

# PART ONE

---

## ***BEFORE YOU BEGIN TO WRITE***

---

Rarely do experienced applicants with many previous successes in the grant-writing arena decide to write a grant application and immediately sit down and begin writing; rather, most applicants (at least those who have a high degree of submitting *successful* applications) 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 introduces the concept of what constitutes a good idea for a grant application and the steps that you, as the applicant, can take to help ensure that your idea is truly a good one. The information in this chapter is predicated upon the concept that a good idea, compatible with the mission of the funding agency, must be one of the key centerpieces of a potentially-fundable 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 (and efficiency of time economy) 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 — namely, the reviewers or “gatekeepers”, who will actually pass judgment on the relative merits of the ideas presented in your proposal.

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 what we have termed as 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 are convinced that, all other things being equal, the factor most likely to doom an application to failure is a lack of sufficient time of an applicant to do all of the things necessary to maximize opportunities for success.

As indicated above, 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 dozens of different funding agencies, this will make a significant difference in your likelihood of success.