



# Scientific Research Funding Application Checklist

Everything you need to know to write a successful grant proposal

Are you ready to write a successful grant proposal? Are you looking for a list of refresher tips before you submit your research application? In this grant application checklist, we provide step-by-step instruction and offer insider guidance on crafting a winning proposal.

# Step-by-Step Research Funding Application Checklist

What you need to know before clicking 'submit'

- Create a calendar** and write down the due date of the application. You will want to work backward. Remember — it's always best to err on the side of having too much time rather than not enough.
  
- Build a timeline.** There are a lot of moving parts in the application process, so the first step is to create a timeline. Write down due dates on your calendar. Allow enough time to gather information and write the proposal without feeling rushed. Factor in time for editing and internal reviews.
  
- Determine who should review your application once it's complete.** Seek out multiple reviewers. These people should be inside your company, organization or institution (or experts in your field). But you should ask a few non-experts, too. Asking them early in the process will ensure 1) you find enough qualified reviewers and 2) they know what to expect and when. Remember — your reviewers likely have a full plate, too, and they may turn down your request.
  
- Create a robust outline.** This is the most important part of the application process. The more detail, the better. Be specific in your questions, hypothesis, aims and goals. Detail your experiments and expected outcomes.
  
- Gather your appropriate tools and resources.** Before you begin writing, make sure you gather everything in one place.
  - Request certain documents now if you need them.
  - Create a folder on your computer that houses everything related to your grant application. Make sure to back up your files if you aren't using Google or another cloud-based provider.

- **Read through the application instructions carefully and don't be afraid to ask questions.** Read through everything. Highlight any documents you need to include.
- **Familiarize yourself with the request, rules and requirements.** Every document that is requested must be included in the application. Reach out to the program officer if you have any questions about the process or you're looking for clarification on a particular item.
- **Include strong preliminary data.** This is a major piece of any application, even if the grant request says it's not necessary.
- **Write the application.** Allow yourself enough time to write the proposal. Take breaks during the writing process. Don't rush. Be confident in your work but not overly ambitious.
- **Send your pre-determined reviewers the proposal.** It's important to give your reviewers plenty of time. Here are some questions to ask:
  - Is the proposal clear and concise?
  - Do I need more data?
  - Are any parts confusing or in need of additional explanation?
  - Am I telling an interesting story?
  - Could I add any other visuals?
- **Incorporate edits from your reviews.** Don't be afraid to ask for clarification or follow up with a question if you're unsure about any of the feedback.
- **Give yourself enough time to familiarize yourself with the application portal.** If you work with a research office, they will upload the application on your behalf. If you don't, you want to make sure you familiarize yourself with the application portal before your deadline.
- **Submit your application.**

# 18 Tips for Creating a Standout Grant Application

- **Be realistic.** Think carefully and be modest about your objectives.
- **Tell a story.** With any type of good writing, you want to build a case. Start with an introduction that hooks the audience. Talk about the wider problem you're hoping to explore, and why you are the right person for the job. Explain your hypothesis and how you plan to tackle it.
- **Include two or three specific aims.** This is the heart of the grant. Again, be reasonable. Don't bite off more than you can chew in order to seem overly ambitious. Include clear objectives and clear milestones of success.
- **Be mindful of your language.** Be specific, informative and engaging but also concise. Use active voice and strong verbs. Quantify information or data.
- **Copyedit for correct grammar and punctuation.** If grammar isn't your thing, find someone who can copyedit. If you work at a college campus or university, the English department may have a list of students who will provide such services for a fee.
- **Don't get too technical or use too much jargon.** You know your research inside and out, but your reviewers likely don't. Write for an educated but diverse audience.
- **Include preliminary data.** It's important, so it bears repeating.
- **Add pictures, illustrations or graphics.** Break up your application with some visuals.
- **Make sure the budget matches what is allocated.** It sounds obvious, but don't ask for more than the set budget amount. If you work at a higher education institution, you will likely work with a research office on the budget.

- **Talk to the program officers early and often.** Make sure you understand what the application is asking, and if you don't, talk to the program officers. Remember, you don't have to figure out everything by yourself!
- **Don't break the rules.** Include everything that is required in the application.
- **Answer the questions that are asked.** In other words, don't be "non-responsive." Reviewers will take note.
- **Don't procrastinate.** Avoid putting off everything until the last minute.
- **Consider hiring someone who can handle the grant application process.** This could be a valuable investment if you have the budget.
- **Explore all types of funding opportunities.** Don't limit yourself to traditional federal agencies like NIH and NSF. Sign up for email lists, newsletters and daily grant alert notifications from both federal and non-federal agencies.
- **Ask to help out on a grant application.** Grant writing is a skill; the best way to improve is to practice.
- **Attend grant writing workshops.** Gain insight and experience by learning from others.
- **Participate in a review committee.** If this opportunity is possible, it will enable you to see grant applications from a different perspective.

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# Does your application require a budgetary quote for equipment?

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