OVERVIEW PART ONE

BEFORE YOU BEGIN TO WRITE

Rarely do experienced applicants with successes in the grant-writing arena decide to write a grant application and immediately sit down and begin writing; rather, most first engage in a comprehensive period of preparation. In our opinion, most applicants fail to attract grant support in large part because they do not take the necessary steps in positioning themselves to be successful. CHAPTERS 1–6 discuss the key activities that you, as the applicant, should take before beginning to write the actual grant application.

CHAPTER 1 addresses the important question of why funding agencies award grants and what you need to understand about positioning yourself favorably when you apply to a funding agency for support of your idea.

CHAPTER 2 discusses the concept of what constitutes a good idea for a grant application and the steps that you, as the applicant, can take to ensure that your idea is truly a good one. This chapter is predicated upon the concept that a good idea, compatible with the mission of the funding agency, is the centerpiece of a good grant application.

CHAPTER 3 outlines a series of strategies that you can use to identify potential funding agencies for support of your idea. It also emphasizes the value of applying to multiple funding agencies rather than focusing exclusively on one.

CHAPTER 4 emphasizes the importance of understanding exactly what the review criteria are that will be used to evaluate the relative merits of your idea within a given funding agency. It also discusses what you need to know about exactly to whom you are writing — the reviewers.

CHAPTER 5 summarizes many of the important "do’s and don’ts" with respect to writing style and proper use of the English language. It includes a number of tips and strategies that you can use to make your proposal maximally reviewer friendly.

CHAPTER 6 addresses the critical issue of adequate time to commit to the grant-writing process — undeniably the single most important element necessary for any grant writer to be successful.

We strongly urge you to read and follow the recommendations in Part One. With our years of experience helping investigators to prepare grant applications to literally dozens of different funding agencies, we can assure you that those applicants who begin the process of grant writing by taking all the steps recommended at the end of each chapter will have a distinct competitive edge over applicants who do not undertake these activities.