

# CHAPTER 8

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## *WRITING A FIRST DRAFT OF THE OVERVIEW/EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*

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In CHAPTER 7, (which you should have just finished reading), we discussed all the key elements of your Overview/Executive Summary section that you need to include in each of the four important paragraphs of this section of your grant application; what each is intended to achieve; and how they should all be linked together into a cohesive, logically-developed unit. In this chapter, we will guide you through the process of creating an outline and formulating a first draft of your Overview/Executive Summary. Although an ideal Overview/Executive Summary would usually be approximately one page in length (with Arial 11 font and three quarters to one-inch margins) using the approach summarized in this chapter, it is often difficult to fully attain this goal. A more realistic goal with this approach may be as much as one and one-quarter pages for your final draft (although the closer you can stick to one page only, the better). The following approach is designed to take you, step-by-step, through the process of creating your own Overview/Executive Summary — the first step in preparation of your competitive grant proposal.

The overall approach that we will use for developing this important Overview/Executive Summary section will be to first create a bulleted outline for each of the 12 elements identified in CHAPTER 7 and then expand those bullets into sentences. To do this, we recommend that you first make a series of responses in a set order, which will become the essential “bullets” for your outline. Once you are satisfied with the bullets that you have written, and *how they relate to each other*, you can then expand them into sentences that, when pasted into a new file, will become the first draft of your Overview/Executive Summary section. You can then modify, amplify, rewrite, and otherwise refine your first draft to produce the version that will become the template for writing the rest of your grant application.

### ***Introductory Paragraph***

Step 1. As noted earlier, you need to begin your opening paragraph with an interest-grabbing sentence that satisfies two key criteria: 1) it should contain a sufficient number of keywords so that the reviewers will easily understand what your grant proposal is likely to be about and why it would be important, and 2) it must establish the relevance of your proposal to the mission of the targeted funding agency. It is particularly important that you address both of these issues because you want the relevance of your project to the funding agency’s mission to be obvious immediately. For example, if you were writing an application about the difficulty that teenagers who become mothers of infants have in relating to their children (an issue that would be important to any funding agency interested in children’s well-being), you would not construct your opening sentence to indicate that 1,500,000 babies were born to adolescent women in the U.S. in 2012. Not only is this simply a statement of fact, but it also does not inform reviewers as to exactly what your project would be about, other than to provide the information that it would likely have something to do with teenage mothers. Instead, you would want to open with a sentence that makes clear how