A Brief Introduction to SPIN, SMARTS, and GRC

Novice and experienced grant writers alike sometimes struggle with finding funders for their work. Though CMU’s Office of Research and Graduate Studies is happy to conduct a thorough search on your behalf, we recognize that conducting your own search might be an important first step in thinking through your project. Fortunately, CMU subscribes to a number of helpful grant databases to facilitate searches for federal, state and private sponsors. Each of the search engines described below and an electronic copy of this brief tutorial are linked to ORGS’ Faculty and Staff External Funding website at the following address under the title Search Engines and Resources (bottom of webpage):

https://www.cmich.edu/office_provost/ORGS/FacultyandStaffExternalFunding/Pages/default.aspx

**Sponsored Projects Information Network (SPIN)**

Look to the top of the page – “Client Login to” and then choose the “SPIN” link at the top of the web page. SPIN is accessible from any campus computer and provides detailed information on funding opportunities offered by more than 1,200 federal and non-federal sponsoring agencies. A variety of qualifiers allow users to filter retrieved data by keywords or phrases, project category, geographic limitations and applicant type. Alternately, users can click the “Funding Guides” tab and read the latest requests for proposal (RFPs) released by the federal government in the Federal Register or browse the current contracting opportunities published in the Federal Business Opportunities (FedBizOpps) digest.

**Spin Matching and Researcher Transmittal Systems (SMARTS)**

Below the header, “SMARTS/GENIUS,” click “Create a New Profile.” You may also edit your existing profile from this screen if your funding needs change. SMARTS is a passive search system, meaning that it works in the background, identifying funding options based on criteria that you input and formatting lists of current funding opportunities for delivery via email. Like SPIN, this system offers over 10,000 funding opportunities supportive of research, scholarly, and creative projects. Sponsorship opportunities are described thoroughly and sent to users via an email digest as opportunities arise.

**Grants Resource Center (GRC)**

Where prompted add username (cmich) and password (service), then click on “Grant Search” at the top of the webpage. ORGS’ subscription to GRC provides two helpful services to CMU’s applicants – first it offers a useful interface for active searches of federal and private sponsors across academic categories, subjects, activities, sponsors, keywords and monthly deadlines. Secondly, GRC provides a weekly newsletter with information about upcoming grant competitions, profiles of successful grantees and materials from recent training opportunities. One of the duties of your ORGS liaison Program Officer is to select and share information from these newsletters with you, based on your specific areas of interest. If you haven’t heard from your program officer recently, it may be time to meet and share an update of your latest progress and project plans.

Like all large databases, the quality of information received depends on the quality of the search terms applied. To improve your results, avoid common words (a, the), capital letters for all but proper pronouns, and plural search terms. Ensure that words with multiple meanings have appropriate qualifiers, and brush up on Boolean logic (http://www.internettutorials.net/boolean.asp) to search as efficiently as possible. Or if you’d like a hands-on lesson on searching for sponsors, contact ORGS at x.6777 and we will gladly arrange a special time to focus on funding your project.