CHAPTER 16

THE ABSTRACT, TITLE, AND FACE-PAGE SECTION OF YOUR APPLICATION

The Abstract, or Summary, of Your Application. Virtually all grant applicants are requested to prepare and submit with their application an Abstract, or abbreviated Summary, of the work that will be described in the application. Different funding agencies will likely have different requirements as to what needs to be included in this section, so you absolutely must read the instructions to applicants before beginning to prepare this section. It is possible that the funding agency may restrict this Abstract to one page (or to 250 words) or structure it in such a way that it fits inside an enclosed box. Many funding agencies will require a certain font size and that the Abstract specifically address issues that would be relevant to the mission of that funding agency. The funding agency may want this section written strictly in the third person. Whatever they request should become of paramount importance to you and take precedence in preparing this section.

It is important to remember that many experienced proposal writers will argue that this section is one of the single most important parts of the grant application, because it is likely to be read by every single person who has anything whatsoever to do with your project (and they will likely read this first after they have read the title and have identified you as the applicant). The individuals who will probably read this will include, at a minimum, the administrators who's responsibility it is to catalog the application with respect to its content and may be involved in assigning your application for review. The individuals who are in charge of organizing and running the review meeting will also read it. Further, all reviewers who will participate in the review process will be likely to read it, *even if they were not specifically assigned to your proposal as reviewers.* (As a reminder, we earlier discussed the fact that, for many grant applications, only a subset of all of the reviewers serving on the review panel will actually read the entire proposal.) In addition, if you submit your proposal to a federal funding agency or many major foundations, your Abstract may eventually appear on the Internet in the Funded Grants database or Foundation Annual Report (should your proposal be one that would be funded). It is, therefore, critically important that you write this part of the application with all the polish that you can possibility put into it. Writing this section is not a trivial endeavor that should be postponed until the last minute before your grant application is due.

It merits being noted that, contrary to the perspective assumed by many new applicants, the *primary* purpose of the Abstract, or Project Summary, is not to inform the reviewers as to what the proposal is about.. Rather, the primary purpose is to aid funding agency officials in managing the proposal both during review and after and, in essence, keeping track of all of the applications submitted. In this respect, well reviewers will be able to extract some information regarding the focus of the proposal from the submitted abstracts, the place where most of this information will be obtained will be in the Overview and Objectives section (Executive Summary) that we discussed earlier in this workbook (See CHAPTER 8)