? What gaps exist in the knowledge base of your field?"

Clearly articulate and document the nature and extent of the problem that has resulted in a need for the proposed project. Reasons should be given using available evidence and logical argument to establish the need for your project. Mention how existing programs are limited, how yours differs from them, and how it will solve the problem or meet the agency's goals. Include how your program builds upon or complements other programs funded by that agency. You must convince sponsors that the problem is important enough to deserve attention. Then, explain how you will alleviate the problem and why your solution will be successful.

Document the need for your project using a review of the current literature with emphasis on studies particularly pertinent to this project. Use historical, geographic, statistical, or demographic data to demonstrate need for the project. You might show need by furnishing evidence of demand including case loads, waiting lists, enrollment or interest surveys, newspaper articles, and position statements from national organizations. Pull the documentation together so that it is relevant to your project. What do the data mean? How do they support your position? What specific examples would help? You might survey the population to be served or visit a major laboratory to determine the scope of their work. It may be necessary to collect your own data. Contact ORSP if you need internal funding to conduct a pilot study or modest needs assessment.

Finally, emphasize the significance of your project. What will be the result or end product of your project? What impact will it have? Will the impact continue after funding? You might present your project as a model for others. This can take a regional project and give it national impact deserving of federal funds. There are two approaches to having a large impact: (1) create a program that directly affects many people; or (2) conduct a smaller project that is very easily transferred to other settings and situations. Remember, especially in the case of requests for corporate funds, you need to provide them with a competitive edge, better image, or improved employee environment. Write your need statement with that flavor in mind. Always address the priorities of the funding agency in this section. Show your project to be unique, distinctive, and effective. Forecast the usefulness and importance of the results of the proposed project. This assists the reviewers in determining the cost/benefit ratio for the project.

Review Questions for the Development of a Statement of Need…
- What significant needs are you trying to meet?
- What is the current status of the needs?
- Will this project help meet the need?
- What really needs to be done?
- What services will be delivered? To whom? By whom?
- What gaps exist in the knowledge base of your field?
- What does the literature say about the significance of the problem, at a local, state, regional, national level?
- Is there evidence that this project will lead to other significant studies?
- What previous work has been done to meet this need? Was it effective?
- Do organizations involved in this area of study see the need as important?
- What will be the impact of this study?

In all proposals, you must substantiate that the perceived problem exists, but this section varies slightly in programmatic and research proposals.

Literature Review and Problem Statement (Research Proposals). The significance, substantiation, or need for a research project is documented in a review of the literature. Most research is an extension or criticism of previous work. Approach the literature review not as a mere listing of previous work or as a description of the subject, but as documentation supporting the need for and value of your project. Identify the current situation in your discipline and demonstrate how you will improve it. Emphasize how your project builds on the work already done. Include older articles only if they are landmark studies or critical analyses. How does your project fill the gap in an evolving body of knowledge? How will the results of this project help you formulate your next research question? Write with purpose, being succinct, fair, and thorough. Lead the reader to your conclusion, support your hypothesis, and justify your methodology.

The problem statement follows the literature review and indicates why the question you posed remains unanswered, or why it needs further description, experimentation, or analysis. This statement should include the relevant variables and their relationship to the problem. Discuss the extent of the problem and the value of your research. Who is affected by it? How many corporations, people, or processes does it affect? Who else is interested in the problem? Is it a government priority? How will the outcome impact others? How will it further their efforts? How is it related to the mission of the funding agency and other studies it has funded? What is the forecast as to the usefulness and importance of the results of the proposed project?

Objectives. The opening statement of this section should complete the sentence "The purpose of the proposed project is to.…" The objectives state the essence of the proposed work in terms of what will be accomplished. The project goals and objectives should flow logically from the statement of need directly addressing the problem. Most projects result in broader goals being achieved through a series of objectives.

Goals convey the ultimate intent of the proposed project, describing what will be accomplished, not how. The statement of goals must be realistic but can be general and more inclusive, for example, to establish an internship program.

Begin with an overall goal for your project delineating what you actually intend to accomplish. Then break it down into specific measurable pieces that become the set of project objectives, the precise outcomes that can be measured to determine actual accomplishments.

Objectives state specific activities leading to more immediate outcomes that can be measured, either quantitatively or qualitatively. They must be clear, specific, and allow for evaluation. They should depict action and specify the limitations or parameters of the study. Well written objectives specify the project's expected results, length of time needed to achieve the results, and minimal competency level or service level desired. They are action oriented and usually begin with a verb. If your project has more than one objective, arrange them in order of priority.

Research projects are described in terms of hypotheses stating the relationship between variables. The hypotheses are investigated through an orderly progression of objectives.

Statement of Objectives and Hypotheses. This section includes a statement of the specific objectives of the study, the hypotheses to be tested, or the questions to be answered. Hypotheses should be stated as predicted or expected relationships among variables. Null hypotheses are usually reserved for statistical studies.

Research objectives are less specific than programmatic objectives. They include objectives of the research project, the reporting of the study, and its dissemination. They reinforce that your project is based on sufficient evidence and that it is conceptually sound. On occasion, in exploratory studies, only questions used to guide the research are stated.

Plan of Action, Project Design, or Methodology. This section answers the questions "What specific activities will enable you to reach your objectives? How will they be conducted? By whom and in what time frame?" Here you explain how you plan to do the things set forth in your objectives, when you plan to do the work, how long it will take, who else will be working with the project, exactly what each person will be doing, where they will be doing it, and what facilities, equipment, supplies, time and personnel will be needed. Walk the reader through the entire project. This section is task oriented and specific. It is essential that you identify and then present to the reviewers all the steps needed to complete the project. Make sure that each step follows logically after the one before it and that it is tied to the one following it. Be certain that the way in which each objective will be achieved is explained. Include when activities will begin and who will be responsible for each activity.

This section of a proposal is often the most detailed and lengthy, constituting the heart of the proposal. In addition to the points just mentioned, include the time frame of the project, demonstrating that something will be accomplished throughout the entire funding period including summers and vacation periods. This can be general, by month, or in relationship to the funding date. It is often presented as a time and task chart. This timeline will help keep the project on schedule and let the funding agency know what to expect in progress reports. A well conceived activity timeline convinces the reviewers that the applicant

knows the subject and the methodologies to be used. It presents the project as realistic and able to be completed in the projected time frame. In addition, it is a clear and visual summary of the project.

Often the plan of action ties together the objectives and the personnel who will be responsible for achieving them. Explain what each person in the project will do. Include why you need consultants and how you chose them.

Some funding agencies are interested in the relationship between the various administrative bodies of a project. Organizational or managerial charts reflect the project management schema including how decisions will be made, what communication lines exist, and what cooperative relationships must be in place with external personnel and agencies. A well developed and effective chart demonstrates that you have managerial know-how and gives the reviewer confidence that the project will be effectively administered. The managerial chart might include the composition and role of the advisory committee or board, other related committees, consultants, staff, students (graduate and undergraduate), deans, department chairs, and the principal investigators or project directors.

Include in the Activity Timeline…
- Pre-proposal planning activities
- Pilot studies
- Needs assessment surveys
- Schedule for hiring
- Schedule for ordering supplies and equipment
- Plan for putting equipment into operation
- List of meetings with colleagues and consultants
- Means of acquiring subjects
- Methods for data collection and analysis
- Formative and summative evaluation procedures
- Procedures for dissemination and publication
- Report preparation
- Follow-up activities

List each step, the time it will take, and who will be involved.

Design and Procedures (Research Proposals). This section deals with the methodology and its rationale. If your methodology is new or unique, be sure to explain why it is better than that previously used or that used by most scholars. Specify the research design and why it was chosen, including descriptions of variables and their relationships. Define all important terms. Provide descriptions of data sources including subjects, how they will be selected, the size of the subject pool, and the size of the sample. Describe all procedures related to data collection, analysis, and dissemination. Include pilot instruments and data whenever possible to help convince the reviewers that you know what you are doing and that the project is feasible.

If the project director has not completely thought through all the steps needed to complete the project, this section will be weak and will negatively affect the reviewer's comments. You will need to include a step-by-step work plan and timeline similar to that just described. Be as specific as possible.

Evaluation. An evaluation section should be included in all programmatic proposals, even if it is not requested. It is most often excluded from research proposals. Grantors need to know to what extent the project met its goals. What went right? What went wrong and why? Agencies need to be able to decide on future funding priorities and ascertain the ultimate value of the project. Was there impact beyond the

funded project? If a publication resulted, did others request it? If a manual was produced, who used it and did they implement a similar project?

A Good Evaluation Plan . . .
- Covers both process and product
- Tells who will perform the evaluation and how they were chosen
- Defines the criteria by which the program will be evaluated
- Evaluates the achievement of each objective
- Describes data gathering methods
- Explains assessment instruments, questionnaires, and other materials
- Describes data analysis procedures
- Relates evaluation findings to a plan for program improvement
- Describes evaluation reports to be produced

This section includes how the project will be evaluated both as it progresses (formative evaluation) and when it is finished (summative evaluation). It should explain the methods that will be used and might include descriptions of record keeping, surveys, and assessment instruments. Sometimes the relationship between the objectives, project plan, and evaluation can be presented in a table.

The evaluation process needs to be viewed as a learning process rather than a grading process. As you develop the evaluation strategy, consider what would count as evidence that your project succeeded or that it failed. Imagine that you were someone else who wanted to decide whether to use the results or products of your project. What would you need to know to determine if you would benefit from the project? What form should that information take to be sufficiently credible or useful? If you have never written an evaluation section before, ORSP has materials to help you.

Another approach is to hire a third party to conduct the evaluation. Identify your evaluators before submitting the proposal and obtain a letter of commitment from them. Often the external evaluation team will contribute to the writing of the evaluation section of the proposal.

Continuation. Funding agencies want to have lasting impact and they want to know how that will be accomplished. Include how you propose to continue the project beyond the funding that you are requesting. This may include a "good faith" statement from the university. Any commitment of the university to support a program at any level after expiration of the grant period must be cleared in writing through ORSP. This section may explain a plan to phase out external funding and to assume the project under existing offices or programs. It must show how what has begun through external funding will become part of an established program. Will it generate fees to sustain it or will it become part of the base budget? Is this project part of an on-going research endeavor? A statement of impact or continuation is appropriate for all proposals. A letter of support from the appropriate administrator can strengthen this section.

Dissemination. Dissemination is the process by which your project is reported to other professionals and the public. It is very important to the funding agency because it allows them to have multiplied impact. The methods for dissemination are sometimes presented as the concluding thoughts of the project plan. Whether the plan for dissemination stands alone or is incorporated into another section of the proposal is determined by the guidelines. Wherever it is located, this section should address the way in which you will disseminate the results and outcomes of your funded project. Specifically, how will the research methodologies, results, or products be made available to others? How will the transfer of information be implemented? Will there be workshops, publications, or conferences? If you are producing instructional materials or manuals, how will they be advertised, marketed, and distributed?

The Dissemination Plan Should Include . . .
- Which results will be reported
- What audiences will be reached
- How the results or products will be disseminated, e.g., computer networks, video tapes, conferences, professional journals, or publication of books, chapters, or monographs

Key Personnel. This section answers the question, "What will each person on the project be doing and is he/she qualified to do it?" Convince the funding agency that you are capable of accomplishing what you say you can accomplish. Highlight the expertise of all key personnel as it contributes to this particular project. Mention successful accomplishments or products from similar projects substantiating the argument for competence. Include experience you have had managing other research projects or large budgets. Some agencies ask that you justify the time commitment required for each person or position on the project.

Include the vita of the project's key personnel. Some agencies request a shortened vitae or biosketch listing publications and professional activities for the last 5 years. Be sure the vita are readable and current. People do read them, and they do influence funding.

Weak qualifications or inexperience in some cases can be compensated for by adding appropriate consultants. Be specific about the qualifications of all consultants and the tasks they will perform. Always have your consultants' permission before including them in a proposal and attach a letter of intent from them.

If you have not identified specific persons for some positions on the project, summarize the job descriptions or qualifications required and how you will find the persons. Indicate what responsibilities they will have and explain the level of effort for each.

In the Key Personnel Section Address . . .
- Publications in the area of the proposal or related areas
- Receipt of previous grants in this area
- Involvement in a similar study or project, whether funded or not
- Evidence of relevant training, certification, or clearance
- Unpublished papers, conference presentations in the area
- Pilot studies in the area

Qualifications of the Applicant Organization (Facilities/Institutional Capability). This section answers the question "Why should the award be made to your institution?" Highlight the institution's capabilities with regard to the proposed project and the agency's funding priorities. You might outline the experience of the institution in the proposed field of activity, the library holdings that will be available, the computer capabilities, the administrative support available to you, and the availability of necessary special equipment or facilities. Include the capability of the department or section within the department to carry out the project. A record of past achievements, philosophy of the organization, reputation, adherence to standards, and accreditation of programs or endorsements are often evidence of capability. ORSP can help you with the information for this section.

Indicate the availability of facilities in terms of space (laboratory, office, classroom) and equipment. If you will be utilizing community facilities (such as a mental health center, school, library, or park), attach a letter of agreement concerning their availability.

Budget Narrative or Explanation. This section answers the questions "What is the cost of the project you have described in your proposal and why are the expenditures necessary?" The budget section often has two parts: (1) the budget form or budget summary that, without explanation, breaks down the total budget into specific items; and (2) a budget narrative that explains how you arrived at these figures. List by category and item the money needed to conduct the project. Consider indicating the cost/benefit ratio of your project. Express your budget in terms of cost per participant, hours of service, or samples prepared. The budget narrative should mirror your project description. Be specific and explain how you arrived at the figures you used. Explain any unusual expenditures.

ORSP must be involved in this portion of the proposal development. ORSP staff can get many of the necessary figures for you such as salaries, benefit calculations, and Facilities and Administrative (F&A) costs (formerly called indirect costs or overhead) and can provide examples of complete budgets for you to peruse. Appendix A contains a worksheet to assist you with budget development.

Estimate the personnel requirements of the project. Include salaries or stipends for principal investigators, student assistants, graduate research assistants, secretarial and technical assistance, and consultants who will be paid from the grant. List those who will contribute their time. Commitments of faculty time must be approved by the department chair and dean of the college. How many people with what types of qualifications will be needed to carry out the project? What travel resources will they need? Where are you going? Why? What is the cost for airfare, for hotel? What space and equipment is required for the project? Include building or equipment rental costs. Estimate the cost of copying, telephoning, and mailing, as well as any supplies or equipment that may need to be purchased.

An in-kind contribution is the dollar value of non-cash contributions such as equipment, space, or faculty and staff time not paid for from the grant. Essentially, these are the costs the university would be paying regardless of whether your project is funded. If your project is funded, the in-kind resources will be allocated to it. If your proposal requires a cash match, see the Vice Provost for Research for assistance. Any commitment from the university must be cleared in writing before the proposal is mailed. Since these figures are very important to funding agencies, you must be accurate and specific. Seek help from ORSP for this section of your budget. If there are multiple sources of in-kind or cash matching funds, clearly list them all in the budget.

Facilities and Administrative costs (also known as F&A, and formerly called indirect costs and overhead before that) are costs not uniquely associated with the project. The method for calculating this figure varies depending upon the agency and program to which you are applying. Contact ORSP for the correct F&A cost rate associated with your project. When figuring the budget, include the full F&A cost amount. If for any reason part of the Facilities and Administrative costs is to be waived, written permission must be obtained in advance from the Vice Provost for Research.

Total the cost of the project, clearly showing the amount you are requesting for this proposal. If you have a multi-year proposal, a budget is required for each year. It is usually wise to show increasing matching funds in each successive year of a multi-year budget. This demonstrates commitment to the project. A summary budget page should total all funds requested for the project.

Lastly, review the budget objectively to determine that you have requested enough funding to complete the project professionally. The budget needs to be both realistic and justified. Most funding agencies indicate an "average" award amount for their programs. Target your budget to this figure. If your project requires substantially more funds, consider breaking it into smaller pieces, identifying another source that makes larger awards, or applying to multiple funding agencies. Bring your budget to ORSP for review well in advance of the deadline date of your proposal.

Appendix Material. The appendices answer the question "What additional information will be helpful to the reader?" Include only material that is valuable to the reader. Material is put into an appendix if it supports the project proposal, but would break the continuity of the proposal narrative. Vitae usually comprise the first appendix. You can sequence the balance of the appendix material so that it follows the proposal narrative or put it in the order of importance to the reviewer. Be aware, however, that some sponsors either do not allow appendix material or do not require reviewers to read anything that appears in an appendix; be sure to first consult the proposal guidelines.

Appendices often include . . .
- Vitae
- Bibliographies
- Photos, maps, charts
- Brochures
- Evidence of previous experience in the area
- Letters of support, endorsement, or cooperation
- Previously tested modules
- Complex statistical formulae or computer programs
- Sample questionnaires or other assessment instruments
- Clearance to use facilities or to administer tests
- Samples of intended products to be developed

Letters of Support. Good letters of support are very specific; vague letters are useless. These letters are most often referred to in the text and contained in an appendix. Letters of support indicate how your project fits with the goals or mission of the university, college, or department. It clearly presents what type of support and how much support will be offered on behalf of your project. If a letter of support is needed from the Provost or President of the university, ORSP will obtain it for you. It is helpful if you bring your proposal abstract and a draft of the desired letter to ORSP at least one week before your deadline date.

Letters of Endorsement. Letters of endorsement are from respected scholars with expertise in the field, indicating that they view the proposed project as valuable and the investigators as competent.

Letters of Cooperation. This section should answer the question "What is the commitment of participants, the university, or other affected parties?" The plan of operation states the role that these parties will play in your proposal; here is where they give evidence of their interest, cooperation, and commitment, indicating specifically that they agree to participate at the time that you need them, or that they will contribute specific equipment, people, or space. Letters of cooperation confirm the cooperation or participation of organizations or individuals essential to the study. If the project is funded, these people are ready with their contribution.

8. Internal Review

It is always best to have your proposal evaluated before sending it off in final form. ORSP staff will edit and/or critique your proposal and offer suggestions for improvement should you desire. Your department chair or colleagues in your area of interest, at CMU or on other campuses, might be other sources of review. The more reviews, the better. It is important to correct any weaknesses before the proposal is submitted. In addition to providing you with informed comments, this step will alert your chair and others to your activity and intentions.

Be sure to give your reviewer plenty of time to respond to your draft. Assure the reader that this is a draft and that you expect and want suggestions rather than a pat on the back. Give the reviewers the relevant portions of the guidelines so that they can make an informed evaluation of your proposal. Ask them to assess how well your proposal responds to the selection criteria. Your intentions must be clear and specific, the ideas must flow logically, the activities must be consistent with current knowledge in the field, and you must be able to capably and efficiently carry out the project you have presented. If you have no guidelines or if they don't contain the review criteria, the table on the next page offers points to be considered in the internal review process. You want your internal reviewers to simulate the process used by external evaluators.

Review the comments from all internal reviews and incorporate those that are appropriate. When your proposal contents are in final form, read "Submitting the Proposal" below and check the final draft once more with those points in mind. Then bring it to ORSP, Foust 251.

Internal Review Criteria Checklist…
- Need for project is clear and compelling.
- Project is significant and relevant to the priorities of the funding agency.
- Project will produce new information of importance to others.
- Objectives are realistic and clearly stated.
- Objectives are related to identified needs.
- Procedures to conduct project are clearly stated and are suited to the objectives.
- Subjects of the study are fully described and selection procedures are explained.
- Instruments and data-gathering methods are adequately described.
- Research design and statistical methods are well suited for the project.
- An appropriate evaluation design is specified.
- Dissemination plans are appropriate and complete.
- Budget is realistic and cost effective.
- Qualified and experienced personnel will be conducting the project.
- Facilities are adequate for the project and equipment is current.
- Project proposal is clearly written and presented.

Submitting the Proposal

1. Formatting And Typing

You have finished writing and are ready to prepare your materials for submission to the funding agency. Requirements vary from agency to agency and you must follow them exactly. The guidelines will indicate the type size and margin restrictions, the required forms to be attached, the number of copies to be submitted, and binding recommendations. Attend to detail; reviewers may presume that a sloppy proposal foreshadows a sloppy project.

Formatting and Typing Checklist…
- Choose a legible type with proportional spacing and justify left margin
- Use margins, type size, and spacing as requested
- Use white, 8 ½" x 11" bond paper
- Use a laser printer
- Adhere to page limits
- Address all sections of the guidelines/evaluation
- Make sure the budget balances
- Use a standard form for the bibliography
- Number the pages, figures, and tables
- Complete all required forms and the cover page
- Proofread very carefully and use spell check
- Check that each copy is complete and all pages are clean copies
- Submit the correct number of copies

2. Page Limit

Guidelines often specify a page limit. Do your best to adhere to it. Some reviewers agree that they are willing to read a few pages beyond the limit, but that is all; others adhere rigidly to page limits and will not review proposals that are too long. Others stop reading when they reach the page limit and the remaining effort is forfeited. Delete copy rather than reduce the print size to meet page limit requirements.

3. Deadline Date

Deadlines for proposal submission will either be a postmark or receipt date. Check the agency guidelines carefully to determine how much time should be allowed for mailing proposals. Your proposal must meet the due date requirements or it will automatically be returned without review.

4. Lead Time Requirements

As your proposal preparation draws to a close, be certain to allow for unforeseen delays. The funding agency will never extend its deadline. You will need the signatures of several university officials for your final submission. Be sure to check with ORSP in advance to verify that the necessary people are available for signatures.

5. ORSP Transmittal Form

A university transmittal form is required for all proposals. It remains in the project file in ORSP and does not go to the funding agency. This record of the project title, director, funding agency, deadline date, and total cost is critical for the university's commitment of matching funds. The signatures assure ORSP that all appropriate university officials have knowledge of the proposal and its contents, and all agree it should be submitted. If the project is funded, the abstract contained on the transmittal sheet is used as a summary for the Board of Trustees. Completion of the transmittal sheet may take several days and must be submitted before the proposal is mailed.

6. Financial Disclosure Statement

Central Michigan University's Conflict of Interest policy is intended to ensure that the design, conduct and reporting of research and other sponsored projects conducted by CMU are not biased by any conflicting financial interest of persons involved in carrying out the sponsored projects. The policy applies to all faculty, staff and subcontractors involved in externally funded projects.

Under the terms of the policy, each investigator and subcontractor shall disclose his or her affiliations and significant financial interests (which includes those of the investigator's spouse, domestic partner, children or other relatives living at the same address as the investigator) that create or have the potential to create a conflict of interest with the funded project.

The disclosure procedures specify that no later than the time when a proposal is submitted to ORSP for transmittal to a funding agency, each investigator or subcontractor participating in a sponsored project must complete a Financial Disclosure Statement (see page three of the transmittal form). A negative disclosure will be signed by an ORSP Research and Program Officer and placed in a separate file. A positive disclosure will be reviewed initially by the Vice Provost for Research in an attempt to resolve actual or potential conflicts of interest. If the conflict cannot be resolved at the initial review stage, positive disclosures will be referred to a Conflict Review Committee for additional review.

Investigators and subcontractors must notify ORSP of any conflict of interest that arises during the implementation of the project when none was present at the time the proposal was submitted.

ORSP staff will assist you with the Conflict of Interest policy and the Financial Disclosure Statement. Questions on all matters relating to conflict of interest should be referred to ORSP (Foust 251, 774-ORSP). Guidance regarding CMU policies on consulting can be found in the Faculty Handbook, under the section entitled "Outside Work for Pay."

7. Freedom Of Information And Confidential Research Information Acts

Prior to submitting a proposal, investigators should be aware that under the terms of the Federal Freedom of Information Act, information contained in research proposals may be made available to anyone, on request, once a proposal has been funded by a federal agency. The Act bars the government from disclosing unfunded grant applications and from premature release of information in proposals that could jeopardize one's ability to obtain patent protection.

Under the Michigan Freedom of Information Act, the university could be required to release any grant or contract proposal it submits or receives, but only after the time for the public opening of bids or proposals has passed, or if no public opening is to be conducted, until the time for the receipt of bids or proposals

has expired. Even then, however, there might be portions of a proposal that could be withheld from release under some of the additional exemptions described below.

In general, once a grant or contract has been awarded to the university, the contract, associated documents, and resulting reports become subject to disclosure under Michigan law, with certain exceptions. For example, trade secrets or commercial or financial information voluntarily submitted to the university for use in developing governmental policy can be kept confidential and withheld from disclosure to the public under specified conditions, including presidential approval obtained before the grant or contract is accepted. Also exempt from disclosure are communications and notes of an advisory nature within or between public bodies if they are preliminary to a public body's final determination of policy or action.

Under Michigan's Confidential Research Information Act, the university may also be able to protect other "information obtained in research and related activities" from public disclosure. Information protected by this law could potentially include trade secrets, commercial information, financial information, and intellectual property used exclusively for research, testing, evaluation, and related activities, provided several specific conditions are met.

If you believe you will be receiving any of the types of confidential information described above, please contact ORSP for assistance before accepting the information. These laws have quite specific requirements for maintaining confidentiality, many of which must be fulfilled prior to receipt of the information.

8. University Signatures

Your signature verifies your authorship and commitment to conduct the project as described in the proposal. The other signatures required for proposals vary from agency to agency, with most proposals requiring the signature of at least the Vice Provost for Research. University signatures usually signify our agreement to comply with federal assurances and provide formal endorsement of the project. ORSP will secure the appropriate central administration signatures for you. You are responsible for getting the department chair's and dean's signatures indicating their knowledge of your project and consenting to commitments for space, time, and equipment.

9. Cover Sheet

The cover sheet is always the top page and identifies the organization as well as the proposal. Federal agencies usually provide a form for a cover sheet; however, you may need to draft a cover sheet for submissions to foundations. In either case, the following information is generally required: project title; name and address of the institution; project director's name, address, and telephone number; dollar amount requested; signature of the university authorizing official; agency grants officer's name, address, and telephone number; proposed date for starting the project; submission date; and employer identification number. The cover sheet is often completed by ORSP.

10. Compliance With Federal, State, And University Regulations

Before submitting your proposal, ORSP staff will check to be sure that you have the required assurances and certifications as specified in the agency guidelines. They might relate to the Civil Rights Act, Research Using Human or Animal Subjects, Drug-Free Work Place, Lobbying, and Debarment and Suspension. Central Michigan University is cleared for the use of certain controlled substances and the maintenance of certain laboratory animals. If your project involves humans as research subjects, then you

must gain approval from the Institutional Review Board prior to any data collection or contact with subjects. Project directors planning to use animals in their research must submit an Application to Use Vertebrate Animals for Research or Teaching, presenting plans for laboratory animal facilities, care, anesthesia, etc. which must accompany the proposal through the transmittal process. More information on research policies and procedures may be found in the Grant Manager's Handbook. Assurances and certifications are usually not required for proposals being submitted to foundations, although they may require proof of CMU's non-profit status.

11. Copying And Mailing

Notify ORSP staff of your deadline date and ask them how much lead time will be necessary to copy and mail your proposal. Bring the final copy of your proposal to Foust 251 arranged in the order required by the funding agency. It is important to submit your proposal exactly as requested by the agency and to send the proper number of copies. If 20 copies stapled in the left hand corner on white paper are required, send just that. Don't think that a few extra copies will help or that your proposal will look better in a notebook or plastic folder.

ORSP staff will mail your proposal obtaining the proper receipt with a legible date. Not all receipts are acceptable proof of mailing, so be sure to read the guidelines. ORSP will keep one copy of the proposal for the file and will give you a final copy.

Does your completed proposal package have the following?
- Completed university transmittal sheet
- Cover sheet with necessary signatures
- Required assurances and certifications
- Proposal in the correct order as outlined in the guidelines
- Correct number of copies, including required extras of any section
- Correct mailing address

Waiting Through the Review Process

1. The Review Process

From agency to agency, there is more variation in the mechanics of the selection process than in the criteria for selection. The process of selection reflects the size of the funding agency or organization, its goals, the amount of money it has to disburse, the annual volume of proposals received, and whether it is supported with state, federal, or private funds. The decision-making process may be the responsibility of a permanent board whose membership represents broad, general backgrounds or very limited, specialized fields. Or, the decision makers may be a peer review panel where members of the panel are specialists in the field represented, meeting in one place at one time. Each member rates each proposal, and, after discussion, the final decision rests on this collective rating. A proposal may also be mailed to selected peers for their independent review. Their ratings are then assessed by the agency.

The evaluators who will review your proposal usually are authorities in the field. Therefore, they will be able to judge if you are current in your methods and thinking. They will evaluate the soundness of your plan, the potential of your results, whether your resources to conduct the proposed program or project are adequate, and the relationship of your project to other similar programs already completed or in progress.

The criteria on which grant competitions are based are derived from agency-established priorities. They are usually printed in the guidelines and may include special priorities. However, the priorities may change from one year to the next, so be sure to use current guidelines.

2. Communication From The Agency

Eventually you will hear from the agency whose support you sought. The "news" may come by telephone or through the mail. The time required for the review process is quite variable. It may take only 3 weeks for a foundation or up to 9 months for a large federal agency. Bring any correspondence to ORSP so that we may respond in an official capacity. The kinds of replies you may receive and some of the possible ensuing actions that can be taken are shown in the table on the next page. Regardless of the reply you receive, be sure to contact ORSP as soon as you hear from the agency. Also, be sure that ORSP has a copy of all changes to the proposal and all additional information submitted to the agency.

Some agencies will request a site visit for particularly large proposals. The purpose of the visit is to convince the reviewers that the investigator is competent, that the facilities and equipment are adequate and that all support personnel are available.

Reply You Receive…	*Action You Take…*
• Official letter stating that a grant or contract is going to be awarded to you.	• Some agencies require an official acceptance signed by a university official; others assume you have accepted unless you tell them otherwise. Always notify ORSP immediately of the award.
• Request for additional information.	• Notify ORSP of the request and work together to provide what is requested promptly.

• Request for a site visit.	• Contact ORSP to make arrangements to tour facilities and/or talk with requested university personnel.
• Letter suggesting that you: (a) revise your proposal, (b) limit your project activities, or (c) decrease the amount of the budget request.	• Revise your proposal if it can be done without jeopardizing your mission or the quality of the anticipated results. If budget revision is requested, you must work with ORSP to develop the new budget.
• Letter indicating that your proposal has not been funded.	• Thank them for reviewing your proposal. Review the evaluation comments. Discuss with the program officer why you were turned down. Share these comments with ORSP staff who can help you strengthen and resubmit the proposal

3. Negotiation Of The Award And Acceptance

Ideally the funding agency will provide the full amount you requested in the proposal. If this is the case, there is little problem and your most important task is to review any accompanying terms, conditions, or stipulations. For example, if the project involves human subjects, there are federal regulations covering their use and treatment. Or, the sponsor may request certain restrictions on patents, copyrights, or publication of material derived from the project. With the help of ORSP staff, make sure that any such restrictions are consistent with CMU policies and procedures before accepting the award.

Unfortunately, total funding of a proposal is often not the case. Sometimes you receive a letter or telephone call suggesting that you revise your proposal by limiting your project activity or decreasing the dollar amount of your request. It is important at this point to review the sponsor's request and seek resolution. ORSP must be involved in all budget revisions. When an agreement is reached, prepare a revised proposal that does not jeopardize the mission of the project or quality of the anticipated results. Be certain that a copy of the revised proposal and final budget are on file in ORSP.

Finally, the university will receive an official award letter stating a grant or contract has been awarded to CMU to perform the project you proposed. If ORSP or the President's office receives the award letter, we will notify the project director; however, if the project director receives the award letter, it is very important that he or she bring it as soon as possible to ORSP, Foust 251. Some agencies require official acceptance signed by the person authorized to obligate the institution. Others will assume that you accept the award unless you tell them otherwise. In either case, bring the letter to ORSP.

Once notification of the award is completed and the budget is finalized, you will be expected to meet with someone from Grant Accounting and ORSP to learn to administer the project and the budget. You may now begin work and charge expenses to the university account number you are assigned. The Grant Manager's Handbook provides the information you need to competently manage your grant or contract award.

4. Becoming A Reviewer

When you are talking with the program officer of a federal agency, offer to become a reviewer in a future competition. The experience will help you understand the review process and what the agency is funding.

If you anticipate submitting a proposal for agency funding, it is a good idea to be a reviewer the year prior to sending your proposal in for competition. This option is not available at foundations, as they usually use their own staff and board members for the review panel.

5. If The Proposal Is Not Funded

Visit with ORSP staff for suggestions on what to do next. One of the most important steps is to learn why the submission was unsuccessful. Remember that many proposals are not funded and try to take any rejection in stride. All federal agencies are obligated to provide you with the reasons for a denial. Sometimes reviewer's comments are automatically sent to you, but more often, you need to request them from the program officer. This should be done as soon as possible after receiving your letter. Telephone or e-mail the program officer and request the written evaluation of your proposal or an oral briefing. Ask the program officer if you should revise and resubmit your proposal. If you do this quickly, the program officer is more likely to recall the reviewer's discussion relevant to your proposal. Even if you receive the reviewer's comments automatically, you might benefit by calling the program officer for more information. Remember, not all reasons for rejection relate directly to the proposal preparation or idea. Ask the agency to send you a funded proposal and a list of all the funded projects and their abstracts. Contact those who were funded to request a copy of their proposal, and offer to pay for the copying and mailing.

The situation for unsuccessful foundation proposals is quite different. There is no obligation to furnish the grant applicant with any reasons for denial. Nevertheless, one should always ask for the reasons for rejection. Some foundations will not provide any information. Others are very helpful and constructive in providing feedback.

Common Reasons Why Proposals Are Not Funded…
- The agency's budget was insufficient to support all good projects.
- The purpose of your project wasn't a priority for the funding agency.
- The proposal did not follow the guidelines.
- Adequate facilities were not available to accomplish the work.
- The project was beyond the scope of the project director.
- The project director lacked a track record.
- There was little likelihood of securing products or professionally significant results.
- The proposal lacked new ideas.
- Research plans were not focused or the goals were poorly detailed.
- Treatment of the literature was insufficient.
- The approach to the proposal was not critical or was biased.
- The budget requests for equipment or personnel were unrealistic.
- Proposed methods or procedures were unsuited to the stated objectives.
- There is not sufficient guarantee of commitment from the applicant or the institution.

The competition for funding is very keen. The rejection of a proposal for funding is a common occurrence, particularly in the case of a first submission. The main purpose for securing the evaluation of your proposal is to guide you in considering resubmission. Use the reviewer's comments to improve the proposal. Share them with colleagues and seek their ideas on ways to strengthen the proposal. ORSP staff can help with the revision process. Unless the program officer directly suggests that you do not resubmit your proposal to that program, work hard to improve it and resubmit it in the next round of competition. The chances for success improve significantly after revision and resubmission.

Accepting and Managing the Award

1. Accepting The Award

Before you can begin project activities, the university must accept the grant or contract on your behalf. The university is the entity that provides the legal, financial, and service umbrella for the project, and so it is the university who is the recipient of the award. If you receive an award letter, please immediately bring it to ORSP. The award letter will contain any terms, conditions, or stipulations of the award. These commonly include final report schedules and account reporting. Review the terms carefully with the help of ORSP personnel. ORSP will accept the award on behalf of CMU and thank the agency.

2. Publicizing The Award

Once the award has been accepted, ORSP will notify Public Relations and Marketing of your award. At that point, Public Relations staff may call you for more information as they prepare a press release. Award announcements from foundations may include a prepared press release for distribution to news organizations.

3. Project Director's Meeting

A meeting will be arranged between you, an ORSP representative, and one of the university's grant accountants. At this meeting you will receive your account number, learn how to read the university accounting sheets, review hiring, payroll, purchasing procedures, and reporting requirements and have an opportunity to ask questions. Remember, as project director you are ultimately responsible for the administration and accounting of your grant or contract. However, ORSP staff and other university personnel will assist you and make your task as trouble-free as possible.

A file will be established in Grant Accounting for your grant or contract containing the award letter, final budget, proposal narrative, all purchasing requisitions, invoice vouchers, and personnel transactions. Any deviation from the budget or scope of work must be discussed in advance with ORSP staff and copies of relevant correspondence should be sent to Grant Accounting to be added to your file. Once a proposal is funded or a contract is signed, changes often need to be approved by the funding agency.

4. Managing The Award

The ORSP Grant Manager's Handbook provides the information you need to competently manage your grant or contract award.

Appendix A - Budget Development Worksheet

ORSP will help you develop the budget for your grant proposal, but we need input from you, because you are most familiar with the project and what resources are needed to successfully implement it. The following worksheet will help you get started. You are also encouraged to refer to ORSP's "Institutional Information for Developing a Proposal or Contract," which provides a fair amount of detail on the basis for calculating many project costs. If you have questions at any stage of your work on the budget, call our office (774-ORSP). Additional copies of the worksheet may be picked up in Foust Hall 251 or call and we will send them to you.

The funding category is listed in column 1 of the worksheet with a brief explanation in column 2. Column 3 is for your own notes and/or calculations, and it occasionally includes a tip on how to calculate cost. Column 4 provides a place for you to enter totals. Use the worksheet in any way that serves your purpose.

When you finish with the budget, bring it to ORSP. A final copy can be typed on the required forms in a format that is clear, easy to read, and makes a good impression.

Here are some tips for developing a budget:

1. Although it is somewhat time-consuming, it is definitely worthwhile to accurately estimate your costs. Round number (e.g., Consultants @ 5,000) may lead the funding agency to conclude that you did not carefully plan your budget (and therefore, you may not have carefully planned the project). Furthermore, rough estimates may lead you to overestimate your budget, thereby reducing your chances of funding, or underestimate your budget, leaving you short of funds to complete the project when it is funded.

2. The following table lists most items likely to be included in a budget for external funding. You might use only a subset of the categories or you may need to add categories not included here. If the funding agency prescribes the budget categories, be sure to group expenditures into the categories they suggest.

3. Every item in the budget must be justified in the text of your proposal. This cannot be emphasized too strongly. As you develop the budget, keep asking yourself "Have I explained why this item is needed or what this person will be doing?" It is often helpful to keep a set of explanatory notes for future reference regarding how you arrived at certain figures. You will most likely need to submit a budget explanation or narrative with your proposal and these notes will be helpful as you develop that section.

4. When calculating costs, remember that you are often developing a budget in the current year for a project that will be conducted in the future. Costs for everything, including salaries, generally increase over time and you must plan for that. ORSP staff can help you adjust your calculations. Use additional copies of this worksheet for future budget periods.

Project Title:
Date:

CATEGORY	NOTES	CALCULATION	COST
Personnel	The most important role for the proposal writer is to determine who (or what type of person) will work on the project and how much time each person will contribute.		
Project director	Faculty or staff responsible for the project. Salary is based on that person's contractual salary and the percentage of his/her time devoted to the project. For government projects, a person cannot work more than 100% of time.	% of time x base salary.	
Principal investigator (PI)	Basically the same as the project director, but the term is more likely to be used on a research project.	% of time x base salary.	
Co-director or Co-PI	When two people are sharing responsibility for the project, they can be Co-directors or Co-PIs. There should be a statement showing the percentage of time each person is contributing to the project.	% of time x base salary.	
Faculty/staff	Other faculty/staff may be working on the project. Their roles should be clearly defined and justified in the proposal. There should be justification for the amount of time each is contributing.	% of time x base salary OR stipend if summer pay or overload pay.	
Technical assistant	Pay levels will be determined by CMU's Personnel Office.	Hourly wage x hours/week x # of weeks.	

Post-doctoral fellow	Most commonly found in the sciences, these people are likely to hold full-time positions. Salary and benefits determined by Personnel Office.	% of time x base salary.	
Graduate research assistant	Pay levels for graduate assistants are established by the Board of Trustees. Current pay levels are available from ORSP. A full-time graduate assistant works 20 hours per week for the academic year and is given 20 credits of tuition scholarship. Those working fewer hours or a shorter time period get a pro-rated tuition scholarship. GAs can be appointed for 1, 2, or 3 semesters per year.	Tuition, fees and stipend.	
Graduate student help	Graduate students may be hired under the terms of General Student Assistance, just like undergraduates. They are then paid an hourly wage. If the student is going to work for at least one full semester, it is preferable to hire the student as a GA.	Hourly wage x hours/week x # of weeks.	
Clerical help	Clerical assistance can be obtained for a project either by hiring someone specifically to work on this project or by paying a portion of the salary of an existing clerical employee. Salary for a clerical employee is determined by the Personnel Office.	Hourly wage x hours/week x # of weeks.	

Student assistant help	Undergraduate students can be hired to work on a project. Their pay level is determined by the Student Employment Office, which considers the level of responsibility assigned to the student and the length of time the student has worked for the university.	Hourly wage x hours/week x # of weeks.	
Fringe Benefits	Most employee groups at CMU are paid fringe benefits, which are a function of the employee's classification. Fringe benefits are sometimes included with salary, but more often are reported as a separate line item. ORSP staff will determine fringe benefits for everyone included in your proposal.	Consult ORSP.	
Consultants	It is not unusual to pay a consultant as part of a project. Be sure that the proposal explains the rationale for the consultant. Pay rates vary by discipline, but some funding programs (particularly federal ones) have limits on what consultants can be paid.	Fee + [per diem costs x number of days on project].	
Honorariums	Pay for special activities such as a major workshop presenter, keynote speaker at a major event, or conference panelists.	Fee + expenses.	
Independent Contractors	Independent contractors are hired to do a specific task that they typically do for many different people. CMU employees cannot contract with CMU. The "Independent Contractor" designation is determined by the Personnel Office.		

Equipment	An item costing more than $5,000 and having a life over one year is considered equipment. Include equipment only if it is an allowable expense by funding program.	List each item and its cost.	
Travel	Figure the number of trips, the number of travelers, and the mode of travel. Travel costs can include airfare, trains, private cars or motor pool vehicles, hotels, taxis, tips, meals, and conference fees.	Estimate all costs for each traveler on each trip. Do NOT use a ballpark estimate of the overall cost.	
Participant Support	You might provide support (e.g., books, housing, meals, travel) or a small fee to each participant in the project. The project guidelines may limit what you can offer participants. If you are paying expenses for an advisory committee, you might list them here.	Cost per participant x # of participants	
Supplies & Materials	Many things fall into this category, such as paper stationary, envelopes, computer paper, software, pencils, pens, other office supplies, books and texts, workshop materials (e.g., folders, tablets), laboratory supplies, art supplies, telephone (local and long distance), printing, photocopying, postage (particularly for large mailings), and test materials. Possible costs are given here, but you need to thoroughly think through the project (mentally walk through each step) to know what must be included.	Unit cost x quantity.	
Evaluation Costs	Carefully plan the evaluation, so you know what charges to include. The costs may be listed here or included in the various categories above.		

Dissemination Costs	Dissemination costs can include such items as travel to professional meetings, visits to other universities or schools, costs of hosting a workshop at CMU or elsewhere, publication of booklets, curriculum materials, tests, and page charges. These items can be included in the various categories above.		
Other Costs	Depending on the project, there may be other costs that do not fit any of the categories provided above. For example, there may be entertainment costs (you will need permission to charge these), conference fees, or publication costs not listed under Dissemination.		
Facilities & Administrative Costs (Also Called Indirect or Overhead Costs)	These are administrative costs not uniquely associated with the project, and cover work done by other areas of the university such as Accounting, Purchasing, Payroll, Custodial Services, etc. ORSP will tell you how to compute F&A Costs for your project. Under current policy, 33% of the F&A Costs will be divided between the Project Director and the Project Director's department.		
Matching Funds (Also Called Cost Sharing)	Some agencies/programs require matching funds; others encourage it. Some matches must be cash; others may be "in-kind" or "third party." ORSP will assist you with this portion of the budget.		

Appendix B - Glossary

501(c)(3): The section of the Internal Revenue Code that defines nonprofit, charitable, tax-exempt organizations. Most foundations limit their giving to organizations that have 501(c)(3) status. CMU qualifies for 501(c)(3) status.

990-AR: Private foundations are required by law to submit this report to the Internal Review Service and make it available to the public for 180 days after filing. It contains financial information on the foundation, a list of grants or contributions made during the year, and the names and addresses of foundation managers.

Agency: An agency is a branch of federal, state, or local government. Often agencies have funds available to further their programs by sponsoring research or programmatic projects.

Allowable Cost: An approved expenditure for the funded project. Only allowable costs may be charged to the grant account.

Annual Report: A separately published report issued on a voluntary basis which describes activities of foundations and corporations and which may also describe application processes. Annual reports vary in format from simple typewritten documents listing the year's grants to detailed publications that provide substantial information about the organization's funding program.

Applicant: The applicant in most instances is the university. An applicant may refer to an individual in the case of a fellowship or exchange.

Application: The document presenting a project to and requesting funding from a funding agency. This may be a letter proposal, a response to a request for proposal, or a formal application to a federal or state agency.

Appropriation: Legislation that determines funding levels granted by law to an agency or program in a given fiscal year.

Assurances: Certifications of compliance with federal or state regulations that include areas such as the use of humans or animals in research, drug-free workplace, and scientific misconduct. All of the assurances must be signed by a university authorizing official. ORSP has these on file and has the authority to sign them.

Authorizing Official: A senior officer of the university who has contracting authority to sign proposals or contracts. For external grants this is generally the Vice Provost for Research in ORSP.

Award: Formal correspondence announcing approval of funding for a project.

Basic Agreement: A formal written document between the funding source and the university specifying the scope and work of a project to be completed during a specific time-frame. These basic agreements may take the form of a grant or a contract.

Budget: The financial plan or cost assessment for the grant proposal or contract. This instrument reflects the costs associated with project implementation.

Business Officer/Fiscal Agent: The financial official of the university who has primary fiscal responsibility for the university.

Capital Support: Funds provided for buildings, construction, or equipment.

Compliance: Assurances and certifications that may be related to grants and contracts.

Consultant: Someone paid to work on an externally funded project, who is generally not an employee of the university. A consultant is an "expert in a field" participating in the project to deliver services consistent with the goals and objectives of the grant or contract.

Contract: A formal agreement by which the applicant promises to perform a service or deliver a product to the funding source. Contracts may be signed only by university personnel with contracting authority for the dollar amount of the contract.

Cooperative Agreement: Agreements that generally involve no exchange of funds but involve either the use of an agency's services, equipment, facilities, or significant technical collaboration.

Corporate Giving Program: A grantmaking program established and administered within a profit-making corporation or company. The amount of a corporate giving program is usually tied to the previous year's profits and sometimes tied to company-sponsored foundations.

Cost-Sharing: The university's support of a project through either cash or in-kind services. Cost sharing requirements vary, but they generally represent a percentage of the total cost.

Deadline: The date the proposal is either to be postmarked/mailed or received by the funding agency. It is important to know whether the deadline date is a postmark or receipt date.

Direct Costs: All costs that can be directly attributed to the conduct of the project and are specified in the proposal budget. Direct costs do not include overhead or other indirect costs.

Discretionary Funds or Programs: Funds or programs not mandated by legislation for which an agency or program staff may have some authority to solicit and fund proposals for special projects or program activities.

Endowment: Funds intended to be invested to provide income for continued support of an organization or to be used to support projects funded within that organization.

Equipment: Items in a budget that cost more than $5,000 and have a life of over one year.

Expenditures: Line items in a budget that are spent for personnel, consultants, equipment, travel, supplies, etc.

Facilities & Administrative (F&A) Costs: "F&A costs" is the new term used by the federal government in place of the older terms "overhead costs" and "indirect costs." F&A costs are costs associated with administering a project, such as accounting services, library services and materials, personnel services, space and utilities. The federal F&A cost rate is a percentage negotiated by the university with the federal government. The rate at CMU is a percentage of salaries, wages, and fringe benefits only. Some federal and state agencies have a mandated ceiling for F&A costs (e.g., 8% of total direct costs for training grants). Foundations often disallow F&A costs. ORSP can tell you the correct F&A cost rate for your project.

Federal Register: Government document, printed daily, reporting all legislative actions of Congress, including the appropriation of funds to special programs and the guidelines used to award those funds to individual projects. Program guidelines and requests for comments on proposed guidelines are published here. This document is available in the Park Library and via the web.

Fellowship: An award that enables individuals to pursue study in their field or related fields. A fellowship often advances, synthesizes, or enlarges the applicant's specific area of interest.

Financial Report: Report generated by the university's General Accounting Office and sent to the funding agency to report actual expenditures on a grant or contract.

Fiscal Year: Any 12-month accounting period. The fiscal year for the university begins July 1st and ends June 30th. The federal and state government fiscal year begins October 1st. The first day of the calendar year is often the beginning of the fiscal year for corporations and foundations. Most external grants are awarded based on the fiscal year of that entity.

Formal or Full Proposals: An expanded version of the preliminary or preproposal that provides a detailed statement of the proposed work. The formal proposal constitutes a final application to the funding source.

Funding Criteria: The criteria associated with the evaluation of a proposal for funding. For federally-sponsored programs, these are printed in the program guidelines or Federal Register and often follow a point system, e.g., a maximum of 15 points may be awarded for the Project Plan.

Graduate Assistant: A post-baccalaureate student performing research, teaching, or service for an academic department. Definition, eligibility, and responsibilities can be found in The Graduate Handbook available from the College of Graduate Studies, Foust 100, 774-GRAD.

Grant: An exchange of property or funds for support of an activity outlined in a proposal describing project goals, objectives, activities, personnel, and budget. Grants are usually from federal, state, local, foundation, or corporate entities.

> Challenge Grant: A grant award that will be paid only if the recipient organization is able to raise additional funds.
>
> Consortium Grant: A grant made to one institution in support of a project which is carried out through a cooperative arrangement between or among the grantee institution and one or more participating institutions.
>
> Continuation Grant: Funds awarded for the continuation of a previously funded project. It is usually not competitive with other proposals but is contingent upon successful performance in the previous year.
>
> Demonstration Grant: A grant, made to establish or demonstrate the feasibility of a theory or approach.
>
> Formula or Block Grant: A grant awarded on the basis of some formula for distribution prescribed by legislative or executive direction, for example state grants made to local school districts.

Grants Officer: The official authorized to take final action on grant. This is the [Vice Provost for Research](#) located in [ORSP](#), Foust 251.

Grantee: A university, public or private nonprofit corporation, organization, agency, individual, or other legally accountable entity that receives a grant and assumes legal and financial responsibility and accountability both for the awarded funds and for the performance of the grant-supported activity.

Guidelines: The document that outlines program goals to be addressed in a proposal and provides specific instructions on what content to include in a proposal, the format it should take, and the funding criteria.

In-Kind Contribution: A contribution of equipment, supplies, space, personnel time, or other property in lieu of a dollar contribution.

Indirect Costs: [See Facilities & Administrative Costs](#).

Indirect Return: Moneys returned to the project director, department, or school receiving the external award. The current policy provides that 33% of the funds will be split evenly between the project director and his or her department.

Letter of Intent: Initial contact by the project director with a sponsoring organization indicating intent to apply for funding.

Matching Funds: Funds that must be supplied by the grantee, which may be cash or in-kind contributions, depending on the requirements of the funding source.

OMB A-21: Office of Management & Budget circular ["Principles for Determining Costs Applicable to Grants, Contacts, and Other Agreements with Educational Institutions."](#)

OMB A-110: Office of Management & Budget circular ["Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations".](#)

Overhead Costs: [See Facilities & Administrative Costs.](#)

Preliminary or Preproposal: A brief outline or narrative of proposed work and budget for review by a sponsor.

Program Officer: The title given by a funding agency to their employee who oversees projects and occasionally evaluates proposals. That person is a valuable resource for learning more about a program and its potential as a funding source for your project.

Project Director (PD)/Principal Investigator (PI): The designated faculty or staff member who is responsible for a funded project.

Proposal: A written statement establishing the objectives, need, methodology, qualifications of investigator, and budget plan for a project.

Request for Proposals (RFP) Or Request for Application (RFA): The written document soliciting proposals in a specific area.

Site Visit: A visit by funding agency staff to the research or program site to determine adequacy of staff and facilities, or to assess progress on a continuing project.

Timeline: A schematic of goals, objectives, and activities with a time set for reaching completion.

Transmittal: Actual mailing of the proposal to the funding agency.

Transmittal Form: CMU's form that summarizes information about the project. It requires signatures from the project director, chairperson, dean, and university authorizing official, and no proposal or contract can be submitted until the transmittal form is signed and returned to ORSP.

Appendix C - Annotated Bibliography of Grant Writing Books

Bauer, D. G. (1994). Grantseeking primer for classroom leaders. New York, NY: Scholastic Inc. (LC 241 .B387 1994)

Directed at educators, this primer provides step-by-step instruction on identifying a funding source, preparing a proposal, and implementing a pro-active grants effort. Grantseeking is presented in practical terms for those involved in K-12 education and includes worksheets, outlines, and examples.

Belcher, J. C. and Jacobsen, J. M. (1992). From idea to funded project: grant proposals that work (4th ed.). Phoenix, AZ: Oryx. (LB 2336 .B43 1992)

Designed to assist in writing a proposal as well as in conducting a search for a sponsor, this source contains listings of useful resources and data on forms and required information. In addition to samples of forms and checklists, the book also features a selected bibliography and an index.

Blum, L. (1993). The complete guide to getting a grant: how to turn your ideas into dollars. New York, NY: Poseidon Press. (HV 41.9 .U5 B58 1993)

Uniquely, this book is designed for those who are seeking grant money awarded to individuals for individual projects both personal and research-based. This experienced grant seeker takes the novice from the beginning to the end of the process in getting funding from the nonprofit world.

Bowman, J. P. and Branchaw, B. P. (1992). How to write proposals that produce. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx. (HF 5718.5 .B69 1992)

Aimed at practitioners, this practical publication offers techniques for writing grant-winning proposals. It examines the need for analysis and understanding of the different parts of the process and provides detailed instructions. Each step of the grantseeking process, including planning, documenting, editing, and presenting, is delineated with clear examples. The book concludes with appendices and an index.

Brewer, E. W., Achilles, C. M. and Fuhriman, J. R. (1998). Finding funding: Grantwriting from start to finish, including project management and Internet use. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. (LB 2342.4.U6 B74 1998)

Divided into three parts, this source covers exploring the grants world, writing grant proposals, and implementing, operating and terminating a project.

Decker, L. E. and Decker, V. A (1993). Grantseeking: How to find a funder and write a winning proposal. Charlottesville, VA: Community Collaborators. (LC 243 .A1 D43 1993)

Intended as an introduction and guide to the successful search for funding and writing of a winning proposal, this publication lays out a road map of the sequential activities followed by successful grantseekers. Each step in the grantseeking process is clearly detailed from starting with a good idea, through locating funding, writing a winning proposal, and finally administering the award.

Geever, J. C. and McNeill, P. (1993). The Foundation Center's guide to proposal writing. New York, NY: Foundation Center. (HG 177.5 U6 .G44 1993)

In addition to explaining how to plan and research a grant opportunity and actually write the proposal, this source also contains insightful perspectives from grantmakers. The many examples help to illustrate the sequential process.

Lefferts, R. (1990). Getting a grant in the 1990s: How to write successful grant proposals. New York, NY: Prentice Hall. (HG 177.5 .U6 L44 1990)

Emphasizing structure, principles and methods for good proposal writing, this book encourages a strategic approach that maximizes resources and efforts. While specifically geared toward those in human services, the detailed applications will be useful to those in other fields as well. The newest edition includes a chapter on marketing proposals. The book concludes with appendices, a glossary and an index.

Locke, L. F., Spirduso, W. W. and Silverman, S. J. (1993). Proposals that work: A guide for planning dissertations and grant proposals (3rd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage. (Q 180.55 .P7 L63 1993)

Divided into two sections, the longer first part of this title focuses on the mechanics of writing a proposal. It explores not only the generic elements of proposal writing, but also the finer points of style and form. The second section features four sample proposals, some with critical comments. The book concludes with appendices and an index.

Margolin, J. B., Aikman, L. and Read, P. E. (1991). Foundation fundamentals: A guide for grantseekers (4th ed.). New York, NY: Foundation Center. (HV 41.9 .U5 M37 1991)

Aimed primarily at the nonprofit grantseeker, this publication is a comprehensive guide to funding research. In addition to delineating the process, it also provides descriptions of types of funding sources, worksheets to facilitate the workflow, outlines of a sample proposal and budget, and several appendices of resources. Despite the title, and unlike earlier editions, this volume includes grant information on corporate, as well as foundation grantmaking.

Miner, L. E. and Griffith, J. (1993). Proposal planning and writing. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press. (HG 177.5 U6 M56 1993)

Initially posing 25 frequently asked questions regarding grantseeking, this book seeks to answer those questions by providing a logical, step-by-step approach to developing proposals. It focuses on basic techniques, yet shares specific guidelines and tips. There is a wealth of examples from all types of proposals. The book includes a bibliography and an index.

Ries, J. B. and Leukefeld, C. G. (1995). Applying for research funding. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. (HG 177 .R53 1995)

Developed to provide guidance for the new investigator, this book takes the writer from structuring a research idea to developing a competitive application to secure external funding. In addition to describing the proposal development process, identifying key contacts, strengths and weaknesses of various research environments, and focusing on the reviewers are unique sections contained in this text.

Schumacher, Dorin. (1992). Get funded!: a practical guide for scholars seeking research support from business. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. (LB 2336 .S33 1992)

A book of ideas for how to make rewarding research connections with the corporate world. The rationale behind the corporate world funding university research is explained, providing the basis for the strategies

to success that are next outlined. Several chapters are devoted to the development of a university/corporate collaboration at the programmatic level. A detailed and rational approach is described with references provided for further research.

White, V. (Ed.). (1983). Grant proposals that succeeded. New York, NY: Plenum. (HG 177 .G69 1983)

Featuring a compendium of proposals that originally appeared in Grants Magazine, this book presents a variety of grant proposals that were successful in obtaining funding. Examples included are research proposals, training grants, arts and humanities proposals and a response to a Request for Proposal (RFP).

Appendix D - Grant Proposal Self Assessment Tool

The Grant Proposal Self Assessment Tool (GrantSAT) is an outstanding instrument for evaluating, and hence improving, the quality of proposals. It provides a number of assessment criteria for nine different aspects of a proposal, e.g., problem statement, budget, evaluation. Each criterion is rated on a scale from one to six, and using these ratings, each aspect of the proposal is given a percentage score indicating its relative strength or weakness. Guidelines are then provided on how to interpret and act upon the results of the proposal assessment.

GrantSAT is useful for all grant writers, from the novice to the highly experienced. In today's world, where the grants process is highly competitive, every advantage helps, and GrantSAT may be just the right tool to help turn a "nearly fundable" proposal into your next success story.

Acknowledgments

The following institutions graciously shared their research handbooks, guidelines, and procedures for use as we developed our own. We want to thank each institution listed below for its cooperation.

Faculty Handbook, Office of the Provost, Michigan State University.

Funding Information and Assistance for Researchers and Scholars, Research Services Office, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Handbook for Research and Other Scholarly Projects, Michigan State University.

Manual for Research and Sponsored Activities, Office of Research & Project Administration, University of Rochester.

Planning and Administering Sponsored Projects: A Faculty Guide, Research and Sponsored Programs, Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis.

Policies & Procedures Manual, Office of Contract Administration, Georgia Institute of Technology.

Project Director's Handbook, Research and Sponsored Programs/ Grants and Contracts, Western Michigan University.

Proposal Preparation and Award Administration Guide, Office of Sponsored Programs, University of Houston.

Sponsored Research Policies and Procedures, Office of Research and Sponsored Projects, Texas Christian University.