
OVERVIEW OF PART ONE: Before You Begin to Write

The rate of funding for NSF proposals has historically been just over 25%. That means that approximately three of four applicants fail. To ensure that you will be the one who succeeds we strongly recommend that you do a number of things 'up front' that will better position you to be successful. In these days of fierce competition and scarcer and scarcer research dollars it is common sense to us that every conceivable developmental step that will potentially contribute to a successful outcome for your proposal should be taken. Part one of this *Workbook* - chapters one through five – covers those important preliminary steps.

CHAPTER ONE: What You Need to Know About NSF and Its Funding of Research

Understanding NSF's mission and what it is trying to accomplish by funding grant applications provides the foundation for development of your application.

CHAPTER TWO: How to Develop and Optimize the Idea for Your Grant Application

There is no substitute for a good idea – the linchpin of a successful application. The best ideas are usually the product of a step-by-step developmental process, which is the subject of this chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: How to Choose the Appropriate Funding Opportunity and Granting Mechanism for Your Idea

No matter how good your idea, if you package and present it in the wrong way you are pre-ordained to fail. This chapter will help you to avoid that trap.

CHAPTER FOUR: *FastLane* or *Grants.gov* for Preparation and Submission of Your Proposal

Two completely different electronic means of preparing and submitting a grant application to NSF are available for most funding opportunities. This brief chapter will help you to choose the one that best meets your needs.

CHAPTER FIVE: The NSF Review Process and Tips on How to Write for Reviewers

Understanding the criteria and process that will be used to evaluate your proposal will help you write it to maximize reviewer-friendliness. Similarly, how you write your application will greatly influence its chances for success (or failure). Chapter five will help you avoid many of the writing mistakes that are made by most applicants.

CHAPTER FIVE–DISK: Create a Writing Schedule and Timetable

This file provides a template that can be used to create your writing schedule.