

Grant Writing for Language Activists and Linguists

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Day 2

- Homework review
- What do agencies expect?
 - *Every (really, every) funding agency expects different things.*
 - *Finding out what those things are is vital to the success of your proposal.*
 - *We can't outline every agency's needs, but we can point you toward how to find out what they are.*
- What do reviewers expect?
- How can you find out?

Satisfying the Agency

Getting Funded Means Satisfying the Agency's Goals

- As we said yesterday, this may sound completely backward to you.
 - The goals of the project are surely what is important.
- But, this is reality.
- If you have a great proposal for saving a language,
- And you send it to an agency intent on saving the whales,
- How successful do you think you will be?
- Agencies do have goals that will be compatible with yours.
- You just need to find the right match.

Finding the Goals

- Read the Request for Proposals carefully.
- Read them again, carefully.
- Look at funded proposals.
- But don't believe that the ones that got funded are the only ones that will ever get funded.
 - Funding decisions are often based on choosing the best from among what appeared *that year*.
- In the worst (i.e., normal) case, it may take getting rejected and getting some feedback to find out what it will take.

Interpreting Reviews

- Reviewers ideally assess quality and appropriateness of the proposal and researchers
- The best reviews give good advice for improving proposals
- They also have their own agendas
 - Which can be academic, political or personal
- Some reviews just (try to) sink the proposal

NSF/NEH

National Science Foundation (NSF)/National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)

- As an example, the Documenting Endangered Languages (DEL) program cannot fund proposals that are primarily aimed at revitalization.
 - They have been very reluctant to fund work on sleeping languages.
- Some times, the project goes the opposite direction: It addresses a theoretical issue, and is more appropriate to the Linguistics program rather than DEL.
- NSF provides a great deal of feedback.
 - Often, more than you would like.

Basics

- A good proposal
 - Being well-written helps.
 - A good idea is more important.
- A believable proposal
 - The agency (through its reviewers) has to think you are capable of achieving what you say you will do.
- An ethical proposal
 - Interactions with communities must be fair.
 - Some institutions (e.g. US universities) have more formal constraints (IRB/HIC approval).

Specifics

- If the agency asks for something, give it to them.
 - Putting your name on the proposal, for example.
 - Yes, we have gotten some without that at ELF.
- This can often be rather unexpected.
 - One foundation required 100% recycled paper, printed on both sides.
 - But more substantial issues are common.

Example: Broader Impacts

- One example is the Broader Impacts of NSF proposals.
- This is for outreach beyond the science:
 - Training of students.
 - Developing infrastructure.
 - Education outside the university.
- This is typically easy for DEL proposals:
 - A last chance to record scientific data.
 - Tremendous outreach to Native communities.

Sample Proposals

- Form groups based on the funding agency you decided to apply to
- Then let's look at the sample proposals for a few minutes, with these issues in mind.
- Please return the proposals at the end of the exercise; we do not have permission to copy these.

Sample Proposals

- How does the proposal meet the requirements of the funding agency?
 - Format & length requirements?
 - Required information?
 - Appropriate for the type of funding agency?
- Do the reviewers comment on these?
- Tomorrow we will look at them again to ask about credibility and ethics, so ignore these topics today.

Exercise

- Project summary
- Funding agencies will commonly ask you to write a summary of the proposal
- This is used by grant reviewers and may be used for publicity purposes if the grant application is successful.
 - *Grabs the attention of the program officer.*
 - *Helps in selecting reviewers*

Exercise

- Write a lead sentence to your summary which clearly states what you are planning to do.
- Now write four to six reasons why your project is significant.
- **Think about the audience for this grant – Who is reading it and will your reasons be clear enough, strong enough and specific enough to the funding agency to convince them to give you funding?**
- Later you can go back and draft a 100 word summary of the project.

Open Discussion

- What questions have arisen during your homework and looking at these proposals?

Homework

- Overnight, think about who will be the project participants, both internal and external to your community.
- What does each participant specifically bring to the project?
- Write your 100 word summary.
 - A small, fundable part of the big picture.