PART THREE

WRITING THE BODY OF YOUR APPLICATION

Once you have finished writing the Overview/Executive Summary (CHAPTERS 7–9) and the Significance (CHAPTER 10) sections of your application, then, and only then, will you be ready to tackle the remaining sections of the application. Therefore, we need to be certain that we are all on the same page with respect to what should be in place when you get to this part of your grant application. First, you should have a created a carefully-crafted and critically-reviewed (by your peers) Overview/Executive Summary of your grant application, as well as your Significance paragraph. Second, you should have made a final decision on exactly what funding agency (or funding agencies) to which you are planning to apply, and have had at least one discussion with a program officer in the funding agency where you are planning to submit your completed proposal-if allowed (CHAPTER 3 and CHAPTER 8). If possible, it would be advantageous for you to have had the final polished draft of your Overview/Executive Summary reviewed for programmatic relevance by that program officer or funding official of the funding agency to which you are planning to submit your proposal. The funding agency may or may not be willing to do this, but it never hurts, of course, to inquire about this possibility.

Third, you should have copies of all the forms and instructions (which you have read at least once and preferably several times) for the funding agency (CHAPTER 5). Fourth, you should have copies of (or at least ready bookmarked access to) all the publications or the relevant literature that would be relevant to the grant application you are planning to write (note that this includes access to copies of the actual publications themselves, and *not* abstracts of publications). Finally, and most importantly, you will need to have time scheduled on your day planner for approximately the next one to three months (depending upon the amount of work required to fully complete the application). As we have earlier stressed (CHAPTER 6), time is, without a doubt, likely to be one of the most important elements in the preparation of a successful application, because this is usually a key rate-limiting factor to a successful proposal. If all these elements are place, you are indeed ready to begin writing the body of your grant application.

The approach that we are going to take to achieve this objective will be to divide this task into a series of activities that will encompass an approximate one to three-month time frame. (Four weeks for a six page application up to thirteen weeks for a fifteen to 20 page application). In our opinion, such a time frame constitutes a reasonable, but not excessive, commitment of time that the average grant applicant should spend to write the best application of which he or she is capable, while at the same time, attending to other professional responsibilities that cannot be deferred or delegated. If it takes you a little longer than four to 13 weeks, that is not a problem — as long as you have sufficient time available before the deadline established by the funding agency. If you have a grant application deadline that does not allow the luxury of a one to three-month time frame, you would obviously need to compress the schedule presented below proportionately in order to meet your deadline. Thus, you should use this recommended schedule only as a very rough guide and not as something to which you must adhere. There is enough anxiety in this process, and we do not want to compound that problem for you.