

Reading RFAs and RFPs From A-Z

--Or "Dear God, I hope I didn't miss anything."

1. Know your PI's project and needs

- Interview PI to find out:
 - The project's basic scope and topics; collect keywords/terms
 - What are the needs of the project at this stage? (seed funding, late stages, course release, G.A.'s, equipment and/or supplies, etc.)
 - What type of project is it? (institutional, individual research, collaborative/consortia research, training, capital, community development?)
 - Is the research on a strict timeline?
 - Have they had previous funding? From whom?

2. Determine if the program is a good fit for your PI's project

- Review description and funding priorities of program
- Read the review criteria for reviewers
- Look at past funded projects
- Don't forget the overall goals of the agency in general and their funding areas

2.a. Can the PI be competitive in this program?

- Ask yourself if the PI would have to do too many “pretzel twists” to fit the program.
- If you think the PI is a close fit, you can help them determine good ways to frame their project and develop a full proposal.
- If it isn’t a perfect fit, think about ways the program could perhaps fund certain portions of the PI’s project, or other grants that would fit.

2.b. READ THE FAQ'S!!!

- [illegible]

3. First glance: Quick and Dirty Data

- Deadline(s) and other important dates
- Funding Range
- Project Period
- Type of Grant/ Category: institutional, individual, seed, etc.
- Eligibility
 - Limited Submission?
- Program Officer Name and Contact Info?
- Is there parent announcement?
- Any award conditions?
- Special guidelines for Renewals or Resubmissions?

4. BUDGET and budget justification

- Determine allowable/unallowable costs
 - (Do the allowable costs fit the project needs? If not exactly, you could brainstorm ways to work around limitations.)
- Indirect costs Allowed?
- Is Cost-share required?
 - What is allowable/unallowable cost-share?
 - (If not “cost-share,” what type of “institutional support” is requested?)Other budget considerations?
- Other budget considerations?
 - Note that the guidelines for the narrative might provide more information about the type of allowable/unallowable costs!

5. Formatting Guidelines ?

- If not in the proposal itself, these guidelines might be in an agency reference. (NSF GPG)

6. Misc. Required Documents/Forms

- CV's
- References Cited
- NSF's Current and Pending Support document
- Lists of Facilities
- etc.

7. Supplemental Docs?

- What is allowed and/or required? What is NOT allowed?
- Could include:
 - IRB documentation
 - letters of support from collaborating institutions and PI's
 - audit reports
 - certifications
 - etc.

8. Submission Requirements?

- Mail in or electronic?
 - This can be important for determining time needed to send off the proposal and for setting your own deadlines for the PI! (ha-ha)
 - Do you have to register in more than one place?
