

Grant Writing for Language Activists and Linguists

Spike Gildea

Dept. of Linguistics
University of Oregon
&

Douglas H. Whalen

Speech-Language-Hearing Program
City University of New York,
Endangered Language Fund,
and Haskins Laboratories

Day 4

- Timelines
- Technology
- Budgets
- Reviewers
- Some final comments on the grant process.

Exercise 1 (10 minutes)

- Methods.
- Look back at the major objectives for your proposal.
- What methods will you use to achieve them?
- Suggest the time involved in each activity.
 - Be realistic.
 - Don't say you'll do 600 hours of recording per year.
- List the personnel required to complete each activity.

Technological Needs

- We need to balance:
 - best equipment
 - what works best for people new to documentation
 - particular circumstances and settings
- It's important to be flexible and ready to make changes as necessary.
- See www.rnld.org/node/149

Exercise 2 (5 minutes)

- Technological needs
- Think about the objectives and needs of your project and prepare a short equipment list.

Budget

- Make sure you know what is allowed by your agency.
 - There are huge differences across agencies, so look carefully.
- Foundations typically do not allow indirect costs (also called overhead).
 - Most universities expect to collect such costs, so university-based proposals need to work this out, if you apply to a foundation.

Example: Jacobs Grants

- Jacobs Grants (www.jacobsgrants.org)
 - In the budget summary, give a breakdown of amounts by category. Allowed expenses include consultant fees for ‘Indian/First Nations experts’, travel and lodging, supplies (e.g. recordable media), and archiving (copying, mailing). **You must include an amount for archiving.**
 - Disallowed expenses include researcher salaries, food, conference travel, and capital expenditures such as **computers and recording devices.**

Equipment

- If you have equipment, make sure you list it explicitly.
 - It has to be adequate to your task.
- If you list equipment in your budget, make sure it does the job as well.
 - Don't agonize over exact amounts—these will change before you get the grant.
 - Be realistic—this is not a place to economize.

Justify the Budget

- Every item not central to the proposal should be independently justified
- Amounts should be justified as well
 - Salaries
 - Travel
 - Consultant Fees
 - Other expenses
- Give the basis for any estimates (e.g. costs for travel and equipment fluctuate)

Exercise 3 (5 minutes)

- Look at budgets and justifications in the proposals

Archiving

- Does your agency require archiving?
- If archiving plan is necessary, you may need to link up with an established archive rather than proposing your own.
 - SOAS, DoBeS, U. Oklahoma, AILLA, PARADISEC, NAA, ANLC, LOC (Folkways), etc.
 - www.rnld.org/node/40

Suggesting Referees

- Not every agency allows you to suggest referees. For those that do (esp. NSF), you should take advantage of the opportunity.
- Generally, don't list the most prominent people in the field.
 - They will be too overcommitted to do a review.
- The reviewers cannot have direct connections to you (conflict of interest).
- Some (esp. NSF) also give you the option to block certain reviewers — could be important!

Letters of support

- Many agencies ask for two letters.
- In general, these should be from two different kinds of recommenders.
- Say, one academic advisor and one community member.
- Having explicit, written permission (and, even better, enthusiasm) from the community is a big plus.

Exercise 4

- Choose three people who you think will be appropriate referees for this project or who could write letters of support. Try to select people who represent different aspects of your project.
- For each person, write a sentence justifying why you think they are an appropriate referee or letter writer.
- Who in the community would you ask for a letter?

Pitfalls—what makes a grant application fail?

- Basics 1: Is the good idea clearly presented?
 - Not having clearly stated and/or realistic goals
 - Not having a realistic work plan (e.g., overly optimistic time line)
 - Budget items that don't match your work plan
 - Over-inflated or poorly justified budget

Pitfalls—what makes a grant application fail?

- Basics 2: Credibility
 - Background research/literature review incomplete or too long
 - Participants
 - applicant doesn't seem credible
 - Not clear they are the person to carry out the work
 - Not clearly ready/qualified to undertake this project
 - other participants' roles not clearly specified
 - Writing and editing the proposal

Pitfalls—what makes a grant application fail?

- Basics 3: Ethics

- Little or no evidence of community support and involvement
- No awareness of government requirements for researchers (research visas, permissions)
- No evidence that materials will be returned to the community
- No appropriate archiving plan

What to do when they say no

- Cry.
- Get mad.
- Calm down.
- Take a look at the comments. Look at it from **their** point of view.
 - Hard to do.
- Remember, not all good projects get funded.

The First Try

- Get lots of feedback on your proposal **before you send it in.**
 - Work with colleagues; most agencies cannot look at early drafts.
 - Send a request to LinguistList to ask for help from a volunteer.
- Don't expect to get funded on the first try.
- Funding rates are low.
 - NSF: 20%
 - ELF: 11%
 - Kellogg: 1%

Try Again

- Tune it up and try again.
- Address the problems identified in reviews!
- Try multiple agencies.
- If you haven't gotten it by the third try, it's probably best to go back to the drawing board for a major redesign of the project.
- Try breaking off stronger parts of the overall project for separate funding.

All of this work
is important!
Keep trying!

Evaluation

Please hand these in before you leave.

**Thank You
for your participation!**