2019

GRANT-PROPOSAL WRITING AS A CRAFT AND POTENTIAL WAYS TO IMPROVE GRANT-PROPOSAL WRITING KNOWLEDGE AND APPLICATION READINESS FOR STUDENTS SEEKING FUNDING ASSISTANCE ATTENDING POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

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By

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Dissertation

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in Anthropology, Applied Anthropology Option

The University of Montana
Missoula, MT

Fall 2019

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Grant-Proposal Writing as a Craft and Potential Ways to Improve Grant-Proposal Writing Knowledge and Application Readiness for Students Seeking Funding Assistance Attending Postsecondary Education

Chairperson: Dr. Gregory Campbell

The goal of this dissertation is to examine grant-proposal writing as a craft and potential ways to improve grant-proposal writing knowledge and application readiness for students seeking funding assistance attending postsecondary education. In doing so, this research answers the question: What might experts and professionals in the field recommend to students involved in grant-proposal writing to assist them to better understand the process, develop the necessary skills, utilize the available resources, and explore the possible avenues to writing grant-proposals to enable students to be more successful in their funding pursuits? The objectives that address the specific research actions that have been identified as necessary in order to facilitate achievement of the goal include: provide a solid framework through which students may understand an overview of grant-proposal writing, associated terminology, proposal development, and the components of a grant application; assess the grantseeker's role in the grantmaking process; explore the craft of grant-proposal writing; and discuss feedback and suggestions from experts and professionals in the field regarding student grant-proposal writing.

In creating a more in-depth understanding regarding the phenomenon of student grant-proposal writing at postsecondary academic institutions, this dissertation can bring about positive change at the level of the student grantseeker as well as within the academic institutions that assist students in the grant seeking process in that these research findings will potentially help undergraduate and graduate programs to better support the grant-proposal writing efforts of their students. As such, this research could be especially valuable for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds as well as economically challenged campus communities where funding resources are scarce. Additionally, these findings may also prove valuable and informative to program officers and applicable funding agency personnel who work with individual grantseekers in a similar capacity to better target their instructional and outreach efforts which would benefit all grantseekers, not just students.

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Chapter One: Introduction—Framing the Research

The Research Goal

Almost all students wish they had more money for school, many even know they can apply for grants to help them with the ever-increasing costs associated with higher education. However, most students do not know the right way to approach grant-proposal writing in a way that will yield successful results. Too often, there are missed opportunities because students lack the proper foundation to present a meritorious grant-proposal application.

The goal of this dissertation is to examine grant-proposal writing as a craft and potential ways to improve grant-proposal writing knowledge and application readiness for students seeking funding assistance attending postsecondary education. To describe grant-proposal writing as a craft is to acknowledge that the skill sets acquired through experience in the grant-proposal writing process are based upon science, as it relates to a systematic well-organized body of knowledge; and art, as an expression or creative application of skill and imagination (Henson 2004, NOAD 2014). As with any craft, being successful requires developing and fine-tuning certain skills (Henson 2004).

Grant-proposal writing is playing a role of growing importance in today's society of academic scholars as the costs associated with attending postsecondary education is on the rise (Supiano 2015), student loan debt continues to climb (Thomason 2015) and the money outside of student loans available to assist with tuition and academic research costs from many of the funding sources in the United States is diminishing due to economic issues that have influenced program and budget cuts (U.S. Department of

Education 2015). Although there is a wide range of information about grant-proposal writing available to grantseekers in general, those without any experience may find it difficult to navigate through it all without feeling confused by the terminology used—which may have variable definitions depending on the source—or overwhelmed by the abundance of different approaches to grant-proposal writing and the varying audiences addressed by the literature.

The matter of intended audience in grant-proposal writing literature is especially important because it determines the tone and content of the writing, and as a result, also impacts the reader's interaction with the material as well as their ability to understand, interpret, and relate to the information provided. At present, most of the available literature on the subject of grant-proposal writing is not targeted towards individual grantseekers but rather non-profit organizations that typically have a very different manner of approaching fundraising as well as different strategies and agendas. Furthermore, the grant-proposal writing resources that do specifically address the audience of individual grantseekers rarely narrow the focus further to target students specifically. While some may refute the aforementioned concerns to say that students should look to their academic institutions to get the help they seek for grant-proposal writing, depending on the school, students may or may not have student-focused grant-proposal writing resources of either materials and/or personnel readily available at their academic institution to help guide them through the process. The premise of this research asserts that postsecondary students interested in obtaining funding assistance to defray costs associated with tuition or academic research would benefit greatly from having access to student-focused information explaining grant-proposal writing from the beginning in layman's terms, targeted to address the completely inexperienced postsecondary student writing their first grant-proposal.

Aims and Objectives

"Today's students will be tomorrow's senior researchers"

– Deborah Winslow, National Science Foundation, Cultural Anthropology Program Director (2010a:29)

According to Donald Brenneis, former president of the American Anthropology Association, "[A]pplying for funding remains a key element in shaping both individual careers and the broader trajectory of anthropological knowledge" (Brenneis 2011:3). The purpose of this research is to build on the platform of knowledge about grant-proposal writing previously established and, in doing so, complement the information already available to help support, develop, and grow the disciple of Anthropology but with a narrowed focus on assisting the target audience of fledgling anthropology students attending postsecondary academic institutions, although it is noted that the knowledge put forth by this research will also have broader applicability to all postsecondary students seeking funding assistance. The process of applying for a grant is an incredibly valuable learning experience in and of itself to help students develop, organize, and refine their research as well as network and collaborate with professionals and peers in one's chosen field (Dunnavant 2014). Aside from the monetary incentives of reduced tuition costs and support for research, successful grant-proposal writing may also help one's CV to be more competitive, both within the academic sphere and in the job market (Dunnavant 2014). Students that write successful grants frequently also receive associated benefits such as prestige, travel, resources, equipment, as well as the not-to-be-understated benefit of actually having time to focus on one's research and studies (Henson 2004).

For this dissertation, rather than approach the research inquiring about student viewpoints, since there is the potential for a myriad of individualized issues that may not directly relate to the grant-proposal submittal itself, this research has instead selected to consult with experts and professionals in the field to see what their feedback and suggestions may be regarding grant-proposal writing. This research will answer the question: What might experts and professionals in the field recommend to students involved in grant-proposal writing to assist them to better understand the process, develop the necessary skills, utilize the available resources, and explore the possible avenues to writing grant-proposals to enable students to be more successful in their funding pursuits? The following aims in pursuing this research represent the knowledge that is needed to answer the research question as posed:

- To create a platform of knowledge regarding grant-proposal writing
- To promote a holistic understanding of the grant-proposal writing process
- To generate significant findings about the art of grant-proposal writing
- To assist and encourage the development of skills, knowledge, and attitudes supportive of fostering effective funding applications

The objectives listed below address the specific research actions that have been identified as necessary in order to facilitate achievement of the goal:

- Provide a solid framework through which students may understand an overview of grant-proposal writing, associated terminology, proposal development, and the components of a grant application
- Assess the grantseeker's role in the grantmaking process
- Explore the craft of grant-proposal writing

- Discuss feedback and suggestions from experts and professionals in the field regarding student grant-proposal writing

In answering the research question, this dissertation will not only attain its goal of examining grant-proposal writing as a craft and potential ways to improve grant-proposal writing knowledge and application readiness for students, but, in doing so, this dissertation will also accomplish creating a more in-depth understanding regarding the phenomenon of student grant-proposal writing at postsecondary academic institutions in the United States in an attempt to bring about positive change at the level of the student grantseeker as well as within the academic institutions which assist them in the grant seeking process and society in general (LeCompte and Schensul 1999b:6).

Literature Review

As previously noted, there is a lot of literature available about grant-proposal writing in general. Notable texts per Internet searches include Dr. Beverly A. Browning's 2009 book *Grant Writing for Dummies* (listed as Barnes & Nobles' top seller in results for "grant writing", second top seller on Amazon) and *The Only Grant-Writing Book You'll Ever Need* (2014) by Ellen Karsh and Arlen Sue Fox (listed as Amazon's top seller in results for "grant writing", second top seller on Barnes & Nobles). Additional recommended readings with positive reviews include *Demystifying Grant Seeking* (2001) by Larissa Golden Brown and Martin John Brown, which suggests an approach to grant writing that mainly focuses on the idea that common sense and logical principles and practices are the best tools for grant seeking; *Storytelling for Grantseekers: The Guide to Creative Nonprofit Fundraising* (2009) by Cheryl Clarke, a book that looks at the various phases of developing an effective grant proposal through the lens of storytelling; and *Grant Writing in Higher Education: A Step-by-Step Guide* (2004) by Kenneth T. Henson, a text that discusses strategies to grant writing, beginning with one's attitude, which encourage successful proposals.

Some of the nation's top private foundations and nonprofit service organizations affiliated with grant-proposal funding have also released valuable information on the topic. *Approaching the Foundation* (2003) by Robert F. Long and Joel J. Orosz, a document by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation offers a strategy for approaching funders and a basic framework for one's first written presentation of a funding request. *The Foundation Center's Guide to Proposal Writing* (2012) by Jane C. Geever, an informative guide associated with the Foundation Center—the nation's leading authority on organized philanthropy—provides detailed instructions on preparing successful grant proposals and insight into what makes a winning proposal. The Foundation Center also published *The Grantseeker's Guide to Winning Proposals* (2008), by editors Judith B. Margolin and Elan K. DiMaio, as an accompaniment to Ms. Geever's guide in their Fundraising Guides series; although the funders' comments contain useful advice, this book states the intended audience is development officers, nonprofit board members, fundraising consultants, and others in pursuit of grants.

Many of the academic funding sources that comprise the largest contributors to student research today have also made available grant-proposal application guidelines regarding how to approach their funding opportunities, such as the National Science Foundation's 2014 *Proposal and Awards Policies and Procedure Guide*, available online and as a downloaded file; the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) online grant application guidelines; the National Institutes of Health (NIH) informative web pages; and the American Association of University Women (AAWU) proposal writing tips which are available on their website. While these resources are for the most part entity specific, there are undoubtedly aspects of advice shared that are applicable across funding applications.

The topic of funding and the funding process for social science research in particular has held significance for a number of decades. US sociologist Harry Alpert served as the Social Science Programme Director for National Science Foundation (NSF) from 1953-1958 and is known for guiding the development of NSF's earliest efforts to provide funding to the social sciences (Solovey and Pooley 2011). The first NSF grants for basic research in "Anthropology and Related Sciences" were made in 1954 allocating the entire year's budget on two awards to anthropologists Gordon Willey, Harvard University, who received $11,500 for one year to carry out research on "Prehistoric Settlement Patterns in the Maya Area," and Robert Braidwood, University of Chicago, who received $23,500 for a three-year research period to carry out research on "Human Population Studies in the Fertile Crescent" (Yellen and Greene 1985:332). By 1956, applicants from the four traditional subfields of anthropology—archaeology, physical anthropology, social anthropology and linguistics—were also included for support by NSF (Yellen and Greene 1985). Dr. Alpert is recognized as the key figure in establishing NSF's first basic policy framework for funding social science research by demonstrating both its value and scientific legitimacy within a "unified scientific enterprise" but then also identified the social sciences as "junior partners to the better-established and better funded natural sciences" (Solovey and Pooley 2011:230). During his five years at NSF, Dr. Alpert authored three articles applicable to this dissertation. In 1954, he wrote *The National Science Foundation and Social Science Research*, which takes a look at the increase of Federal sponsorship of scientific research by non-governmental agencies after World War II, namely the support of social science research and development by the NSF. In 1955, an article exploring the relationship of the social sciences to the natural sciences was published, entitled *The Social Sciences and the National Science Foundation:1945-1955*. This article also examined the widely discussed and debated question of what should be the place of the social sciences within the NSF and what the future might look like in the years to come. Dr. Alpert published *The Social Science Research Program of the National Science Foundation* in 1957, analyzing how the establishment within the NSF of a consolidated and unified Social Science Research Program was a major step towards the development in the support of basic research and education in the social sciences.

The National Academy of Sciences was established in 1863 by an Act of Congress as a private, nonprofit, self-governing membership corporation for the advancement of science and technology, which advises the federal government upon request. The Committee on Science and Public Policy of the National Academy of Sciences published both the 1978 *Peer Review in the National Science Foundation: Phase One of a Study* authored by sociologists Stephen Cole, Leonard Rubin, and Jonathan R. Cole as well as the 1981 *Peer Review in the National Science Foundation: Phase Two of a Study*, also by Jonathan R. Cole and Stephen Cole, in an attempt address the question of how judgments are made that determine which specific basic research projects and investigators are selected to receive support with the funds allocated by Congress.

In her 2009 book, *How Professors Think: Inside the Curious World of Academic Judgment*, sociologist Michele Lamont provides informative insight on the study of evaluative cultures via a look at the decision-making process of the U.S. peer review process for academics from an array of disciplines including philosophers, political scientists, English professors, historians, economists, and anthropologists.

Of more relevance to this dissertation is the literature on grant-proposal writing from anthropologists writing as experts and professionals in the field in which they draw from their own experiences. However, contributions to the discussion specific to grant-proposal writing are very limited. Most notable is the 1991 article *Writing Grant Proposals for Anthropological Research* which provides a unique insider's perspective offering advice on how to write a grant proposal for anthropological research from Dr. Sydel Silverman, an anthropologist known for her work as a researcher, writer, academic administrator, and foundation executive who served as the President of the Wenner-Gren Foundation from 1986-2000 (Fic 2011:3). The article contains information about how the funding process works, general points to keep in mind when constructing a proposal, recommendations on preparing the proposal, tips on addressing the main questions, and a breakdown of applicable key concepts. Dr. Silverman's account is considered by many in the disciple to be one of the most useful general discourses on how to prepare a funding proposal.

The majority of associated literature from anthropologists discusses not grant-proposal writing in and of itself but rather aspects of the funding process, funding patterns, or reflections on the importance of funding. Mary W. Greene, Associate Program Director for Anthropology at NSF from 1960-1987, along with John E. Yellen, current Program Director for Archaeology at NSF since 1977, published the 1985 article *Archaeology and the National Science Foundation*. This article explores the nature of NSF archaeological support and reviews awards by fiscal year as well as geographical area and years of tenure. The authors point out that support for archaeology has significantly been on the decline for a number of years and discusses some potential reasons why. Dr. Yellen also co-authored the 1986 article *National Science Foundation Support of Physical Anthropology Research* with Scott Zeleznik of the University of Kansas Anthropology Program, which reviews the awards in Physical Anthropology by the NSF to analyze them and look for patterns in overall NSF support, proposal submission, and success rates.

Stuart Plattner co-authored a number of articles (1987, 1991, 1993, 1997) discussing the funding of research during his time as the first Program Officer for Cultural Anthropology at the National Science Foundation (NSF) from 1985-2005. Dr. Plattner with Linda Hamilton, from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Marilyn Madden, a graduate student from American University, published an article in American Anthropologist entitled *The Funding of Research in Social-Cultural Anthropology at the National Science Foundation (*1987)*,* which describes and analyzes the patterns of funding research since 1956 as well as the differences in funding across research areas. Dr. Plattner and Christopher McIntyre, a graduate student intern from the University of Arizona, authored *The Funding of Dissertation Research in Anthropology at the National Science Foundation* (1991) which presents a brief history and analysis of the NSF funding for anthropology from 1965 to 1989 as well as an overview of trends in the funding of dissertation research as they relate to geographic area, sub-discipline, gender, and school status to determine the influence of these factors on the rate of funding success. Dr. Plattner, along with Gary Aronson of the Smithsonian Institution Repatriation Project and Benjamin Abellera, a graduate student at Catholic University published the article *Recent Trends in Funding Anthropological Research at the National Science Foundation* (1993) which provides a background on the peer review process at NSF and reports on trends and patterns of funding for senior (post-PhD) research funding from FY 1986-1991 in the sub-disciplines of Archaeology, Cultural Anthropology, and Physical Anthropology. In 1997, Dr. Plattner teamed up with Margaret Mastriani, a graduate student summer research intern at NSF to produce a commentary on allocations of research support for Cultural Anthropology at the NSF from 1991-1995 by sharing data about whether there are potential influential factors in terms of who gets funded and who does not, in particular gender, seniority of the PI, and the status of the institution.

Professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Hawaii and multiple NSF award recipient, Miriam T. Stark similarly wrote about funding patterns in Archaeology in her article *Where the Money Goes: Current Trends in Archaeological Funding* (1999), which looks at how funding availability affects how archaeological knowledge is produced by examining data on funding patterns related to select academic and nonacademic funding sources for North American archaeologists.

Donald Brenneis, former president of the American Anthropological Association as well as linguistic and social anthropologist at the University of California, Santa Cruz, wrote an article called *New Lexicon, Old Language Negotiating the "Global" at the National Science Foundation* (1999) in which he provides an ethnographic exploration of the bureaucracy of the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the development of a new NSF funding initiative in the social sciences. Dr. Brenneis states that the characterization of issues as 'global' defines a new class of research issue as well as a new topic for research funding.

A widely published author on grant-proposal writing and the funding process, Deborah Winslow, Program Director for Cultural Anthropology Program at the National Science Foundation (NSF) since 2005, shares her breadth of knowledge in the informative Career Development column for Anthropology News covering an array of applicable topics, such as: *What Makes an NSF Proposal Successful?* (2007), which first discusses the NSF review process and how panel decisions are made, and then examines the attributes that are key to a meritorious proposal, including an interesting research question, good contextualization in relevant literature, appropriate research design, a clear analysis plan, a qualified researcher, and a potential contribution beyond the research community; *Where Does the Money Come From* (2008a), an article that examines the NSF budget rollout and looks at how the budget process works; *Methodologies Unlimited* (2008b) discusses how anthropologists approach methodologies and the ways in which conventional ethnography grounded in good language skills and long-term fieldwork remains a central part of anthropologists' research; *Writing a Dissertation Research Proposal?* (2008c), which looks at NSF's review process and examines what makes a dissertation proposal successful; *Team Work?* (2008d), an article that focuses on the advantages of team work in anthropological research; *Field Notes…What Will Happen to Yours?* (2009a), which poses questions to fellow anthropologists regarding what will happen to the future of research materials and lists a variety of options worth considering for fieldwork preservation that are available today; *Funding Anthropology in Stimulating Times* (2009b), reviews the impacts at NSF of the America Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA, aka "stimulus" money), which aided NSF considerably after a worrisome period of time in which a recession was looming; the article *Navigating NSF* (2009c) first discusses the history of how the NSF came into existence in 1950, then reviews its standing programs, like cultural anthropology and archaeology, as well as special programs and Dear Colleague Letters which enable NSF to stay responsive to new research areas and national needs; *Cultural Anthropology Grows at NSF* (2010a), this article is a response to the reaction of a comment that the author had made three years earlier when she stated that the Cultural Anthropology Program at NSF needs to receive more proposal for research in order to represent the full extent and range of what cultural anthropology contributes to the human sciences and to encourage national recognition; and *Funding a 'Healthy Mix' of Research* (2010b), which echoes the sentiment expressed by past and present NSF Cultural Anthropology program directors that, in reviewing funded proposals, contrary to what some may assume there appears to be a healthy mix of qualitative and quantitative methodologies, junior and senior researchers, and hypothesis testing and interpretative approaches.

Donald Brenneis also authored the 2011 article *Writing—and Reading—Money* that explores the importance of understanding the peer review process. This article was part of a thematic series on commentaries about funding anthropology and its importance as a key element in shaping anthropology careers and anthropological knowledge as a whole. Compiled in the November 2011 issues of Anthropology News, additional contributions to this series included the following: *Return to the Funding Proposal as Technique of Peership* (Levine 2011); *Funding for Interdisciplinary Research* (Moritz 2011); *In the Field with Fulbright* (Stam 2011); *Overview of the NSF Archaeology Program* (Yellen 2011); and *70 Years of Wenner-Gren Support for Anthropological Research* (Aiello 2011). An interview excerpt (and link to the recorded conversation) is also included in the issue from Leslie C. Aiello, Wenner-Gren President, and Deborah Winslow in her role as NSF's Cultural Anthropology Program Director, in which they discuss two key funding sources for anthropological research.

Professor of anthropology at University of California-Irvine, Tom Boellstorff 's 2012 article *Visions of Government Funding for American Anthropology* looks at the value of government support for anthropology, as well as for the social sciences. He states, "one reason support for anthropology is important is that we need to better understand the social contexts worldwide in which science is rooted" (Boellstorff 2012:1). Dr. Boellstorff also addresses conversations about whether taxpayers should pay for social science research and explains that the amount in question to fund research is actually incredibly miniscule when looking at the bigger picture of the budget.

Journalists outside the field of anthropology have also published articles on grant-proposal writing and the funding process. Thomas Durso's 1996 article *Researchers Disagree on NIH Plan to Improve Its Peer-Review Process* elaborates on a debate regarding researchers' disagreement on a plan by National Institutes of Health (NIH) officials to improve its peer review process. The article looks at what is current in place, the recommendations of the NIH's Rating of Grant Application (RGA) committee, and suggested alternatives. Additionally, Justin Dunnavant, a PhD student at the University of Florida, discusses some of the different benefits of grant writing in his 2014 blog entry for GradHacker, which is now part of Inside Higher Ed – an online source for news, opinion, and jobs for all of higher education. Dunnavant's article *The Unspoken Benefits of Grant Writing* briefly mentions bolstering one's CV, networking, career development, and collaborating with strangers as possible advantages.

Grounded Theory

In their book, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967), Barony Glaser and Anselm Strauss developed the idea of grounded theory, a systematic research methodology defined as "the discovery of theory from data" (Dey 1999:3). An overview of the main tenants usually identified with grounded theory are presented in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: **Main tenants usually identified with grounded theory** (Bernard 2006:492–494, Dey 1999:1–9).

1.	The aim of grounded theory is to generate or discover a theory.
2.	The researcher sets aside theoretical ideas to allow a substantive theory to emerge.
3.	Theory focuses on how individuals interact in relation to the phenomena being studied.
4.	Theory asserts a plausible relation between concepts and sets of concepts.
5.	Theory is derived from data acquired through fieldwork interviews, observations, and documents.
6.	Data analysis is systematic, beginning as soon as data becomes available and proceeding through identifying categories and then connecting them.
7.	Further data collection is based on emerging concepts which are developed through constant comparison with additional data.
8.	Data collection may stop when new conceptualizations emerge.
9.	Data analysis proceeds from inductive or "open" coding through axiel coding to selective coding around an emerging storyline.
10.	The resulting theory may be reported in a narrative framework or as a set of propositions.

For this research, it was selected to use a grounded theory approach and begin analysis of the data with the identification of preliminary themes in the responses in order to identify categories and concepts that emerge and link the concepts (Bernard 2006:492).

Ethnography as a Tool of Discovery

Ethnography is the "scientific description of the customs of individual peoples and cultures" (NOAD 2014). It is an investigative approach to learning that utilizes the researcher's eyes and ears as the primary tools for data collection (LeCompte and Schensul 1999b:1). Ethnography employs a variety of research methods and meticulous data collection techniques in an attempt to ensure data accuracy and avoid bias (LeCompte and Schensul 1999b:1). It is considered to be both a product of research and a research process (LeCompte and Schensul 1999b:1).

Ethnographic research is not only guided by theory, it also generates theory (Schensul, Schensul and LeCompte 1999:2). Ethnographic theory is said to be "constructed recursively, that is, it begins with a set of connected ideas that undergo continuous redefinition throughout the life of the study until ideas are formalized and interpreted at the end" (Schensul, Schensul and LeCompte 1999:2). The researcher's initial theoretical or conceptual model serves to help the researcher to organize observations and interviews into patterns, attributing meaning to data that is otherwise unconnected (Schensul, Schensul and LeCompte 1999:2). As the researcher becomes more informed about the topic and the model is accordingly refined, the researcher is able to organize the data into a more logical framework based on the most complete information available (Schensul, Schensul and LeCompte 1999:3).

For the purpose of this research project, it was selected to utilize an inductive approach as a research strategy in an attempt to facilitate more open-ended and exploratory research results. In an inductive approach to research, a researcher begins by collecting data applicable to their topic of interest. After the data collection is complete, the researcher then analyzes and looks for patterns in the data and try to develop a theory that might explain those patterns. Using this approach, the research moves from the initial specific observations to broader, more generalized theories or conclusions (LeCompte and Schensul 1999b).

It is the intention of this research to use ethnography as a tool of discovery to formulate hypotheses related to potential ways to improve grant-proposal writing knowledge and application readiness for students seeking funding assistance attending postsecondary education, which will in turn also provide direction for further research on the topic (Wilson and Chaddha 2010). An example of its applicability would be that research findings would potentially help undergraduate and graduate programs to better support the grant-proposal writing efforts of their students. Another instance is that findings may assist program officers and applicable personnel to better target their instructional and outreach efforts. As such, this research could be especially valuable for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

However, while ethnography was determined to be the best approach for this research, there are a few known issues to note. First, it should be stated that the accuracy of the researcher's analysis and conclusions undoubtedly would be influenced by how much data is collected. Since this research will only be able to work with a certain number of respondents through the course of the research period, it is not possible to guarantee that the data collected will be representative of all experts and professionals in the field of grant-proposal writing (Wilson and Chaddha 2010). Furthermore, while the researcher's analysis and conclusions drawn may be sound based on the data collected up until to that point in time, it may potentially be modified or disproven at any moment by additional data collected (Wilson and Chaddha 2010). Finally, since the researcher has unavoidable limitations to the timeframe that makes up the research period, it should be noted that there might be additional patterns that exist that may have been recognized if the data had spanned a longer research period (Wilson and Chaddha 2010).

Data Collection and Methods

Before undertaking this research, the researcher did not have much in the way of previous experience working with or spending time in the "community" of people that comprise the key informants of this research—grant-proposal writing experts and professionals in the field. However, the researcher is a member of the community of postsecondary students in the disciple of Anthropology who are the target audience being served by this research. It is the opinion of the researcher that this lack of experience working with grant-proposal writing experts and professionals in the field will actually contribute beneficially to the research to help convey concepts and ideas in audience-appropriate layman's terms as well as to attempt to facilitate understanding utilizing both emic and etic perspectives.

In the early development phase, the researcher submitted funding applications to a number of well-known funding agencies using only the knowledge gained from a departmental course on grant-proposal writing in which the researcher had achieved high marks. The intention in this approach was to develop a basis for understanding what the grant-proposal writing process is like for post-secondary students who essentially have little to no experience with grant-proposal writing but have excelled academically. While the results varied in that some funding requests were awarded, the majority of submittals were not deemed meritorious. Discussions with peers and mentors revealed to the researcher that most other post-secondary students had similar experiences, alluding to the idea that attaining success in academic achievement was not sufficient enough to equate to a favorable outcome in grant-proposal writing. The researcher deduced that grant-proposal writing was in fact much different from the academic writing style taught to students in postsecondary education and should be approached as its own genre of writing.

Research data was based upon information learned from unstructured observation, non-participant observation, participant observation, informal interview, unstructured interview, and semi-structured interview methods employed in this research, in addition to various print and online texts as well as a variety of multimedia resources including audios, videos, websites, databases, webinars, PowerPoints and other presentation materials, software, and interactive multimedia (Bernard 2006, Schensul, et al. 1999). The combination of these exploratory data collection techniques was intended to provide a more accurate representation of not only key elements of the grant-proposal writing process but also potential ways to improve grant-proposal writing knowledge and application readiness for students seeking funding assistance attending postsecondary education. The decision when to use observations and/or interviews as the preferred method and the degree of structuring for each instance was governed by the researcher's assessment of the situation and the applicable research objective(s) being addressed. Additionally, the social composition of those under observation as well as all interview respondents was not differentiated based on age, gender, race, religion, socioeconomic status, or education. Each of the subsequent sections in this chapter will discuss the data collection processes in greater detail including the basis for each method selection, design, and implementation.

Observations as a method of data collection for this research involved observing behavior as it took place in a natural environment for activities affiliated with grant-proposal writing. Observations were conducted between the timeframe of January 1, 2011 and July 31, 2016. All observations were recorded as applicable by digital or handwritten note taking solely by the researcher. The observation field sites were located in the United States and—for ease of transportation and scheduling—predominantly at the researcher's host institution, the University of Montana, although observation field sites also took place at additional venues as permissible within the researcher's budgetary constraints. The observation field sites for this research included an array of classes, events, trainings, workshops, meetings, and professional development opportunities that are associated with experts and professionals in the field involved with grant-proposal writing. These site locations were dependent on the external factors of when grant-proposal writing observation opportunities were offered at the University of Montana or other applicable venues that were within the researcher's budget. The researcher attempted to go to as many observation locations as were available that fit within the researcher's schedule and budgetary restrictions, but ideally planned to consist of no fewer than 35 observations. Each observation ranged in length depending on the duration of the event or activity being observed but did not exceed an hour per observation. Observations ceased to be implemented in this research when further observations began to add little or nothing to the researcher’s understanding. By the end of the data collection period, a total of 40 observations occurred.

The purpose of using observation as a fieldwork method in this research was predominantly for general, open-ended data gathering to build a platform of knowledge for a narrower focused investigation as the research progressed. Using observation as a fieldwork method also captured visual clues as to the thoughts and feelings of those who are affiliated with the grant-proposal writing process as well as allowed for a type of behavioral verification of the informants' statements (Bernard 2006, Schensul, et al. 1999). One notable disadvantage of using observations is that they cannot be replicated or falsified but nonetheless observations are still deemed to add valuable insight (Schensul, et al. 1999).

Unstructured observations were implemented when the researcher wanted to monitor all aspects of the phenomenon that seem relevant to the research (BCPS 2010). This method was selected for its flexibility to help identify key components associated with the topic and develop hypotheses (BCPS 2010). It should be noted that the researcher was aware that there is a tendency for high levels of bias in this method but attempted to mitigate that bias by treating unstructured observation findings as potential hypotheses to be tested as opposed to definitive findings (BCPS 2010). Of the 40 observations that occurred, 11 were unstructured observations.

Non-participant observations are when the researcher adopts a more distant role to observe interactions, events, and activities in order to gain a direct understanding of a phenomenon. In this context, the researcher has limited interaction with the people under observation (Cohen and Crabtree 2006). This format of observation allowed the researcher to carry out a broad-in-scope observation to help attain an overview understanding of the topic (Cohen and Crabtree 2006). Of the 40 observations that occurred, 15 were non-participant observations.

Participant observations allowed the researcher to learn through exposure to or involvement in the activities of participants within grant-proposal writing affiliated environments (Schensul, et al. 1999). For this research, the participant observation sessions were covert and entailed taking field notes about what was seen and heard in the setting being observed (Bernard 2006:344). Due to the nature of the participant observation field site locations, the researcher was not able to determine a set frequency in advance for how often participation observations would occur since the variable of when observation opportunities were held was beyond the researcher’s control. Of the 40 observations that occurred, 14 were participant observations.

Interviews with key informants provided for more in-depth knowledge to be garnered from a smaller number of individuals who are deemed by their peers to have more authority on the subject (Bernard 2006, Schensul, et al. 1999). Interviews for this research were conducted within the period of January 1, 2011 to July 31, 2016. Geographically, the interviews all took place in the United States. All interviews were conducted solely by the researcher and documented in the manner deemed best per situation using either by digital or handwritten note taking and/or by audio recording utilizing the researcher’s iPhone and an audio recording app called TapeACall. The app enables the user to record any incoming or outgoing call of any duration of time, and then provides the option to download the recording in iTunes as an MP3. The app also allows both the downloaded file and a link to obtain the downloaded file to be sent out via e-mail.

Eligible interview candidates were required to be publicly recognized as either an expert or professional in the field of grant-proposal writing or have notable experience affiliated with grant-proposal writing and/or the grant-proposal writing process. Interview candidate names were obtained from the following potential sources:

- The researcher's various professional development experiences
- The researcher's observations
- Internet searches for well-known postsecondary student funding entities and organizations affiliated with individual grant seeking, followed by a review of the staff directory on their website for potential interviewees based on their job titles
- Authors mentioned in the Literature Review section of this chapter
- Referrals from other interviewees

Interview field sites varied since interviews took place at a date, time, location and/or manner selected by the respondent. To mitigate budgetary constraints regarding travel expenses, respondents were interviewed over the phone or allowed to answer the interview questions by email, if they so choose. This research attempted to allow for as many interviews as people interested, but ideally planned to consist of no fewer than 35 interviews. Each interview ranged in length between twenty minutes up to an hour and a half depending on the feedback and tolerance of the respondent. By the end of the data collection period, a total of 36 interviews occurred. Interviewees for this research included representatives as presented in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2: **Interviewees for this research.**

State-funded public universities	6 interviewees
Private universities	1 interviewee
Federally funded grantmaking agencies	8 interviewees
Grantmaking public charity/community foundations	1 interviewee
Grantmaking private foundations	11 interviewees
Grantmaking nonprofit organizations	6 interviewees
Authors	3 interviewees

The purpose of the interviews were to capture the thoughts, opinions, feedback, and advice of grant-proposal writing experts and professionals in the field as well as those individuals who have committed to learning about grant-proposal writing and/or the grant-proposal writing process; such as: funding agencies, funding requesters, reviewers, program officers, program directors, program managers, program administrators, pre-/post-award specialists, research coordinators, academic officers, grant-proposal writers, grant managers, grant administrators, and relevant authors. The interviews attempted to allow for elaboration of personal opinions regarding grant-proposal writing and the grant-proposal writing process. The interview questions were designed in manner that were either in an open-ended question format or gave the respondents a chance to "freelist" (Schensul, et al. 1999:121). An open-ended interview format enabled the researcher greater flexibility in exploring any topic in depth and for covering new topics as they arise (121). The key words/phrases and freelist responses from the interviewees then were compared across respondents and ranked in terms of the frequency with which certain ideas were mentioned. The interview process in itself attempted to not include leading questions that might influence the character of the respondent's answer. Interview questions were developed, tested, and refined based on better ways to phrase the questions as new understandings were gained from the interviews.

This research used informal interviews in the early stages of its development as a means of building a foundation to understand the topic. In addition, the knowledge and insights gained using an informal interview format helped build a foundation for developing and conducting relevant and meaningful interviews that were more structured (Bernard 2006:211, Cohen and Crabtree 2006). Informal interviews were perceived as a beneficial approach for this research because they are frequently seen as more like a conversation and therefore facilitate a less stressful, low-pressure interaction which enables respondents to speak more openly and freely (Cohen and Crabtree 2006). Informal interviews took place at a date, time, location and/or manner selected by the respondent with time allotted to sit and talk with each other. When possible, informal interviews were recorded to enable the researcher to follow and be engaged in the discussion as well as to allow the researcher to focus on interacting with the respondent instead of the note taking. Informal interviews ranged from casual conversations to scheduled meetings to discuss topics affiliated with student grant-proposal writing. When applicable, informal interviews had a list of potential questions prepared to be more efficient with the interview time, but no structured interview guide was provided to the respondent (Handwerker 2001). Informal interview findings aided the researcher to reflect the accuracy of initial guesses about the topic, elaborate on these guesses, and restructure the researcher's understandings accordingly (121). Informal interviews ceased to be implemented when further interviews of this format failed to correct previous conceptions about grant-proposal writing, no longer prompted new questions, and/or began to add little or nothing to the researcher's understanding of the topic (Handwerker 2001). Of the 36 interviews that occurred, 15 were informal interviews.

When deemed appropriate and an understanding of the topic had been established so as to have a clear agenda in mind for guiding discussions with respondents, unstructured interviews were also employed (Cohen and Crabtree 2006). Unstructured interviews were considered to be a useful method for further development of the researcher's growing understanding of the topic. The format of these interviews allowed the researcher to test out preliminary understandings on the topic while still being open to ways in which the respondents may facilitate new perspectives and knowledge (Cohen and Crabtree 2006). Each unstructured interview took place at a date, time, location and/or manner selected by the respondent with time scheduled specifically to speak with each other about the stated topic of discussion. Respondents did not receive a structured interview guide although the researcher had prepared a list of open-ended questions designed to help facilitate respondents to open-up and express themselves in their own way about the topic (Cohen and Crabtree 2006). Unstructured interviews were recorded via the researcher's iPhone and transcribed using Rev.com online transcription service to enable the researcher to focus on interacting with the respondent about the discussion at hand instead of the note taking. Of the 36 interviews that occurred, 3 were unstructured interviews.

Semi-structured interviews were used for respondents in circumstances where the researcher would only have one opportunity to speak with the interviewee (Cohen and Crabtree 2006). Before the interview, semi-structured interview respondents received by e-mail a list of the interview questions, the abstract for this dissertation, and background information on the dissertation research in addition to how the data would be managed so the respondent could make an informed decision that they would like to participate in the interview as well as to allow time for the respondent to contemplate each question and prepare a response, if desired. In this more formalized interview context, the interview agenda planned to follow the order of the interview questions provided so as to promote reliable, comparable data. That said, though, the researcher was also open to follow whichever order the respondent preferred, if they truly had a preference for a legitimate, unforeseen reason and/or the respondent offered new ways of seeing and understanding the topic that was associated with or impacted by the interview question order. Semi-structured interviews took place at a date, time, location and/or manner selected by the respondent with time scheduled specifically to speak with each other about the stated topics of discussion. Semi-structured interviews were recorded via the researcher's iPhone and transcribed using Rev.com online transcription service to enable the researcher to focus on interacting with the respondent about the discussion at hand instead of the note taking. Of the 36 interviews that occurred, 18 were semi-structured interviews.

At the outset of this research, it was conceived that further efforts to submit funding applications would be made after the research phase was complete to see if there was a correlation between grant-proposal writing knowledge and rate of success, but, upon further implementation of the research plan, it was determined by the researcher that there would be a conflict of interest to submit funding applications to the funding agencies that permitted interviews and therefore no additional funding applications were submitted to any funding agency that was affiliated with the data collection.

Data Management

The researcher was responsible for all data management and for implementing and monitoring the data management plan. Adherence to this data management plan during the project period was overseen by the researcher. All data and metadata produced during the course of this project was created, managed, and maintained in a digital format unless necessity required the data to be recorded in a handwritten format. Data was typed initially in Microsoft Word for Mac 2011 and metadata was typed in Microsoft Excel for Mac 2011. Data was organized by aspect of the dissertation research in digital file folders and stored on the researcher's personal computer for the duration of the research period and dissertation development. All digital data was also stored on two external hard drives using Time Machine, a backup software application distributed with the Apple OS X computer operating system. Time Machine backups were saved at minimum twice daily in case of unforeseen issues such as file corruption or computer problems. Digital data management was selected as the best manner in which to control the information generated during this research for its ease of document access, organization, and management. All applicable digital documents were additionally printed and organized by aspect of the dissertation research, along with any hand written field data, in a three-ring binder for ease of reference by the dissertation committee.

The concept of "data" in this project refers to the notes produced from the unstructured observation, non-participant observation, participant observation, informal interview, unstructured interview, and semi-structured interview methods employed in this research (Bernard 2006, Schensul, et al. 1999). Interview and observation field note documentation consisted of mostly descriptions with the use of transcriptions when deemed appropriate (Schensul, et al. 1999). All interview and observation affiliated documents were indexed according to date of occurrence.

The concept of "metadata" in this project refers to all coded information produced during this research project. After all interview field notes were documented, the information was then coded as a means to reduce the data to a more manageable form. Codes are names or symbols used to stand for a group of similar items, ideas, or phenomena that has been noticed in the data (LeCompte and Schensul 1999a). Codes are useful in order to determine the relative frequency of occurrence of items or other phenomena. The coding categories were designated after the data was collected during the interviews so as to not impede the research from being open to new ideas and alternative ways of thinking (LeCompte and Schensul 1999a, Schensul, et al. 1999). Codes for this research were given short names that somewhat abstractly represent the nature of the more concrete items to which they are applied. However, all codes using this naming system were kept at a low level of inference or degree of interpretation, staying very close to the actual concrete description (LeCompte and Schensul 1999a). General types of data information such as background affiliation of respondent's employment and position title were grouped so as to allow the possible answers to be coded by acronyms. When deemed appropriate, descriptive data that involved sensitive issues regarding people's opinions and attitudes were measured as estimates on how strongly one feels or appears to feel about particular events or phenomena (Schensul, et al. 1999). These estimates were recorded on scales expressed in degrees of feeling as a way to express both the direction and the intensity of a person's feeling about or opinions on a specific thing. Scale examples were similar to the following: < = very enthusiastic/excellent, (= moderately enthusiastic/very good, # = neutral/average,) = unenthusiastic/poor, > = very unenthusiastic/very poor (LeCompte and Schensul 1999a, Schensul, et al. 1999). Once the coding system was finalized, the information was represented in a codebook for easy identification. After metadata was coded and represented in the codebook, the research then examined the various collections of codes to see how they related to each other to look for patterns of analysis (Schensul, et al. 1999). This type of pattern level analysis involved organizing related items into higher-order patterns, and then those patterns were organized into more complex structures and eventually linked to theories to help explain their existence (Schensul, et al. 1999:98). To better illustrate this approach, Schensul, et al. (1999) provided the analogy that compiling patterns of analysis are similar to assembling a jigsaw puzzle where the player collects all the pieces with a certain color or design and then assembles to create that portion of the completed jigsaw puzzle picture (Schensul, et al. 1999:98). The analytic techniques that were selected are primarily qualitative techniques that may be measured in a quantitative manner, which attempted to facilitate a broader understanding of grant-proposal writing and the grant-proposal writing process as well as provide for testability to the research hypothesis.

All applicable compiled data and metadata will be preserved and shared thereby allowing others the opportunity to make unbiased analyses through their own interpretation of the interviews conducted during the data collection. The researcher will retain the exclusive right to use all data and metadata collected for this project for a period of one year after the project's completion. The delay in the accessibility of this information is for publication purposes. After the project's completion, all applicable data and metadata files will be converted to PDF format to disallow any alterations of the information, thereby keeping its original integrity preserved as it was intended. Using a PDF format will also allow for ease of accessibility, as it is one of the most commonly used formats in this day and age. Data and metadata compiled during this project may have the potential to be useful and informative to those interested or affiliated with student grant-proposal writing and funding.

Outline of the Dissertation

Chapter Two creates a platform of knowledge regarding grant-proposal writing by providing a solid framework through which students may understand an overview of grant-proposal writing and its associated terminology. The chapter also includes a discourse on a variety of aspects of funding, the grant application process, as well as how to manage the follow-up to a funding application, regardless if an award has been given or not.

Chapter Three examines proposal development and the components of a grant application so as to complement the previously discussed framework in Chapter Two. This chapter describes step-by-step the general process of completing a funding application. Each section discusses key aspects of proposal development. Based on the typical requirements found in most funding request applications, these aspects include: proposal preparation for the research plan, cover letter, title page, table of contents, abstract, executive summary, statement of need, project description, objectives, methods, staffing and administrative needs, evaluation, sustainability, budget and the budget narrative, current and pending support, data management, referenced cited, literature review, biographical sketches, personal statements, as well as other pertinent topics.

Chapter Four builds a holistic understanding of the grant writing process by exploring the grantseeker's role in the grantmaking process, including a discussion on why grantmakers give grants, the grantmaking process, the importance of grantseekers finding the right fit insofar as which funding agencies to consider, as well as the importance of cultivating the relationship between the grantseeker and the grantmaker.

Chapter Five generates significant findings about the art of grant-proposal writing by discussing the craft of grant-proposal writing with an in-depth look at the ideas behind crafting a grant proposal, the genre of grant-proposal writing, and interweaving creative storytelling into the traditional proposal narrative form.

Chapter Six presents 17 tables displaying the feedback and suggestion results from interviews with experts and professionals in the field. This chapter attempts to provide the reader with another dimension to understanding grant-proposal writing by looking at it from the perspective of the funding agency. In doing so, this chapter attempts to assist and encourage the development of skills, knowledge, and attitudes supportive of fostering effective funding applications.

Chapter Seven provides a summary of the findings and a write-up of the conclusions from Chapter Six. The chapter then provides a discussion on the ways in which the research and results have answered the research question as well as how the results relate to the literature. Next, the chapter examines the limitations of the study, offers suggestions for future research, evaluates the broader impacts of this dissertation, and concludes with a summary of the key aspects presented in the dissertation.

Chapter Two: An Overview of Grant-Proposal Writing and Preliminary Concepts

Basic Grant-Proposal Writing Terminology

In creating a platform of knowledge regarding grant-proposal writing, experts and professionals in the field recommend that the first place to start is to ensure that the grantseeker has taken the time to develop an understanding of the essential background knowledge affiliated with grant-proposal writing. One of the most effective methods of building background knowledge is through the acquisition of related vocabulary, also referred to as the lexicon (Marzano 2004, NOAD 2014). Regardless of one's past experience with grant-proposal writing, there is a benefit to improving and clarifying one's knowledge of the affiliated lexicon. For the novice grantseeker, learning the lexicon will be the first step in one's journey to more successful grant-proposal writing. For the experienced grantseeker, it serves to reaffirm one's current knowledge of grant-proposal writing as well as potentially reveal new understandings and interpretations not previously recognized or acknowledged.

A grant is a monetary award given by a grantor, a person or agency that provides funding, to a grantee or grant recipient, a person or organization to whom a grant is made (Browning 2009:10, NOAD 2014). Grants are made possible by grant funding agencies such as small businesses, corporations, governments, foundations, as well as individuals to help support a particular kind of idea or project (Browning 2009:16-17, Foundation Center 2014, NOAD 2014). These agencies may be governmental, public, or private, and some even have variations within different sectors of the same agency (Browning 2009:17). A grant-proposal application—also referred to as a proposal, grant proposal, grant request, funding request, funding application, grant application, or grant submission—is essentially a written statement that pledges that an applicant, a person who makes a formal request for something, will agree to do what has been proposed if the grantor agrees to fulfill the request for funding (Browning 2009:10-11). Grant-proposal writing—also known as proposal writing or referred to in shorthand as grant writing—is the process of creating that funding request and involves either a formal or an informal proposal submitted by an applicant or applicant group to an agency that provides money or funding for a particular purpose, typically called a funding opportunity (NOAD 2014). An agency that provides funding is frequently referred to as a funding agency, funding entity, funder, grantmaker, or grant agency (NOAD 2014).

The Lifecycle of a Grant

The lifecycle of a grant refers to the entire grant process from the initial creation of the funding opportunity to the final close out of the award. The specific actions along this linear lifecycle fall into three distinct phases: pre-award, award, and post-award (Grants.gov 2018). Although the Grant Lifecycle Timeline as discussed by Grants.gov focuses on Federal grants in particular, the concepts described are applicable to grant processes by other funding agencies as well and provide valuable holistic insight into both the roles of the grantmaker and the applicant during the grant process.

In the pre-award phase, the funding agency plans and develops a funding program that is in support of its mission (Grants.gov 2018). The funding agency then formally announces the funding opportunity and invites applicants to submit proposals (Grants.gov 2018). During the pre-award phase, potential applicants seek out funding opportunities for which they are eligible and that seem like a good fit (Grants.gov 2018). Applicants should always check the funding agency's information on the funding opportunity for any additional registration requirements that might be specified, and, depending on the funding agency, applicants may have to register with a third-party database or search tool like Grants.gov (Grants.gov 2018). Applicants should be aware that a grant application may take a while to complete, sometimes several weeks or more, so it is important to allow adequate time to not just complete the application but review and double check for errors as well (Grants.gov 2018). Once an application has been submitted, the funding agency screens the application for eligibility and compliance (Grants.gov 2018). If it the application passes, it is moved forward for consideration as applicable (Grants.gov 2018). Applicants should be aware that the application process is handled differently by each funding agency. Some funding agencies will notify the applicant that the application has been received although many do not (Grants.gov 2018). Some applicants may have the ability to track the status of their application by communicating with the funding agency or may receive status updated from the funding agency, but this will always depend on the application status process of each funding agency (Grants.gov 2018). The application review process takes time and varies greatly on based on the grant type and the funding agency (Grants.gov 2018).

The award phase starts after the review process has been completed and the funding agency notifies applicants if they were selected for award or not (Grants.gov 2018). The funding agency then works with the award recipient(s) to finalize the legal framework for the funding agreement and then disperses the funds (Grants.gov 2018). After an applicant has received the notice of award and the funds from the funding agency, the applicant can begin their project (Grants.gov 2018). The award recipient is responsible for meeting all administrative, financial, and programmatic reporting requirements of the award (Grants.gov 2018).

In the post-award phase—after the funds have been disbursed—a grants management officer at the funding agency will oversee the award recipient's reporting compliance which involves reviewing reports submitted by the awardee, performing on-site visits if applicable, and potentially auditing (Grants.gov 2018). Award recipients typically conduct financial reporting on the overall financial status of the grant project and programmatic reporting on the program performance of the grant project to the funding agency on a regular basis (Grants.gov 2018). Upon completing all of the closeout requirements, including review of the final reports from the awardee, the grant lifecycle comes to an end (Grants.gov 2018).

The grant process should be viewed as a system that is both logical and rational (Brown and Brown 2001:4). Contrary to popular belief, grants are not free money randomly available for the taking (Brown and Brown 2001:4-5). Typically, a funding agency awards a grant because what the applicant has said that they want to do with the funds correlates with what the funding agency states as their mission, goals, and initiatives (5). One way to think about the relationship is that a grant seeking applicant and a grant making funding agency share similar interests but possess different resources (5). Together, as a collaborative partnership, the grant recipient brings to the table the ideas and the capacity for implementation of their ideas and the funding agency brings forth the financial resources necessary to implement those ideas (Foundation Center 2016b, Geever and McNeill 1997:xiv-xv). A grant recipient then can be said to essentially contract, via their proposal, to perform a specified type of work in exchange for the money provided to them by the funding agency (Brown and Brown 2001:5).

The Roles and Responsibilities of a PI

The Principal Investigator (PI) is the primary person in charge of a grant for a research project (Office of Research and Sponsored Programs 2016). The title identifies the individual who is responsible for the conduct of a sponsored project, including its intellectual conduct, fiscal accountability, administrative components, and compliance to regulations and policies (Office of Research and Sponsored Programs 2016). When multiple people choose to take part in these leadership roles and responsibilities, they share the title of Co-Principal Investigators, also known as Co-PIs. According to the University of Montana's Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, even on grant-proposal applications with multiple PIs listed, most universities and agencies require that one individual is designated as the person ultimately responsible for the conduct of the project (2016). If Co-Principle Investigators are named on a grant-proposal application without specifically identifying one of the individuals as the primary PI, the person listed first is considered the PI (Courtesy: National Science Foundation 2014, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs 2016).

In addition to the research project itself, the roles and responsibilities of the PI in the grant process also encompass both pre-award and post-award activities. Pre-award activities include: identifying funding opportunities, understanding the solicitation guidelines, development of the proposal budget, development of the technical proposal content, preparing the proposal for submission, the proposal submission itself, reviewing award terms and conditions, and the decision to accept and/or negotiate the award (Office of Research and Sponsored Programs 2016). Post-award activities include: assuring compliance regulations are upheld; processing personnel documents; processing expenditure documents; initiating, executing, and closing completed subcontracts; reviewing and approving subcontract invoices; preparing program progress reports; monitoring all expenses; reconciling monthly statements; initiating and processing cost transfers; submitting financial status reports and invoices; initiating any requests for modifications and submitting modifications as applicable to the sponsor; completing financial reporting; and submitting the programmatic report (Office of Research and Sponsored Programs 2016).

Many funded projects require some level of committed time or effort that is identified and allocated to the activity to reflect the PI's operation in and oversight of the project (Office of Research and Sponsored Programs 2016). However, typically the application of effort does not apply to any kind of award intended as student augmentation, such as dissertation research, training grants, travel grants, or conference support, and therefore will not be discuss in any further detail for the purposes of this dissertation (Office of Research and Sponsored Programs 2016).

Drafting the Funding Development Plan

Any quest for funding begins with a plan on what one wants to accomplish and what it will take to make that plan successful (Browning 2009:12). Frequently referred to as a funding development plan, this strategic preparation helps the applicant to proactively create a guide for moving through the funding request process (Browning

2009:27). The first step in constructing a funding development plan is to put down in writing any ideas that might potentially relate to the grant-proposal (Browning 2009:27). Brainstorming is a great way to formulate a list that can be reworked into a carefully designed written plan outlining what it will take to accomplish one's goals. In general, a funding development plan should include an assessment of one's funding needs, the funding goals, the funding objectives that have been set to reach the funding goals, an action plan that itemizes what must be done to implement the funding development plan, and some kind of monitoring and evaluation of the funding objectives (Browning 2009:27). A funding development plan not only provides a visual map to what exactly the applicant wants to achieve but also lays out clearly the ways in which the agenda of the funding agency fit within the parameters of the overall goals of the applicant's grant-proposal (Browning 2009:24-25). An effective funding development plan should be flexible, with a perceptive awareness of what is working and what is not within the plan as it develops (Browning 2009:25). This involves taking note of beneficial decisions that were made, constantly updating progress reports, acknowledging and analyzing both the successes and failures, as well as reviewing and revising the plan as deemed necessary (Browning 2009:24). By approaching the funding request process in a systematic manner, an applicant can give thoughtful consideration to selectively decide the best choices to make in order to achieve their goals.

Types of Funding

The next step in constructing a funding development plan is to gain a basic understanding of the different funding available. Every funding agency will specifically delineate the types of funding requests that they will and will not award to applicants, so it is important for all grantseekers to have a clear understanding of the information presented (Browning 2009:12-14). The most common funding types are presented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: **Most common funding types** (Browning 2009:12-14, NOAD 2014, Rosso 2015:3).

Annual Campaigns (Annual Fund Campaigns, Annual Fundraising Campaigns)	Appeals conducted annually for the purpose of raising financial support to be allocated to operating expenses, program expansion, infrastructure improvements, and occasionally one-time-only expenses. Annual Campaigns mainly try to build and develop a base of donors as well as establish habits and patterns of giving by regular solicitation.
Building Funds (Renovation Funds)	Money allocated for "bricks and mortar" projects, such as to construct a new facility or renovate, remodel, or rehabilitate an existing facility.
Capital Support	Funding for major new initiatives beyond usual operating expenses, such as: investing in equipment, materials, computer systems, or collections; expanding, renovating, or building facilities or structures; purchasing a new building or property; as well as creating endowments. Capital campaigns raise funds for specific needs, to be met in a specific time frame, and aim for a specific dollar goal.
Challenge Monies	Financial allocations typically used as leverage to secure additional funds from other foundations and corporations, and as such, these type of funding distributions are contingent upon the applicant's ability to raise additional grant funds from other funding sources.
Conference Funding (Meeting Funding, Seminar Funding, Conference Grants)	Financial support to assist in the expenses relating to of planning, organizing, hosting, or attending a meeting, conference, workshop, or seminar. This type of funding typically covers expenditures that include travel, meals, facility expenses, advertising, printed materials, as well as costs related to hosting a speaker.

Consulting Services Funding	Financial assistance for expenditures related to paying for professional advice and/or training.
Continuation Grants (Continuing Support)	Reference situations in which a former grantee requests for the continuation of financial support to extend beyond the initial budget period from the original funding source from which that grantee had previously received financial assistance.
Endowment	An income or form of property given or bequeathed to someone or something. It is a financial gift awarded with the intention of being invested to provide long-term, permanent investment revenue and ensure a source of financial stability to the recipient.
Fellowship	A merit-based scholarship or specific type of academic financial aid provided to individual graduate and postgraduate students pursuing advanced research to work in specific fields or towards certain agendas. Fellowship funds are awarded to the institution to which the student belongs as opposed to the individual student directly.
Operating Expenses (General Expenses)	Money for general budget expenditures such as equipment, utilities, salaries, fringe benefits, travel, consultants, and other operating costs.
Matching Funds	Grants that are made under the qualifying condition that a set amount of money raised from another funding source must match or exceed the initial amount to be granted before the grant is awarded.
Program Development Grants	Funding allocated to assist with an organization's growth, existing program expansion, or new program development.
Research Money	Money that promotes educational and scientific research by allocating a financial award to the institution to which the individual conducting the research is attending school or employed.
Scholarships	Funding awarded to support a student’s education that may be given directly to the individual based upon academic performance or some other kind achievement.
Seed Money	Seed Money is money allocated to initiate a project.
Technical Assistance Grants	Money provided to cover the costs of improving internal program operations .

These diverse funding types attend to an array of needs, thereby offering a variety of avenues from which to find assistance to achieving one's goals.

Seeking Funding Sources

Once it has been determined what type of funding one is going to request, one can begin the process of looking for viable funding sources and compiling a list of prospects (Foundation Center 2014). As a result of the diverse array of research fields and the fact that funding needs also vary significantly, there is no one-size-fits-all statement that can be made about how to go about the process of identifying potential funders that is applicable for all circumstances (Silverman 1991:485). Grant-proposal writing experts advise that all available information sources should be explored including professors, colleagues, alumni, institutional grant offices, institutional financial aid offices, professional publications, local clubs, etc. (Foundation Center 2016b, Silverman 1991:485).

When researching options for a potential funding source, it is always best to try to understand the ways in which a funding agency describes what their grantmaking interests are and see if those stated interests match up with the goals set forth in one's own funding development plan (Brown and Brown 2001:5, Geever and McNeill 1997:xvii, Silverman 1991:485). It is a waste of both the applicant's and the funding agency's time to apply for funding from a funding agency that does not support the right kind of funding necessary to fulfill the goals of one's plan (Browning 2009:24-32). There are four screening criteria commonly used to determine if a grant opportunity is worthwhile of investing one's time to submit an application (Clarke 2001:11). These criteria are presented in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: **Four commonly used screening criteria** (Clarke 2001:11-15, Foundation Center 2012, Geever and McNeill 1997:xvii).

Subject Area or Academic Discipline	The field(s) of study in which a funding agency is willing to provide financial support.
Geographical Preference	Correlating the geographic region selected for the proposal with a funding agency that is willing to fund in that region.
Type of Financial Needs Served	Confirming that the funding agency provides the desired type of funding assistance that one is seeking.
Range of Financial Allocations Per Award	Verifying that the typical allowance of the funding agency's financial contributions is in line with the proposal's project monetary needs.

An example where the two are not in line would be a proposal requesting $2,000 from a funding agency that the typical award range is $500,000 to $1,000,000 or requesting $10,000 from a funding agency that the typical award range is $250 to $1,000; both instances would be unlikely to yield a successfully funded proposal due to a lack of compatibility (Clarke 2001:15).

Funding opportunities may be researched by means of any variety of media such as: books, magazines, periodicals, newsletters, bulletins, journals, newspapers, social media, the Internet, flyers, written announcements, digital publications, and e-mail listserv notifications, to name only a few (Clarke 2001:19-20). Some grantmakers advertise that they have funding opportunities available while others rely on internal networking communications (Clarke 2001:18-20). Some funding agencies may choose to accept proposals throughout the year, others might decide to implement set deadlines for submissions (Courtesy: National Science Foundation 2014). There are as many possibilities for how a funding opportunity might be managed as there are possible funding agencies to provide awards.

When looking for funding, there are a variety of sources and clearing houses that provide funding opportunities, offering support in a myriad of ways. Resources to help identify potential financial support are most easily grouped into the categories presented in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: **Resources to help identify potential support** (GrantSpace 2016b, Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library 2016).

Government Funding Sources	e.g. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, Community of Science, Federal Grants Wire, Federal Register, FirstGov.gov, Govloans.gov, Grants.gov, and USA.gov.
Non-Governmental Funding Sources	e.g. Foundation Center, GuideStar, and Foundation Directory Online. *NOTE: Foundation Center and GuideStar joined forces in February 2019 to form Candid, a 501(3)c nonprofit organization that aims to connect people who want to change the world to the resources they need to do it. The intention is to bring all of their resources together however access to Foundation Center and GuideStar products and services are still currently available through their respective websites.*
Regional Funding	e.g. Federal Rural Development, Montana Community Foundation, and Philanthropy Northwest.
Journals for Grantseekers	e.g. Chronicle of Philanthropy, the NonProfit Times, Philanthropy News Digest, and Philanthropy News Network Online.

Certain organizations may also be looked to as potential funding sources however these organizations are limited and typically serve a very specific audience or agenda (Foundation Center 2014). Examples of these kinds of organizations are presented in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4: **Potential funding source organizations** (Foundation Center 2016b).

Professional Associations	e.g. American Medical Association and Society for Pharmaceutical Engineers
Clubs and Community Groups	e.g. Elks Club, Kiwanis Club, Lions Club, and Rotary Club
Religious Groups and Congregations	e.g. Disciples of Christ and the Unitarian Universalist Association
Population-Specific Organizations	e.g. The Black Student Fund and The Hispanic Fund
Corporation/Employer Educational Assistance Programs	e.g. Boeing and General Motors

With few exceptions, most funding agencies prefer to award a portion of the applicant's funding needs, as opposed to being the sole provider of the funds (Brown and Brown 2001:12). Those who obtain multiple sources of funding not only benefit by building a diverse base of supporters, but they are less vulnerable to problems that might arise if one's funding source is no longer viable (Foundation Center 2014). Additionally, obtaining multiple sources of funding helps to demonstrate to new prospects that others see merit and value in one's work enough to offer their support (Foundation Center 2014). When compiling a list of other funding sources to submit with one's proposal, some experts and professionals in the field have suggested to separate the list into three sections: grantors that have committed funding; funding entities to whom proposals have been submitted and are still pending consideration; and potential funding agencies to whom one intends to submit a proposal but the process has not yet been completed (Clarke 2001:107).

It should be noted that the potential funding options discussed in this chapter are typically quite competitive because they represent only a small portion of educational funding compared to what is offered by the federal government, which is mostly in the form of student loans (Foundation Center 2014). Although student loans make possible the opportunity to attend post-secondary education, the true costs associated with these federal loan borrowings typically create a less-than-ideal situation for the borrower with a tremendous amount of stress, anxiety, and economic hardship during the repayment period, hence the need for students to improve their knowledge and application readiness for grant-proposal writing to hopefully reduce, if not altogether avoid, this predicament. Statistics show that over 40 million Americans currently carry student loan debt (Berman 2015, Ellis 2014). According to the Quarterly Report on Household Debt and Credit, the national student loan debt surpassed 1.46 trillion in the fourth quarter of 2018 (Center for Microeconomic Data 2019). StartClass, an education data site, created a national student loan debt clock for MarketWatch that estimates that America's student loan debt is growing at approximately $2,726 per second (Berman 2015). While the United States student loan system was created to be an engine to "increase social mobility and invest in our nation's future by ensuring that those without the means of securing a higher education could receive government assistance to attend college," student loans are instead associated with limiting people's ability to achieve financial success and have been reported to have a considerable impact on important life decisions such as choice of career; ability to start a business; and delayed decisions to get married, start a family, purchase a home or new vehicle, or save for retirement (American Student Assistance 2013:2-3).

Foundation Funding

According to GrantSpace, a service of the Foundation Center, a foundation is "a non-governmental entity that is established as a nonprofit corporation or a charitable trust, with a principal purpose of making grants to unrelated organizations, institutions, or individuals for scientific, educational, cultural, religious, or other charitable purposes" (2016a). Foundations have a wide spectrum of subject areas that they support (Foundation Center 2014). Since each foundation has its own funding interests, it is important to find the right match for what one needs (Foundation Center 2014). Private foundations hold an interesting role in philanthropy in that, unlike government agencies, they are not dependent on another authority, so they have the unique ability to respond and adapt quickly to changing community needs as well as the flexibility to reinvent themselves as they see fit (Foundation Center 2014).

One interesting point to bear in mind is when the U.S. government grants a private foundation tax-exempt status, with that comes a payout requirement that requires the private foundation must meet or exceed an annual payout each year for charitable purposes of 5% of the average market value of its net investment assets to avoid paying taxes (GrantSpace 2016a). Private foundations pay that amount in the form of qualifying distributions, which most of time is in the form of grants, although within certain limits, the administrative cost of making grants may also qualify (GrantSpace 2016a). As such, the odds of getting funding in a sense increase in the year that follows when the economy/financial market has been doing good because there is more money that was earned in the endowment, thereby allowing the spending out of the 5% to have more money available to give (Foundation Center 2014).

The 2011 Foundation Center report *Foundation Giving Trends* states that only about 2% of private foundation giving goes to individuals, the other 98% goes to nonprofit organizations that may receive foundation grants and in turn distribute the funds to their own selection of qualified applicants (Foundation Center 2014). To exemplify this point further, according to the 2014 *Key Facts on U.S. Foundation* report, even though education was the top-ranked field in terms of funding priorities and received the largest share of foundation grant dollars, only 4% went to student aid funds. As a result of these kinds of statistics, many grant-proposal writing professionals advise that students should look to foundation funding only after they have exhausted other potential funding sources.

Assessing Funding Needs and Setting Funding Goals, Objectives, and Priorities

One can get a clear and accurate representation of one's true funding needs by creating a straightforward and practical funding assessment of where one stands right now and where one wants to be in "x" period of time (Geever and McNeill 1997:3-4). The assessment needs to include a realistic look at one's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and any potential problems that exist now or might exist in the future (Browning 2009:27-30, Geever and McNeill 1997:3-4). Assessing funding needs and setting funding objectives, goals, and priorities are a crucial part of the grant-proposal writing process. It is vital to the success of the application to begin the process with a clear understanding of what the goal is to be accomplished and the specific means of accomplishing the goal including what resources will be needed to do the job successfully. It is also important to remember that as funding is sought for identified resources, due to the array of funding agendas out there in the grantmaking world, obtaining funding to achieve financial support for each resource may need to come from multiple funding agencies based on agenda compatibility.

Approaching the Grant Application

Once the applicant has created a general plan for what is to be accomplished within the framework of the proposal, narrowed down the types of funding necessary to put the plan into action, and generated a list of potential funding agencies whose grantmaking interests match the applicant's agenda, the next step is to begin the application process (Browning 2009:18). There is no single standardized grant application that is used by all; rather each funding agency has its own unique set of requirements and approach to the process (Foundation Center 2012). Grant applications may entail differing information and they may require it in an array of formats so it is very important to make sure one follows precisely any guidelines set forth by the funding agency for submitting a funding application to that agency (Browning 2009:41, Courtesy: National Science Foundation 2014).

More often than not, the proposal is the only opportunity to communicate with the funding agency (Geever and McNeill 1997:10). As such, it is essential to have the proposal be self-explanatory and succinct, eliminating any wordiness while still retaining the message and key concepts to be conveyed (Geever and McNeill 1997:11-12). The principal message of the proposal must be clear for others to understand regardless if the reviewer has had previous exposure to information applicable to that project or if they are encountering those concepts for the first time (Geever and McNeill 1997:11-12). One way to keep the information easy to comprehend is to write it for the layperson and avoid jargon to promote clarity and mutual understanding (Geever 2012:11). It is important to clearly identify the main point(s) of the proposal as well as any subsequent points to form a solid and concise outline of the pertinent information to be stated and in the most applicable order (Geever and McNeill 1997:11-12). The proposal should not only focus to educate the funding agency about the applicant and the proposed project but must also be well articulated to motivate the funding agency to want to assist that applicant to achieve their goals by awarding the proposal (Geever and McNeill 1997:10). The proposal should be written to be compelling but not overstate the need so much that it sounds dire and unable to be obtained (Geever 2012:11). Additionally, one needs to be realistic about the actual benefit of the proposal's goals within society, the projected outcomes, and the truth about the skill set that the applicant has to accomplish those goals (Geever and McNeill 1997:12-13). A lack of realism not only can impact the likelihood of being funded but also may impact the credibility of the applicant (Geever and McNeill 1997:12).

It stands to reason that the contents of a proposal may be utilized in multiple funding applications so it may be useful to focus initially on creating a comprehensive master proposal that may be later tailored to a specific funding agency's application requirements with minimal overall content change (Geever and McNeill 1997:12). The creation of a master proposal will enable the applicant to work out the details regarding the following key aspects of a proposal: a well-articulated description of the need that the proposal is addressing; the nature of the project and how it will be conducted; the estimated timetable for the project; the anticipated outcomes and how the results will be evaluated; and a reasonable, estimated budget that demonstrates to the funding agency why the expected costs of the project will not be prohibitive to the anticipated outcomes (Geever and McNeill 1997:8-9). Once the proposal is complete, it is a good practice to allow time to step away from it for a short while before it is submitted (Geever and McNeill 1997:14, Geever 2012:13). This will enable the applicant to review the proposal again with fresh objectivity and a mindset to potentially notice any gaps in logic or missing details (Geever and McNeill 1997:14, Geever 2012:13).

While grant-proposal applications will undoubtedly vary in format and composition across funding agencies, there are certain content similarities that exist within a typical grant application package (Brown and Brown 2001:8, Browning 2009:18-19). An applicant who plans to apply to multiple funding sources should expect to become familiar with the following possible components of a grant application package: Cover Letter; Title Page; Table of Contents; Abstract; Executive Summary; Statement of Need; Project Description; Objectives; Methods; Staffing and Administrative Needs; Evaluation; Sustainability; Budget and the Budget Narrative; Current and Pending Support; Data Management Plan; References Cited; Literature Review; Biographical Sketches; and the Personal Statement (Browning 2009:18-19, Geever and McNeill 1997:13, Henson 2004:30-31, Courtesy: National Science Foundation 2014). These various funding application components will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Three.

The Foundation Center's website offers information regarding common grant application formats that have been adopted by groups of grantmakers to allow applicants to "produce a single proposal for a specific community of funders" with the intention of streamlining the grantseeking process (Foundation Center 2016a). Most of these groups are associated geographically either by city, state, or region. According to The United Philanthropy Forum's website (2019), a variety of regions have developed and use

Common Grant Applications, available through their regional associations of grantmakers, as presented in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5: **Regional associations that use Common Grant Applications.**

Arizona Grantmakers Forum
Associated Grant Makers (MA & NH)
Colorado Association of Funders
Connecticut Council for Philanthropy
Council of Michigan Foundations
Council of New Jersey Grantmakers (NJ & NY)
Donors Forum (Chicago area only)
Gateway Center for Giving (MO)
Grantmakers of Western Pennsylvania
Minnesota Council on Foundations
Philanthropy Network Greater Philadelphia
Philanthropy New York (NY & NJ)
Philanthropy Northwest
Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers (DC Metro)
Wisconsin Philanthropy Network

Applicants should always confer with the funding agency to verify that they will accept a common grant application, if any additional supporting materials are required, as well as to see if they would prefer a letter of inquiry in advance of receiving a proposal (Foundation Center 2016a, Philanthropy Northwest 2016). Applicants should also check whether the funding agency has a deadline for proposals and if the funding agency requires multiple copies of the proposal for their review process (Foundation Center 2016a).

An effective proposal collects the information to be presented, assembles it into an understandable framework, and conveys the information to the funding agency in the proper format (Browning 2009:130-131). During the process, the applicant must decide which data best supports the main point(s) of the proposal in addition to verifying the accuracy and relevance of that information (Geever and McNeill 1997). As things move forward, it is important to bear in mind that the plans set forth in one’s proposal are not necessarily set in stone—ideas regarding approach and implementation might change based on feedback and the experience one gains through the implementation process (Geever and McNeill 1997).

Of great importance is that the proposal addresses all aspects of the review criteria set forth in the funding agency's grant application guidelines (Browning 2009:18-19). Additionally, it is important to take note of any writing requirements and pay close attention to sections that describe how the reviewers will be rating or assessing the different components of the proposal (Browning 2009:133). If the proposal is written in a manner that caters to the review criteria in terms of format and proposal content, it will increase the applicant’s likelihood for a successful proposal.

Although there are many aspects to grant seeking that are out of the applicant’s ability to control, there are particular elements of the process over which one does have command, such as, how one organizes their grant seeking efforts, which funding agency one submits an application to, how the applicant relates to that funding agency, what information is presented in the application, how information is presented in the application, and what the applicant learns from their experiences in the grant-proposal writing process (Brown and Brown 2001:7). As previously mentioned, while the specific requirements of each grant-proposal application will vary to some degree, for the most part grant-proposals typically contain similar elements and the application process is relatively predictable in that each application will require the applicant to respond to a group of questions that require details about who the applicant is, what the applicant wants to accomplish, and how they plan to accomplish their goal if they are awarded funding (Brown and Brown 2001:6-8).

It is important to align the applicant's strengths with the funding agency's goals (Henson 2004:15). By emphasizing the applicant's own strengths, it is possible to utilize those strengths to convince the funding agency of the superiority of one's particular approach in meeting the goals of their agency, in contrast to any competing applicants (Henson 2004:15-16). In order to convey this information efficiently and effectively, an applicant must be very familiar with not just their goals but also the nature of the funding agency, such as the funding agency's mission, the types of projects funded, the range of dollars allocated to projects, and the kinds of projects that are never funded (Henson 2004:15-16). In order to build on one's strengths, one must first acknowledge them and the degree to which one is willing to work for them to improve (Henson 2004:17). Examples of applicant strengths might include the types of experience one has had, recognized known limitations of the applicant, and personal characteristics that promote the applicant's aptitude to be well suited for the proposed project (Henson 2004:16). One can also emphasize the strengths of the applicant's institution or community by incorporating resources available to support the project and any special needs of the institution or community that are in alignment or could be addressed by the proposed project (Henson 2004:16).

Before submittal, it is very important to evaluate one's proposal for brevity, clarity, and accuracy (Henson 2004:31-32). The applicant should reaffirm that each element requested in the grant application guidelines is accounted for as well as verify that there are no grammatical or mathematical errors (Henson 2004:32). Grant-proposal writing experts and professionals in the field recommend utilizing application checklists, which may be provided by the funding agency or created by the applicant using the grant application announcement (Browning 2009:71, Henson 2004:30). Checklists allow for a chance to double check that every component included in the proposal is properly addressed as instructed by the grant application guidelines (Browning 2009:71, Henson 2004:30-32). The key to any successful grant-proposal is adequate preparation which entails planning ahead and allowing sufficient time to research and gather information, write and revise, as well as some flexibility for unexpected delays or unforeseen problems (Clarke 2001).

Understanding the Peer Review Process

As previously mentioned, once submitted to the funding agency, the next step in the journey of the grant application is some sort of assessment of the proposal to determine if it is a potential candidate for receiving an award. Public and private funding agencies that provide funding assistance for students attending postsecondary education may have different processes in place to review the applications, however, the most common practice for federal funding organizations is peer review. It is important to gain an understanding of the peer review process because these reviewers are what compose the audience for this genre of scholarly and scientific writing, "Thinking about that audience—and about the kinds of expectations, concerns, hopes, and unspoken assumptions it might bring to these readings—can be very useful in developing a proposal." (Brenneis 2011:3). The next few paragraphs will provide a general overview of how the peer review process works although it should be noted that not all peer review processes follow every step as detailed below.

Peer review is an academic process in which peers evaluate and rank the work of other researchers, typically in affiliation with awarding funding to potential new research projects (Courtesy: National Science Foundation 2014). The peer review process consists of a panel of individuals who have been deemed to possess the applicable scientific, academic or work experience and/or educational credentials within the relevant field to read, analyze, and rate the merit of funding proposals (NOAD 2014). Since the evaluators work in the same field as the applicant and therefore are considered the applicant's peers, as opposed to a program officer, the process is called a peer review (Browning 2009:133).

In most cases, the process starts with the program officer selecting the screeners and panel members (Lamont 2009:28). The program officer is also responsible for facilitating interactions as well as directing and communicating with the screeners and panel members throughout the process, communicating with the applicants, supervising the distribution of proposals as well as the panel deliberations, diffusing tensions, and setting the overall tone of the panels (Lamont 2009:28-29). The screeners evaluate the applications and those scores and comments are used to eliminate about half of the total number of proposals (Lamont 2009:28). The applications that move forward are then sent to the peer review panel for continued consideration as finalists (Lamont 2009:39). Each reviewer on the panel assigns a ranking or score of some kind to each proposal reviewed and additionally assesses the proposal's strengths and weaknesses (Browning 2009:133, Lamont 2009:39-40). Frequently, panelists are allowed around a month or so to undergo this part of the process (Lamont 2009:39). The reviewers then convene and meet generally for a day or two to discuss the proposals (Lamont 2009:45). At that time, the reviewers are provided the rules of deliberation by the program officer which include rules that specify whether the panel operates by consensus or voting as well as whether all proposals, even those with low ratings, will be discussed (Lamont 2009:45-46). Under the constraints of the mechanics of peer review, the panel members discuss their conclusions and provide funding recommendations to the program officer (Lamont 2009:45-46). It is common for the entire application review process from first submittal by the applicant to the final decision notification to take between three to six months, depending on the funding agency and number of proposals submitted for consideration (Browning 2009:133, Courtesy: National Science Foundation 2014).

During the process, reviewers will typically evaluate a proposal's merit to look for answers to questions like the following: What is being studied? Who is being studied? Why is this topic being studied? What is the significance of the study? What kind of approach does the applicant take? What are the epistemological implications of the study? Is the study timely? (Lamont 2009:4-10). Typically, reviewers receive guidance on the goals of the funding competition and the criteria that should be considered. Criteria of evaluation frequently used by funding agencies during the peer review process include: clarity, originality, intellectual significance, social significance, methods, quality, and feasibility (Lamont 2009:27). While these criteria are important to keep in mind, it should be noted that the evaluation process is not straightforward, nor is it consistent, and the weight of criteria not only changes depending on the reviewer, but also may change within the mind-set of the same reviewer as they develop their own method of evaluation, assess the pool of applicants, and reevaluate their rankings to account for the way that different proposals “shine under very different lights” (Lamont 2009:42-43).

Reviewers generally do not receive formal training with regard to what is to be evaluated, nor are they given a precise meaning of the selection criteria to be used or each criterion’s specified weight (Lamont 2009:43). As such, in working through this process, the reviewers may differ in their definitions of quality and excellence (Lamont 2009:41-42). There will also be differences of opinion colored by cognitive, social, and emotional influences as the reviewers draw from their own expertise and background (Lamont 2009:48-49). As a result, reviewers will inevitably—albeit unintentionally—apply different interpretations and standards to different proposals (Lamont 2009:1-3, 39-42). It is in this light that many grant-proposal writing experts and professionals in the field assert that proposals “do not all win or lose for the same reasons” (Lamont 2009:42).

Managing the Follow-up

After the grant application has been submitted, it is usually helpful for the applicant to develop some kind of tracking system to keep track of what was submitted, what funding agency was it submitted to, the status of the application, as well as records of any correspondence that might have taken place between the applicant and the funding agency as the proposal proceeds through the application process (Browning 2009:270-271). Regardless of the outcome, it is important for the applicant to assume responsibility for taking the next step (Geever and McNeill 1997:xviii). If the proposal was not selected for award, the applicant should follow-up with the funding agency to find out why the proposal was not funded and what feedback or suggestions might they offer to improve the proposal. That feedback will enable the applicant to plan out how to rewrite the proposal for submittal for the next award cycle or to another funding agency. It is important to realize that rejection is a part of learning how to write a successful proposal (Henson 2004). Just because an applicant was turned down one year, does not mean that one should not reapply. The reason for the rejection may not have to do with the merit or quality of the application (Foundation Center 2012). However, before another application is submitted, it will be valuable to find out why the application was turned down so as to assess the fundability of the next application and revise as applicable (Foundation Center 2012). If the proposal is awarded, the applicant needs to immediately extend their appreciation to the funding agency and say thank you (Brown and Brown 2001:156-157, Geever and McNeill 1997:127). It is equally as important for the grant recipient to make follow-up communications with the funding agency with any updates, reports, or requested documents. Effective communication will let the funding agency know that the money is appreciated and that it has been put to good use and is making a difference in a tangible way (Brown and Brown 2001:156-157).

To further explore the key concepts associated with grant-proposal writing, Chapter Three examines proposal development in greater detail and provide an overview of the potential components that applicants may expect to find as part of a grant application package.

Chapter Three: Proposal Development and Components of the Grant Application

Constructing Fundable Proposals

In continuing to improve one's grant-proposal writing knowledge and application readiness, experts and professionals in the field assert that it is very important for the applicant to gain a greater understanding of proposal development and the components that one might find associated with a grant application package for the simple reason that the contents of any given grant application will likely vary depending on the funding agency. While some funding agencies will put out Requests For Proposals (RFPs) that state exactly what components should be included in a grant application, others do not specify and may leave determining what to include to appear somewhat subjective (Henson 2004:20).

According to Sydel Silverman, former President of the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, there are "particular skills involved in constructing 'fundable' proposals that, like other cultural practices, can be learned" (Silverman 1991:485). The focus of this chapter is help students continue to obtain these skills by providing another framework—complementary to Chapter Two's discussion—through which students may understand proposal development and the common components of a grant application with which an applicant should be familiar, including: Cover Letter; Title Page; Table of Contents; Abstract; Executive Summary; Statement of Need; Project Description; Objectives; Methods; Staffing and Administrative Needs; Evaluation; Sustainability; Budget and the Budget Narrative; Current and Pending Support; Data

Management; References Cited; Literature Review; Biographical Sketches; and the Personal Statement.

Cover Letter

The value of a cover letter is that it clarifies in a manner that is straightforward and easy to comprehend the ways in which the applicant's proposal specifically matches with the mission and goals of the funding agency (Brown and Brown 2001:9, Clarke 2001:103). Experts and professionals in the field state that the cover letter is a key element of the grant application package in that frequently decisions to either consider or immediately reject a proposal are based on the content and compelling nature of this document (Geever and McNeill 1997:86). Typically only one page in length, a cover letter should always be clear and concise (Clarke 2001:102). It should contain an explanation of why the applicant has selected to approach this particular funding agency; the ways in which the applicant's request fits within the funding agency's goals, mission, and priorities; the specific amount of funding requested; a mention of any previous discussions the applicant has had with the funding agency regarding the proposal; an explanation of the project; a brief description of the contents of the application package being submitted; as well as the contact information of the applicant (Clarke 2001:103, Geever 2012:99, Geever and McNeill 1997:87-88). It is also beneficial to indicate in the cover letter the applicant's willingness to answer any questions or provide additional information, if requested (Clarke 2001:103, Geever and McNeill 1997:88). The cover letter should always close with the applicant expressing appreciation to the funding agency for considering the proposal as well as thanking them for their time (Clarke 2001:103).

Title Page

Also referred to as a cover page or cover sheet, the title page demonstrates the professionalism of the applicant, enables quick and easy identification of specific information to the reviewer, and protects the proposal (Geever 2012:103, Geever and McNeill 1997:93). Although most funding agencies have specific requirements for the title page, usually it is one page in length and will include at minimum the project's title, the name and contact information of the applicant submitting the proposal, name of the student's institution, and the date of the proposal's submittal (Geever and McNeill 1997:94, Henson 2004:21). The title page may also list the amount of funding requested (Geever and McNeill 1997:94).

The proposal's title should always be relevant and descriptive to what the project is about and additionally should mean something if it is to be effective (Geever 2012:106). Experts and professionals in the field advise that the title should be original and should not try to be cute or intend to be a pun as it may be perceived by the funding agency that "the proposal is not a serious attempt to solve a real problem" (106). When responding to a Request for Proposal (RFP), it is important to ensure that the title of the proposal also reflects in some way the funding agenda stated by the funding agency (Henson 2004:24). If there is no RFP available, experts suggest checking the mission statement of the funding agency and pulling keywords from their mission to use in the proposal's title, literally relating key concepts in the proposal to the major concerns and goals of the targeted funding agency (24).

Table of Contents

Although not necessary for shorter submittals, any proposal five pages or more in length should typically include a table of contents (Geever 2012:108). The table of contents is a visual tool that is comprised of a list of the sections organized in the same order in which they appear, with page numbers indicating where each section can be located (NOAD 2014). The table of contents clarifies to the reviewer where to find specific pieces of information in the proposal as well as provides an overview of what is included at a glance (Geever and McNeill 1997:96-97). As with all aspects of proposal preparation, it is important to double-check one's work in creating the table of contents to avoid overlooking an item and therefore appearing careless or disorganized to the proposal reviewers (Henson 2004:25). Experts advise that not all funding applications will require a table of contents, regardless of the page length, reiterating the importance of continually referring to the grant application guidelines offered by the funding agency for what to include in the grant application package (25). Lastly, some grant application packages that are submitted online through a web application may automatically generate a table of contents for the proposal; in these instances, applicants should be aware that they might not be able to edit this type of table of contents during the submittal process (Courtesy: National Science Foundation 2014).

Abstract

An abstract is a short summary description of an academic paper such as a research article, thesis or dissertation, review, conference proceeding, or funding proposal (NOAD 2014). Instead of a condensed version of the full proposal, in the context of a grant application package, the abstract is intended to provide a neutral overview and should contain highlighted features relating to reasons for submittal, important goals and objectives of the proposal, and unique qualities of the proposal that may set apart it from all of the others (Henson 2004:24-25, NOAD 2014). Oftentimes, an abstract will have restrictions in length or word-count set by the funding agency to promote brevity (Henson 2004:24). An abstract is a useful component of the grant application package to help the reviewers make a quick assessment of the proposal so as to decide whether or not to move forward reading the entire document (Henson 2004:24, NOAD 2014). Once again, not all funding applications will require an abstract so, as always, it is important to refer to the grant application guidelines or Request for Proposal for specific instructions (Henson 2004:24). Some experts and professionals in the field recommend that proposals longer than two or three pages should potentially include an abstract if given the choice, even if including an abstract is not mentioned in the funding agency guidelines at all (24). Once the abstract has been drafted, it is a good practice to cross-reference the proposal's goals as stated in the abstract with that of the targeted funding agency to make certain that the funding request is both suitable and appropriate (24).

Executive Summary

The executive summary, sometimes referred to as the project summary, can be thought of as a miniature version of the proposal that essentially may be read in place of the longer document (Courtesy: National Science Foundation 2014, NOAD 2014). It provides the reviewer with a brief summarization of all of the proposal's key information (NOAD 2014). Although similar, most funding agencies differentiate to say that the executive summary is not the same as an abstract, however there are some instances in the grantmaking world where the two words are used interchangeably so always refer back to the guidelines of the funding agency to clarify any potential confusion regarding their choice of language and associated expectations (Courtesy: National Science Foundation 2014).

The executive summary is important because it enables the funding agency to quickly determine if the proposal falls within the parameters of their funding agenda and, if well written, ideally will encourage further reading of the proposal (Geever 2012:15). The executive summary should be written with minimal jargon so the layperson can understand its subject matter. Additionally, the executive summary should be informative to others, especially those who work in either the same field or related fields of study (Courtesy: National Science Foundation 2014). Typically written in the third person perspective, an executive summary should not exceed one page in length and should include at minimum the following elements: a brief statement of the problem or need that will be addressed; a short description of the project including the purpose of the project for which support is being requested, what will take place, who will benefit, how the project will work, where it will take place, the duration of the project, as well as who will be involved through the course of the project from beginning to completion; a request for a specific amount of funding, including an explanation of the funding requirements for the proposed project as well as future plans for subsequent funding and/or sustainability; and finally, a statement supporting the applicant's capacity to implement the proposal's plan (Courtesy: National Science Foundation 2014, Geever 2012:15). The executive summary may also include a statement of planned objectives and the corresponding methods that delineate the specific activities that will take place to achieve those objectives (Courtesy: National Science Foundation 2014). Most experts and professionals in the field recommend that applicants may find it easier to write the executive summary last, after all other aspects of the proposal have been clearly expressed and identified, so as to better emphasize and reiterate the key points and arguments already discussed at length in the rest of the proposal (Geever 2012:16).

Statement of Need

Also known as the problem statement or the situational analysis, the statement of need demonstrates why the proposed project is necessary and what problem will be remedied by the project if it is awarded funding (Geever 2012:19). Whereas the executive summary could be considered to be more of a selling piece to convince the reviewer that an applicant's project should be funded, the intended purpose of the statement of need section of the proposal is to educate (15,19). The statement of need incorporates all pertinent facts, evidence, and arguments in a logical sequence that support the need for the project (Geever 2012:19, Geever and McNeill 1997:19-20). In doing so, the statement of need also begins the process of building the applicant's case and telling their story

(Geever 2012:26). In crafting the statement of need, the applicant should consider the following: which facts, evidence, and/or statistics best support the project; how to demonstrate that the implementation of this project will result in benefits to others that they may not otherwise receive; how to not to overstate the need as dire or be overly emotional but still discuss the need as important and/or critical; whether the situation being addressed will be applicable and beneficial to other communities and could potentially be put forward to serve as a model; how to demonstrate that this project can address this need better than any other project presented without being demeaning or condescending of others; how might this project complement the work of others without any duplication of what has already been done; and whether this project could benefit by collaborating with others (Geever 2012:19-21). It is important in a statement of need to emphasize the needs of those being served, not the needs of the applicant (Geever 2012:22). One way to think about it is that it is not the absence of the implementation of one's project that is the problem; rather, the implementation of one's project should be offered as a way to solve a problem that already exists (Geever 2012:22).

Project Description

The statement of need sets the stage to educate the reviewer about the problem; the project description then follows to discuss the solution (Geever 2012:26). The project description addresses what the applicant wants to do, why the applicant wants to do it, how the applicant plans to do it, how the applicant will know if they succeed, and what benefits could occur if the project is successful (Courtesy: National Science Foundation 2014). Grant-proposal writing experts and professionals in the field recommend incorporating the elements of objectives, methods, staffing and administrative needs, evaluation, and sustainability within the project description. (Geever 2012:27). These elements—which will be discussed in further detail subsequently in this chapter—interconnect in that the objectives and methods directly influence the staffing and administrative needs for a project and any evaluation to assess the results of that project in turn also reflects back on the objectives and methods implemented (Geever 2012:27). In addition, a project may bring about sustainability as a result of its success and by its ability to attract others to offer support because of that success (Geever 2012:27). The project description should elaborate on the purpose, planning, and intention that exists behind each of the project's activities with a clear, detailed account of the methods and procedures to be employed and an explanation as to why the applicant selected those methods and procedures as the best choice to accomplish their goals (Courtesy: National Science Foundation 2014).

Furthermore, the project description should state the expected significance of the proposed work, the relevance of the project's long-term goals, and what the project will contribute to contemporary knowledge and current debates in the applicable field of study (Courtesy: National Science Foundation 2014). Some funding agencies recommend that the project description specifically address ideas relating to the intellectual merit of the proposed activity as well as the broader impacts that will result if the proposal is selected for funding (Courtesy: National Science Foundation 2014). Broader impacts may be achieved through the research itself or through activities that are supported by the project and should contribute to the achievement of societally relevant outcomes (Courtesy: National Science Foundation 2014). Discussions regarding broader impacts might touch on how funding of the project's activities will disseminate results to enhance knowledge within scientific and technological arenas; further the progress of research and educational goals that involve teaching, training, and learning incorporated into objectives to advance discovery and understanding; improve the quality of research and educational infrastructures, in particular networks, partnerships, facilities, and the development of instrumentation; demonstrate augmentation of participation and/or opportunities for underrepresented and minority groups; and/or prove to be beneficial to the local community and general public (Courtesy: National Science Foundation 2014). It is important to bear in mind that one's proposed plan as presented in the project description may be subject to change based on feedback or as a result of experience gained through the project's implementation (Geever and McNeill 1997:27). As such, if awarded funding, it is crucial for the applicant to stay in communication with the funding agency to ensure that they approve and support any changes in the applicant's approach (Geever and McNeill 1997:27).

Objectives

A goal is the object of a person's ambition or effort, an aim or desired result (NOAD 2014). In a grant-proposal, goals are a futuristic way of describing where the applicant wants the project to be after the end of the funding (Browning 2009:31). Objectives are the measurable outcomes or benchmarks of a project that must be undertaken to achieve one's goal (Browning 2009:31, Geever 2012:27). Objectives also help to delineate one's methods (Geever 2012:27). Whereas goals tend to be more conceptual and abstract, objectives need to be clearly defined or identifiable, specific, concrete, measurable, and achievable within the specified time frame set forth in the proposal (Geever and McNeill 1997:28). In the proposal, every goal must be supported by at least one objective (Browning 2009:31). It is important for the applicant to explain why each objective was selected and how achievement of that objective will help to ensure the goal will be reached (Browning 2009:31). Experts and professionals in the field recommend that each objective should be syntactically framed as a brief statement that contains an action verb written in either present or future tense (Henson 2004:26). As part of the interconnectedness of these elements of the proposal, the type(s) of objectives that the applicant develops for their project will determine the kind of evaluation conducted (Geever 2012:28). Objective types are frequently classified as behavioral, performance, process, or product orientated: behavioral objectives presume a human action will occur; performance objectives anticipate a behavior will happen within a specified period of time; process objectives refer to the manner in which something takes place; and lastly, product objectives are the creation of tangible items as the final result or outcome of an activity or process (Geever 2012:28). An applicant may choose to use of one or more of these objective types within their proposal depending on the nature of their goal(s) in the project (Geever and McNeill 1997:29). In writing a grant-proposal, it is very important that objectives are not only well written and straightforward in how they support the goal but also realistic since these objectives must actually be accomplished within the time specified in the proposal if the applicant is awarded funding (Geever 2012:30).

Methods

Before beginning this section, it is important to clarify some terminology that is occasionally confused by students: a method is defined as a particular form of procedure for accomplishing or approaching something; a methodology is defined as a system of methods used in a particular area of study or activity (NOAD 2014). As with all aspects of grant-proposal writing, applicants need be sure that they fully understand what is being requested by the funding agency before drafting an answer. Any confusion over terminology should always be clarified with the funding agency since, as previously mentioned, definitions may vary.

The objectives section of the proposal explains to the funding agency what will be achieved by the project during the award period; the methods section describes the specific activities that will take place to achieve those objectives (Geever 2012:31). The methods section of the proposal should include all of the strategies and activities that the applicant will utilize, the personnel who will be employed to carry out the work, and the resources that will be utilized in order to achieve the proposal's objectives (Clarke 2001:65). Resources might include anything such as money, materials, staff, office space, or even available time to invest in the project (Clarke 2001:65, NOAD 2014). Every objective discussed in the proposal will need to identify one or more method that will accomplish that objective. Experts and professionals in the field recommend dividing the methods section into discussions addressing the subsections of "how," "when," and "why" (Geever and McNeill 1997:31).

"How" refers to providing a detailed description of what will occur from the very beginning of the project to the time of its completion (Geever and McNeill 1997:31). The methods discussed should always correspond with the objectives and should be presented in a logical sequence to ensure the reviewer has a clear understanding of each method's relevance to achieving the objective (Geever and McNeill 1997:34). One way to move through this process is to first describe the objective and then enumerate the method(s) that will make that objective viable and attainable (Geever and McNeill 1997:34). Just as with the objectives, the methods must be realistic as well as doable in order for the argument to be convincing to the funding agency (Geever and McNeill 1997:35).

"When" presents a timeline for the tasks and activities that will need to take place for the objectives to be achieved during the specified project period (Clarke 2001:68, Geever and McNeill 1997:35, Henson 2004:27). The timeline should lay out the different stages of the project, starting in chronological order, from the first implementation phase to the final plans to disseminate information and should include specific beginning and end dates for all phases of the project (Clarke 2001:68, Henson 2004:27). Mapping out the sequence of this information in a timeline format will enable the reviewer to "visualize the implementation of the project" at a glance (Geever and McNeill 1997:39). Depending on the purpose of the funding requested, it may also prove beneficial to extend the timeline beyond project completion to demonstrate plans for project sustainability for the time period after the award (Henson 2004:27-28). In planning to create a detailed timeline, the applicant needs to organize the information by time period (e.g. weeks or months) and should include only the most pertinent information laid out in a format that is clear and easy to understand (Clarke 2001:68). One method of organization that some grant experts and professionals suggest using are bullet points for the objectives with their corresponding methods listed numerically under each stated objective to help ensure the information represented is straight and to the point, presenting a clear and concise visual road map to the reviewer (Clarke 2001:68).

"Why" explains to the reviewer for what reason(s) the chosen methods were deemed to be the best ones for this particular project to obtain the anticipated desired outcomes (Clarke 2001:66, Geever and McNeill 1997:39). Frequently illustrated with examples of other similar projects that have been successful and/or expert testimony, this discussion helps to demonstrate to the funding agency that this project is being approached in a well thought out manner (Geever and McNeill 1997:39).

Staffing and Administrative Needs

In the context of student grant-proposal writing knowledge and application readiness, assessing staffing and administrative needs may not always seem applicable. However, this exploration is important to help the applicant to fully analyze their proposed plan to see what will be necessary to make the project successful. Staff can refer to volunteers, consultants, as well as anyone who will be paid for their services during the project (Geever 2012:39). Staffing and administrative needs should include: the number of staff included in the project; each staff member's applicable qualifications in terms of practical experience, level of expertise, and education background; and the tasks in which each staff member will be involved (Geever 2012:39). Detailing these needs also allows the applicant to demonstrate both a clear understanding and sense of responsibility for the project's financial management, project outcomes, and reporting (Geever 2012:43). Additionally, an applicant should be sure to explain anything that may be deemed unusual about the proposed staffing and administrative needs for the project to avoid any questions that might arise during the review process later (Geever 2012:39).

Evaluation

Any discussion of methods should also incorporate evaluation measures to ascertain the effectiveness of the project's activities toward achieving those desired objectives (Geever 2012:49). At minimum, an evaluation plan should convey to the reviewer what the applicant wants to learn from the project experience and how they will use the information to improve and sustain the project (Long and Orosz 2003:3). It is important to have a strategy for evaluation built into the proposal and not just added after the project has been completed (Geever and McNeill 1997:43). It is also important to match the scope and complexity of the evaluation plan accordingly to that of the project (Geever 2012:50). For example, an applicant seeking funding to conduct a scientific experiment will need a more detailed evaluation plan that an applicant seeking funding to purchase iPads for a classroom (Geever 2012:50-51). Consequently, the length of discussion regarding the evaluation plan may be only one or two paragraphs or it may be one or two pages depending on the nature of the project and the purpose of the funding request (Geever 2012:50). The applicant should select an evaluation that measures the process or the product, or potentially both (Geever and McNeill 1997:47). Either approach will require explaining the ways in which evaluation information will be collected, how the data will be analyzed, who will analyze the data, as well as the anticipated outcomes and impact of the project on its intended target audience (Geever 2012:53).

Nationally recognized author, lecturer, and founder of a development consultant firm, Jane C. Geever notes “evaluation in the context of grantmaking derives from the social sciences. As such, it has specific vocabulary associated with it.” (Geever 2012:49). For example, qualitative evaluation methods include interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, notes compiled by observers, and surveys (Geever 2012:52). In contrast, quantitative evaluation methods, which are numerical in nature, are used to generate statistics that demonstrate the effectiveness of the project (Geever 2012:52). Using data gathered from both qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods, the applicant should aim to answer as many of the following questions as possible: Did the desired outcomes occur? If so, did they occur as a direct result of the project’s implementation? Were the strategies that were implemented the best options or would different strategies be more effective? Will the impacts of the project’s implementation be noticeable to the target audience? Will the impacts of the project’s implementation be long lasting? (Geever 2012:53). Experts and professionals in the field also recommend that the best evaluation strategies take into account both objective and subjective data that contributes to both the applicant and funding agency learning something beneficial from the project’s implementation (Geever 2012:49).

Sustainability

While some grants are awarded on a one-time only basis to address a specific question or conduct research, others may carry the expectation that the funded project will continue after the original award period is over (Riggs 2012:1). Since most funding agencies do not want to take on any projects that require a permanent funding commitment, sustainability can play a very important role in convincing a funding agency to award one's proposal (Geever 2012:44). Sustainability refers to "the continuation of a project's goals, principles, and efforts to achieve desired outcomes" (Riggs 2012:2). If a project is not intended to be finite with specified start and end dates, the applicant should be prepared to present a well-thought-out continuation plan which describes strategies for long-term financial viability depending on the nature of the project (Long and Orosz 2003:3). Experts and professionals in the field recommend that one way for an applicant to demonstrate plans for sustainability is to include a list of current and prospective funding among the attachments to a proposal, so long as including the attachment is considered allowable under the funding agencies guidelines (Geever 2012:44).

If the nature of the project requires a detailed description of what services and activities will be planned, what resources will be needed, or what is going to be needed to manage activities after the award period is over, the applicant should bear in mind that not all the activities of the project need to be sustained, only the ones that are intended to achieve the project's desired outcomes (Riggs 2012:2). Most funding agencies agree that sustainability is not about continuing the project "as is" but rather "making sure that the goals of the project continue to be met through activities that are consistent with the current conditions and resources that are available" (Riggs 2012:2-3).

Budget and the Budget Narrative

The project description details the proposal in words, the budget echoes that same description but with numbers (Geever 2012:61). A budget is a financial plan entailing the amount of money needed for a purpose that includes an estimate of income and expenditures for a set period of time (NOAD 2014). Unless otherwise specified, most grant applications require information pertaining to a budget for each year of support requested. A budget may be as simple as a list of projected expenses or may be more detailed and complex utilizing a spreadsheet with notes explaining various line items (Geever 2012:61). It is very important that the applicant ensures that the budget includes all of the estimated costs associated with a proposal's request. Experts and professionals in the field further advise that a budget that is well thought out will add significantly to the reviewer's understanding of the project (Geever and McNeill 1997:49).

In preparing the budget, it is useful to review one's proposal and make a list of all of the costs related to the operation of the project, categorized initially into personnel and non-personnel budget items (Geever 2012:61). Costs should then be grouped into subcategories; for example, personnel subcategories might include salaries, benefits, and consultants whereas non-personnel subcategories might include budget items like travel and equipment (Geever and McNeill 1997:51). Additional subcategories that might be applicable include: office supplies, meeting expenses, office space expenses, stipends, honorariums, meals/per diem, storage rental, lab fees, fuel, vehicle rental, vehicle maintenance, insurance, and membership dues; although it should be noted that applicants should feel free to use non-standard subcategories as well provided that they are consistent with the project (Geever and McNeill 1997:52).

In a similar fashion, almost every kind of cost associated with a project can be designated as either a direct cost or an indirect cost (NOAD 2014). Direct costs are services or activities that benefit a specific project, such as staff salaries or required materials (NOAD 2014). Direct costs are easily traced "directly" to a certain project so these kinds of costs can be annotated on an itemized basis (NOAD 2014). Some examples of direct costs for a project include: salaries and wages for any project personnel, project administrative and/or clerical salaries and wages, fringe benefits, consultant services, project materials and supplies, publications, participant support, training, and travel expenses (NOAD 2014). Indirect costs, also known as overhead costs or Facilities & Administration (F&A), are expenses incurred that are not directly accountable to a particular project or activity such as those pertaining to general operation or administration (NOAD 2014). Examples of indirect costs include: rent; utilities, such as light, heat, and power; general use supplies; fuel costs; use of office and/or laboratory space and equipment; maintenance; janitorial services; security; legal services; and telecommunications expenses (NOAD 2014). Some costs can be either charged directly or allocated indirectly depending on the particular purpose of the expense, for instance, postage, printing, computer use, telephone charges, labor costs, or miscellaneous office supplies like paper and ink toner (NOAD 2014). The institution to which the PI belongs typically will have some kind of cost determination guidelines regarding these matters.

The budget narrative, also known to as the budget justification, explains the need for the cost as well as how the costs were estimated (Geever and McNeill 1997:55). In a budget narrative, each budget line item and amount are fully documented and justified in the sense of being "necessary, reasonable, allocable, and allowable" under the funding agency policies and the program solicitation (Courtesy: National Science Foundation 2014). The budget narrative also explains any unusual line items (Geever and McNeill

1997:55). Even if a budget is required in the grant application package, not all proposals require a budget narrative. The grant application guidelines will state whether or not to include a budget narrative as well as what allowable expenses might be funded under that particular proposal (Geever and McNeill 1997:55). Applicants should be aware that they might need to approach multiple funding agencies in order to obtain funding for all of the items in their budget.

Current and Pending Support

Many grant applications request information on any current and pending support for ongoing projects and proposals (Courtesy: National Science Foundation 2014). All current project support from State, Federal, local or foreign government agencies, private or public foundations, industrial or other commercial organizations must be included in this section (Courtesy: National Science Foundation 2014). In addition to the proposed project, all other projects or activities requiring any amount of either paid or unpaid time from the PI must also be included (Courtesy: National Science Foundation 2014).

Data Management

Data is defined as “facts and statistics collected together for reference or analysis” (NOAD 2014). Data management is the management of data as a valuable resource (NOAD 2014). Data management encompasses not only methodological organization but also the strategies for data treatment throughout all of the stages of research including data collection and processing, analyzing the research, publication of the results, and planning for long-term access and storage (Courtesy: National Science Foundation 2014, NOAD 2014). Data management is important in that properly managed and archived data increases research efficiency for both the data collector as well as other researchers who are able to understand and utilize the data (NOAD 2014). Additionally, effective data management makes possible data reuse which may potentially "lead to new, unanticipated discoveries" by enabling data to be available to research and teaching communities in the future (NOAD 2014).

A data management plan (DMP) is a formal document that outlines how data will be handled during research as well as after the project is completed (NOAD 2014). Applicants should expect that different funding agencies may have different requirements for DMP submittals and should always review the grant application guidelines for specific instructions on this subject. Typically, a data management plan will include the information presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: **Information included in a data management plan** (Courtesy: National Science Foundation 2014, NISO 2004, NOAD 2014).

Data and data format	This discussion entails a description of all of the data to be produced by the project including data that is experimental, observational, raw or derived, samples, physical collections, models, simulations, software, images, as well as any curriculum or supporting materials. Other aspects to discuss may include: how, when, and where data is acquired; how data will be processed; file formats; naming conventions used; quality assurance and quality control measures used during sample collection, analysis, and processing; the origins of any existing data and how new data will be combined with existing data; as well as how data will be managed in the short-term and who will be responsible for that management.

Metadata format and content	Commonly referred to as “data about data,” metadata is defined as “structured information that describes, explains, locates, or otherwise makes it easier to retrieve, use, or manage an information resource” (NISO 2004). There are three main types of metadata: descriptive metadata, which describes a resource for purposes such as discovery and identification, such as title, abstract, author, or keywords; structural metadata, which references containers of metadata and how objects are put together, for instance, how pages are ordered to form a chapter; and administrative metadata, which provides information to help manage a resource, for example when it was created, how it was created, who can access, or file type and other technical information. Metadata can be embedded in a digital object like in an HTML document or stored separately such as with artifacts, where it may not be possible to embed metadata in the object. Important ideas to consider include: what metadata are needed, how the metadata will be created and/or captured, and what format will be used for the metadata along with the justification for using that format.
Policies for access and sharing	This topic references provisions for the appropriate protection of privacy, confidentiality, security, intellectual property, or other rights. Namely, that involves: how data will be shared; when the data will be accessible to others; how long the data will be available; how access to the data may be gained; any rights the data collectors may have reserved for using the data; any ethical or privacy issues with sharing the data; and additionally, any obligations that exist for sharing the data, such as from the applicant’s home institution, the funding agency, affiliated professional organizations, or applicable federal or state legal requirements.

Policies for reuse, redistribution, and the production of derivatives	This information communicates the intended future uses and users for the data as well as who owns the copyright, how others should cite the data, and any embargoes with regard to data usage for political, commercial, or patent reasons.
Plans for long-term storage	Any arrangements for storing data initially must designate who will be the primary contact person for archived data and what data should be preserved in an archive. Early in the project's planning, it is also important to identify an appropriate archive for long-term preservation of one's data so that data may be formatted, transformed and documented appropriately from the beginning to meet the requirements of the archive.
Budget considerations	Depending on the project, data management and preservation costs may add up to be quite a considerable part of one's budget so it is important to address affiliated expenses such as personnel time for data preparation, management, documentation, and preservation; any hardware or software needed for data management, backing-up, security, documentation, and preservation; as well as any costs associated with submitting the data to the archive.

A free online resource that allows applicants to "create, review, and share data management plans that meet institutional and funder requirements," DMPTool is a service by the University of California Curation Center of the California Digital Library designed to assist researchers to develop data management plans that fulfill data management requirements for a range of funders, including foundations and government agencies (The Regents of the University of California 2017). The website offers step by step guidance through the process of creating a DMP for the first time and features sample data management plans, resources on data management, as well as specific templates for popular funding entities (The Regents of the University of California 2017).

References Cited

Reference information is required on most grant applications, although the format of how the reference information is to be conveyed within the grant application package will likely vary among funding agencies. Fluctuations may occur not just with the content of the reference information but also the order in which the references should be listed, such as in alphabetical order by last name or in order of occurrence in the proposal. Regardless of the format used, each reference must include: the name(s) of all authors, listed in the same order as the publication; the article and journal title or book title; volume number, if applicable; page number(s); the year of publication; and the website address, if applicable (Courtesy: National Science Foundation 2014). Additional reference information requested may include the parent institution or publishing company and the primary city where that publishing company operates. Applicants will want to be sure to review the guidelines of the funding agency regarding any reference information preferences.

Literature Review

Whether written into the project description or found as its own separate section, the literature review is a very important component of the proposal. A literature review provides the opportunity to discuss relevant key concepts particular to the chosen topic including important contemporary findings as well as applicable theoretical and methodological contributions (Hart 2008:1). Additionally, a literature review assists the applicant to develop a full understanding of their topic including what has already been accomplished in the field, how it has been researched, noted criticisms on the topic, and what one's understanding is regarding that previous research including predominant theories and how those theories have been applied and developed (Hart 2008:1). The applicant also uses the ideas presented in the literature to explain their own approach to the topic, provide justifications for the methods selected, as well as demonstrate the ways in which the research will contribute new information to their field of study (The Writing Lab et. al 1995-2017a).

Biographical Sketches

Typically categorized as the Senior Personnel or Key Personnel, the PI as well as any other primary staff members who contribute to the scientific or technical direction of the project or execution of the project in a substantial, meaningful and measurable way should be prepared to submit a biographical sketch to the funding agency (Courtesy: National Science Foundation 2014, NOAD 2014). A biography is an account of someone's life (NOAD 2014). A biographical sketch, also known as a biosketch, is shorter and more specific (NOAD 2014). The biographical sketch should only include information that is relevant to the merit of the proposal (Courtesy: National Science Foundation 2014). For example, there is no need to submit any personal identifying data pertaining to one's home address, phone number, fax number, birth date, marital status, citizenship, driver' license numbers, personal hobbies, etc. as that information holds no relevance as to whether the PI has the skills and/or experience to do a good job fulfilling the promised obligations set forth in the proposal (Courtesy: National Science Foundation 2014). Experts and professionals in the field recommend that a biographical sketch should include: the applicant's undergraduate education, graduate education, postdoctoral training, and/or any other professional preparation experiences; a list of all the applicant's academic and professional appointments, typically beginning with the current appointment and moving chronologically backwards in time; a list of the publications authored by the PI that are closely related to the proposed project; illustrations of the broader impacts of the PI's relevant academic and professional activities; and, if applicable, an alphabetical list of those who are currently or who have recently been collaborators, co-authors, or co-editors with the PI on a project, book, article, report, abstract, paper, journal, compendium, or conference preceding the submission of the proposal to enable the funding agency to "help identify potential conflicts or bias in the selection of reviewers" (Courtesy: National Science Foundation 2014).

Personal Statement

Some grant applications request for the applicant to submit a personal statement with their application materials. Typically, the personal statement will either be a general, comprehensive statement that allows the applicant complete freedom with regard to what to write in the statement or the application will ask specific questions to which the applicant's personal statement should respond (The Writing Lab et. al. 1995-2017b). In an attempt to assist those writing personal statements for academic and other purposes, the Purdue Online Writing Lab, a free online resource offered by Purdue University, proposes questions to consider for writing one's personal statement, as presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: **Questions to consider for writing one's personal statement** (The Writing Lab et. al. 1995-2017b).

1.	What's special, unique, distinctive, and/or impressive about you or your life story? What's special, unique, distinctive, and/or impressive about you or your life story?
2.	What details of your life might help the committee better understand you or help set you apart from other applicants? Examples might include personal or family problems, history, people or events that have shaped you or influenced your goals.
3.	When did you become interested in this field and what have you learned about it (and about yourself) that has further stimulated your interest and reinforced your conviction that you are well suited to this field? What insights have you gained?
4.	How have you learned about this field—through classes, readings, seminars, work or other experiences, or conversations with people already in the field?
5.	If you have worked a lot during your college years, what have you learned (such as leadership or managerial skills) and how has that work contributed to your growth?
6.	What are your career goals?
7.	Are there any gaps or discrepancies in your academic record (for instance, great grades but mediocre LSAT or GRE scores) that you should explain?
8.	Have you had to overcome any unusual obstacles or hardships (for example, economic, familial, or physical) in your life?
9.	What personal characteristics (such as, integrity, compassion, and/or persistence) do you possess that would improve your prospects for success in the field or profession? Is there a way to demonstrate or document that you have these characteristics?
10.	What skills (for example, leadership, communicative, analytical) do you possess?
11.	Why might you be a stronger candidate and/or more successful and effective in the profession or field than other applicants?
12.	What are the most compelling reasons you can give for the committee to be interested in you?

Additional advise offered to applicants with regard to writing one's personal statement recommend to concentrate on the opening paragraph since it becomes the framework for the rest of the statement, make one's self memorable by distinguishing yourself through your story, be sure the answer fits the question being asked, back up what is said with specific reasons or experiences, be explicit in relating what one knows about the field and use the language professionals use in conveying this information, proofread all writing meticulously, and always adhere to any stated word limits (The Writing Lab et. al. 1995-2017b).

Discrepancies in Vocabulary Usage

One issue for applicants to be aware of as they develop their proposal is potential discrepancies regarding the definitions of certain vocabulary in the grant application package, in particular: Objectives and Methods. Unfortunately, even within the same funding agency, these words may not be standardized to have the same meaning across all grant opportunities. As such, applicants should be wary of discrepancies in vocabulary interpretation and make a practice of reviewing any available funding agency guidelines for their particular vocabulary definitions. If there are any concerns, applicants should contact the funding agency to verify that their understanding of the definitions of important terms are consistent with the definitions intended by the funding agency.

Tips for Hardcopy Grant Application Submittals

If the grant application is not submitted electronically, most funding agencies will explicitly state how they want applicants to package their grant proposal before submitting it (Clarke 2001:100-101). If not specified by the funding agency, when compiling all of the hard copy pages of the grant application together into one unit for submittal, most experts and professionals in the field recommend not using binders, folders, or staples but instead suggest using paper clips or binder clips for larger submittals (Clarke 2001:102). This is due to the fact that most funding agencies photocopy or scan the proposals for the review committee; therefore, it is less of a hassle for the funding agency to prepare the grant application package for the review process (Clarke 2001:101). Similarly, hard copy submissions should be typed in 12-point font on plain, white bond paper and should use a 1-inch margin on all four sides of the paper to make it easier to read (Clarke 2001:101). It is frequently suggested that single-sided copies are preferred because double-sided copies sometimes bleed through to the other side potentially impacting the readability of the document (Clarke 2001:101). Finally, after the grant application package is complete, the applicant should be sure to leave plenty of time to mail the application if using the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial carrier. Applicants should also consider utilizing certified mail or other means of guaranteed delivery to ensure the grant application arrives on time since most funding agencies will not accept late proposals.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter provided a general framework through which students may understand proposal development and the common components of a grant application, however, applicants need to remember that "[i]t takes time and persistence to succeed. And even a perfectly written proposal submitted to the right prospect might be rejected for any number of reasons" (GrantSpace 2016b). In truth, the applicant's creation of a grant proposal is just one aspect of a bigger process. In the next chapter, the grantseeker's role in the grantmaking process is further explored so as to educate applicants about the important and dynamic collaboration that makes it all possible.

Chapter Four: The Grantseeker's Role in the Grantmaking Process

Why Do Grantmakers Give Grants?

> "Grants are not awarded simply because an applicant needs funds, has a worthwhile purpose, and/or is recommended by an advocate. There is a process through which the goals of the researcher and the goals of a funder whose mission it is to support research are brought together. The key element in this process is the grant proposal…"
>
> – *Sydel Silverman, former President of the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research (1991:485)*

In creating a holistic understanding of the grant writing process, experts and professionals in the field express that it is important for students seeking funding assistance to understand why it is that grantmakers provide money to grantseekers. Some people assert that grantmakers only make grants to capitalize on the tax breaks for their donations. Although this is a benefit afforded to many grantmakers, it is the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) that dictates the rules under which grantmakers can make grants and deduct charitable contributions (GuideStar USA 2011). Much like a grantseeker needs to do their research before applying for a grant, a grantmaker must also to do their research to ensure their donation is to an eligible entity staying within the strict guidelines set forth by the IRS or suffer the consequences of not following the rules, which may include paying steep penalties to the IRS, disallowance of their charitable deductions, and/or risk for prosecution (GuideStar USA 2011).

Much to the surprise of many beginner grantseekers, grants are rarely ever allocated based on the actual need of the applicant. Instead there is a symbiotic relationship between the grantmaker and the grantseeker. The grantmaker needs the grantseeker to help manifest the reality of the funding agency's goals. The grantseeker needs the grantmaker to assist with the financial component of what they plan to accomplish. It is an important point for applicants to bear in mind that money does not provide all the tools to get a research project done, only one. The person undertaking the research still needs to investigate if anyone else has already done similar research, learn the basics about their issue, know what they are going to use the information for, fact check their data, etc. This same concept can be applied to the idea of paying for college, if the other components don't exist—selecting the right classes for the degree, going to class, doing the homework, studying for the exams, getting good grades—then the money that pays for the cost of tuition is not being efficiently spent because the desired result of graduating from college isn't going to happen.

The Grantmaking Process

According to Sydel Silverman, former President of the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, those "seeking funding for research can do much to improve their chances of success if they understand the grant-making process and the skills needed to negotiate it" (Silverman 1991:485). Although the specific details of each funding agency's grantmaking process will vary with regard to their approach, there are general similarities in that every funding agency initially decides what fields it would like to support, then conducts research to identify gaps or needs that the funding agency can address within those fields (Doris Duke Charitable Foundation 2017). Next, the funding agency decides what they want to accomplish and how they can make a meaningful difference with their investments (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation 2017). Once the funding agency commits to an area of need, they define their goals and identify a path to achieving them, which then leads to the development of a grant initiative (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation 2017). The grant initiative creates a grant or set of related grants that aim to advance a specific goal of the funding agency (Doris Duke Charitable Foundation 2017). Some grantmakers feel the most effective way to achieve their goals are to make smaller, less restricted grants to a larger number of grantees whereas other grantmakers prefer to make a small number of very large, targeted grants. Both approaches can be equally effective, and, in the end, it just comes down to the preference of the funding agency. The funding agency also decides the best way in which to solicit the grant applications, for example, by utilizing funding agency-initiated invitations to apply, grant competitions, or Requests for Proposals. Most funding agencies also collect data on their progress towards their goals, reflect on lessons learned, and make adjustments as needed (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation 2017).

There is an adage that is widespread in philanthropy: If you know one funder, then you know one funder (Foundation Center 2012). No two funding agencies are the same and, as such, it is important to always read the funding agency's grant application guidelines for how their particular grant making process works. Many grantmakers provide an overview of their individualized grant making process on their website or applicable marketing information. Topics covered typically include how that organization works within the field as well as how they develop their goals and strategies before allocating resources and making investments. Whatever the reason for creating the grant, all funding agencies recognize that they need to use their limited resources effectively to make the greatest impact. Every dollar they spend is to get closer to accomplishing their goals. Funding agencies are investors, not just donors, who invest in results (John

Templeton Foundation 2017). Funding agencies want their grant recipients to succeed because they want a significant return on their investment that is strong (John Templeton Foundation 2017). “This ‘return’ belongs to you and to the world, in the form of new discoveries and breakthroughs, new ways of looking at old problems” (John Templeton Foundation 2017). Students may get angry or have their feelings hurt that their proposal was not selected for award but it is important to remember that funding agency staff are people too who have an obligation to be good stewards of their organization’s resources and who work hard to ensure that they make fair and appropriate decisions (John Templeton Foundation 2017).

Finding the Right Fit

The role of the grant recipient is to help strengthen the connection between a grantmaker and the causes they fund in support of their mission. Every grantmaker has a mission. A mission is “a formal summary of the aims and values of a company, organization, or individual” (NOAD 2014). A mission statement is like a road map that defines the funding agency’s goals and how they plan to reach those goals. It is important to help guide the funding agency’s actions in regard to decision-making as well as to help define the impact that the funding agency wants to accomplish. Mission statements that are well written also serve as filters to separate what is important from what is not, clearly state which markets will be served and how, and additionally communicate a sense of the funding agency’s intended direction (NOAD 2014).

Although funding agencies will have varying missions, strategies, and funding priorities, there are some common elements that may be useful to consider with regard to how to approach a funding agency. First and foremost, it is always important to do some background research on any potential funding agency to ensure that one's request is a good fit for that organization. Grantseekers can utilize resources like the Foundation Center's Foundation Directory Online to get a sense of the volume of activity that a funding agency is engaged in within a particular topic or area of focus as well as the kinds of proposals that agency is funding. The grantseeker can then do a self-assessment as to whether or not they might be a possible fit to receive funding.

Cultivating Grantmaker Relationships

Experts and professionals in the field acknowledge the importance of cultivating the relationship between the grantmaker and the grantseeker. Cultivating the relationship entails "clear communication of expectations, honesty in representation, familiarity with the grantmaker's priorities, reliability, and fiscal accountability" (Furgol 2008). Building this relationship will likely improve one's success in submitting a proposal because it enables not just communication but a connection between the grantmaker and the grantseeker. If after doing the initial background research a grantseeker deems themselves to be a good fit, and the funding agency has staff available that may be contacted, then—unless otherwise stated on their website or marketing materials—experts and professionals in the field suggest that an easy way to start building that relationship is for grantseekers to contact the funding agency and have a conversation to explain why they believe themselves to be a good fit to apply for funding as well as to ask what the funding agency's opinion is regarding the potential applicant's fit before the application is submitted. If that funding agency says that the grantseeker does not appear to be a good fit, then the grantseeker will be able to save valuable time by not submitting an application, and furthermore, the grantseeker can take advantage of the opportunity to ask the funding agency who else might be a good option to approach instead. Before contacting the funding agency, the grantseeker should always be sure to be prepared for any direction the call might go, similar to preparing for a mock interview. Some experts and professionals in the field suggest that a potential applicant should practice with a friend before they call so that the grantseeker can be clear about what they want to convey during the phone call, how to organize themselves, as well as how to concisely explain what their project is about.

Another recommendation from experts and professionals in the field is to make a point to reflect the funding agency's language in describing the applicant's project by using the language of the grant solicitation so as to help the funding agency see a connection with the applicant. By the same token, applicants may also benefit by reading the grantmaker's publications, subscribing to any media releases, or following the grantmaker on social media.

Chapter Five: The Craft of Grant-Proposal Writing

Crafting a Grant Proposal

In working to generate significant findings about the art of grant-proposal writing, experts and professionals in the field state that it is important for students to not assume that the grant that they are writing is like writing a paper for a class. Students should think of grant-proposal writing as like nothing they have ever done before and a craft to be learned. Experts and professionals in the field refer to the concept of crafting a grant-proposal because utilizing the word "craft" indicates that skill is required in carrying out one's work (NOAD 2014). By its very definition, the word "craft" also implies ability, capability, competence, artistry, expertise, proficiency, adeptness, and deftness (NOAD 2014). Many students think that because they are a good writer that they have something that is worth funding. Experts and professionals in the field caution that awarding a grant is not about rewarding those applicants who are the smartest people. Grants are targeted and are very specific to a particular idea, reiterating the importance of finding a good fit before applying for funding.

It is important for beginner grant-proposal writers to remember that, as with any skill, it takes time to develop the ability to do it well. While some first-time grantseekers may have success, most will not, so it will be important to not get discouraged and instead continue to develop and hone one's skills, learn from past mistakes, and be persistent in one's pursuits.

The Genre of Grant-Proposal Writing

Experts and professionals in the field state that a common error in grant-proposal writing is that the student hasn't figured out that grant-proposal writing should be approached as its own unique genre of writing. In discussing grant-proposal writing, experts and professionals in the field frequently mention the distinction between the genre of grant-proposal writing versus the genre of writing a journal article; adding that most students are trained in school to write journal articles, not grant applications. In writing a journal article, the author presents an idea that the evidence is going to prove to be true in the rest of the journal article. Grant-proposal writing is writing a design about how to write one’s research. In this context, the research question needs to be exactly that, it needs to be a research question or hypothesis. It can't be, "This research will show that... " In the case of a grant application, the applicant instead wants to present certain possibilities and how they are going to try and understand whether these possibilities might be true or not.

Telling Your Story

Some experts and professionals in the field talk about grant-proposal writing in the context of storytelling and the importance of being able to paint a picture with words (Clarke 2001, Geever 2012). Grant-proposal writing can be seen as a creative exercise in which the applicant simply tells a story—the story is about people being helped, and their lives possibly changing forever, because of the applicant’s work (Clarke 2001:xii). Creative storytelling can be interwoven into the traditional proposal narrative form with the introduction of the hero(s) and other main characters, the setting, the plot, the conflict, and the resolution (Clarke 2001:xiii). Biographical sketches can be thought of as the back-story information, which helps to define the characters and makes them more believable (Clarke 2001:54). The evaluation and future funding sections in a proposal are similar to a story's epilogue and sequel (Clarke 2001:70-71). The budget translates the same story in the proposal from words into numbers (Clarke 2001:91). Finally, the proposal summary can be compared to the copy on a book jacket, which motivates people to want to invest their time into reading more (Clarke 2001:98). A good story leaves the reader interested in the lives of the story's characters and caring about what happens to them (Clarke 2001:57). A well-written grant proposal can do the same thing to a reviewer (Clarke 2001:76). It is important to note that while applicants can utilize creative writing to make their grant application more effective, dramatic wording should always be avoided (Geever 2012).

Chapter Six: Feedback and Suggestion Results from Experts and Professionals in the Field

Introduction

The interview feedback and suggestion results from experts and professionals in the field provided in this chapter attempt to assist and encourage the development of skills, knowledge, and attitudes supportive of fostering effective funding applications. Interviewees for this research included representatives from federally funded grantmaking agencies, grantmaking private foundations, grantmaking public charity/community foundations, state-funded public universities, private universities, grantmaking nonprofit organizations, and authors who were willing to share their thoughts, opinions, and advice regarding grant-proposal writing and/or the grant-proposal writing process. In addition to providing comments as to how to better navigate certain aspects of the grant-proposal writing process, interviewee responses also discuss the challenges experts and professionals in the field have noted that students frequently face in learning the art of grant-proposal writing as well as suggestions for addressing and remedying these challenges.

List of Tables for Chapter Six

Table 6.1

Question 1a: What are the criteria upon which proposals are ranked?	
Total Number of Responses	**Answer Description**
8	Intellectual merit (The extent to which the project is likely to advance science broadly; Essentially consists of Investigator, Environment, and Research Design/Approach; The potential to advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields; The potential to advance, if not transform, the frontiers of knowledge).
7	Significance (Roughly how important is the work; Including expected larger-scale, longer-term significance of the project).
5	Fit (Alignment with the funder, Ability to resonate with grantmaker's area of interest, How closely this fits the need of the organization that is trying to answer certain kinds of specific questions/how the proposal is geared towards answering those questions, Alignment with mission of funder/project to be funded connects to funder's priorities in their mission statement).
5	Broader impacts (The impact of the project beyond knowledge for the sake of knowledge; Trying to understand the social relevance of things/the social relevance of what they're doing; Essentially consists of Innovation and Significance; The potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific desired societal outcomes; Should contribute more broadly to achieving societal goals; Broader impacts may be accomplished through the research itself, through activities that are directly related to specific research projects, or through activities that are supported by, but are complementary to, the project).
5	The quality of the proposal (Whether or not the proposal is well conceived, well written, well argued, whether the methodology seems to be appropriate to the problem).
3	Innovation (How innovative/how new are the things that are being proposed here).
3	Research Design/Approach (The research design is a plan to answer your research question; What exactly are they doing? How are they doing it?).
3	Investigators (Are these guys really qualified to do this? Ability of the researcher to conduct the study in terms of relevant knowledge and skills).
2	Feasibility (Doability; Feasibility of conducting the study is based upon access to information that can be effectively acquired, gathered, interpreted, synthesized, and understood).

2	Credibility (Have they done this work? Have they got a track record of effectiveness? Can they do it? Not only have they done it before, but also do they have the expertise to do what they're proposing to do? The applicant's track record; The applicant's past background as academic researchers).
2	Evaluation and reflection mechanism in the proposal (Allow grantmaker the ability to track progress over time).
2	Reasonable budget (Suitability of the budget).
2	Environment (Does the environment that they're in actually support the work or does it get in the way?).
2	Quality/clarity of the research question (aka the problem statement—Is it interesting and important?).
1	Complete application (Provide all information requested).
1	Scientific validity of proposal (The design of proposal is sound so that its affiliated findings may be of value and use).
1	The content of the proposal.
1	Appropriate methods proposed.
1	The specific writing components of the application's narrative.
1	The need for, and benefit from, learning about other disciplines across applicable academic discipline/field of study.
1	Appropriateness of the research design and methodology.
1	Overall impact.
1	Evaluation of the student applicant (Is this a well-qualified student, well-prepared to carry out a proposal successfully?; Student duration in program, previous experience doing research at the site where you're going to do your dissertation, student access or lack thereof to campus resources).
1	Whether the student will benefit from the program (Attempting to combine both the traditional standards of excellence with the untraditional criteria of students who need the help and can benefit from it).
1	The likelihood that the project will be conducted successfully.
1	Solid research plan (Are the methods sound? Is the theoretical framework clear and appropriate? Is the problem itself important within a particular discipline or field? Is the proposal itself well written/is it clear? Are the research questions compelling? Is it free from grammatical and spelling errors? Does it follow format guidelines?).
1	For fellowships, it's more particularly the research plan where those five criteria (Significance, Innovation, Research Design/Approach, Investigators, Environment) come in. And the training plan, what is the training plan that they're getting? How well qualified are the supervisors and mentors? Focus on the qualifications of the mentors as mentors.

Table 6.2

Question 1b: Why do you think there is validity in using these criteria?	
Total Number of Responses	**Answer Description**
3	Criteria based on the mission of the funding agency, Criteria seek to advance the funding agency's mission.
2	Criteria established a long time ago.
2	Criteria vetted through peer review practices.
1	Organized philanthropy is such a small pool of money, that nearly all of them are interested in using their small resource to try to leverage somehow affecting change, or improvement, or develop their testing of an idea in their area of interest.
1	Criteria resonate with funding agency interests.
1	The standards that are generally used by peers are those of the mainstream thinking within the disciplines (and that's what your proposal has to be oriented towards).
1	Criteria developed to elicit the types of applications the funding agency desires.
1	Criteria focus on the main aspects of the project: It's what is the project. Who's going to do it? Do they have the resources? Is it a new idea? Maybe how generalizable is it going to be? And why does it matter?
1	There is a general agreement among scientists that these are the important questions to be asking when you're evaluating a project or a project idea.
1	Criteria depend on the funders' goals and the researchers' goals and (for this funding agency) the universities' goals. So depending on what your goals are, you're going to have to change the criteria for judgment.
1	Criteria are designed to identify the potential for a project to make significant contributions to generalizable knowledge that extends well beyond the specific project.
1	Criteria seek to provide insights into both the potential and the reality of the project as proposed.
1	Criteria are designed to give the funding agency a complete view of the project. Without designating specific criteria, there would be very little uniformity between proposals, and it is likely that many writers would inadvertently omit information that the funder needs to make a funding decision.

1	Following the funding agency's criteria is fundamental in presenting information that the funding agency finds important. The criteria that they set forth are designed to give them all the information that they need in order to assess the proposal. Following the criteria to a T lets you be sure that you are giving the funding agency what they need to see in order to make an appropriate decision.
1	Regarding Intellectual Merit criteria— The funding agency wants to know that money is going to support an important problem.
1	Regarding Broader Impacts criteria—The impacts the project is anticipated to have, There's a wide range of things that can be included under broader impacts.
1	Need a research plan that is solid and likely to yield results.

Table 6.3

Question 2: What aspects make a proposal stand out from the others?	
Total Number of Responses	**Answer Description**
5	Clarity in writing (Be clear, simple, and straightforward in what you're saying. Not a lot of jargon or buzzwords; We can't speculate about what a student can do or might do, we can only go by what's in the proposal; Need to have a clear question, a clear method, a clearer connection with the literature, and clear sense of what's going to come out of it; Many proposals are incomprehensible given their use of highly technical language (i.e. jargon) even to their peers; Clarity is the most important thing that makes an application stand out, or at least in the end. They may not stand out at the beginning. At the beginning, somebody who's got imagination and has something unique and interesting about it—That will stand out at first but in the end what persists is a well-written proposal... A clear proposal; Clear and able to understand; Clearly articulate what you need to say; A great grant application is just like a business plan. Here's what we are looking to do, here is the money that we need to achieve that, and here is how we are going to measure the return based off of the money we are going to get).
4	Very well written.
3	Proposal looks like it would help the funder accomplish their mission, A fit with the overall strategy and perspective of the funder around what was being funded, Proposal answers how the project will help the funder meet their goals/mission.
3	What you want are things that are pushing the terrain of knowledge past what we already know; Grantmakers want to fund a project that will tell us something that we don't already know to be true, something novel and interesting, something with the capacity to push the boundaries of our knowledge; Intellectual merit; Generate really interesting or useful knowledge.
2	Some unique perspective that was different from what we were hearing... Or what I was hearing from others. So a different stakeholder group represented, or a different analytical point of view, or what have you; Something that's just really different that people can get excited about.
2	Follows the directions of the application process, Follows instructions on how to compose their applications.
2	Addresses an interesting and compelling problem in an innovative way, Must be addressing interesting questions.
2	The proposal articulates a complete and coherent approach for conducting research in a scientifically sound way.

2	Clearly expressed research questions and a design that makes it possible to answer them, Solid on the research questions.
2	How persuasive an application is as to the significance of the project proposed, The impact/significance section is essential to convey to the readers why your project is important.
1	Recognizing that there's a lot of competition for this small amount of money.
1	Format the proposal to make it easier for the reviewer to read it (Think about who the reader is and layout the proposal to have sections and subsections while still following their criteria. Do simple things like bolding, underlining, using indentation with bullets, etc. to help pull the grantmaker through the document because many of them do not read the document in its entirety, they're reviewing it in pieces).
1	Doable and relevant—The most successful ones for our purposes are usually someone who's done a pilot study and can offer some results that show that the proposed work is doable and relevant; How persuasive an application is as to the feasibility of the project proposed.
1	Be succinct but complete.
1	Have clear hypothesis and predictions as well as ways of testing them (including feasible ways of testing the hypothesis and predictions).
1	Makes a persuasive argument that the research can be done and propose persuasively how it will get done—what kinds of systems will be used or what kinds of subjects will be used and what kinds of methodologies will be applied.
1	Has to convince peers/reviewers that this is outstanding work in the top 10% of those that apply.
1	Applicant shows potential.
1	The abstract is critical (If you can't hook your reviewers in the abstract, then you're not going to sell your grant to them).
1	A good project idea.
1	Presentation is important.
1	Grantsmanship enhances a good project (it's about communicating the project to the reviewer).
1	Students need to think about "what are you going to do to make it easy for them to understand your project and to want to keep reading past the first page?" (Imagine the reviewer is travelling on an airplane and its late at night...)
1	The research is grounded in relevant [field of study] scientific theory.
1	The proposal makes clear one or a few core questions grounded in the theoretical framework on which the project will focus.
1	The proposal specifies plans to use scientifically sound methods to explore the validity of answers to the core questions.

1	The proposal articulates how the likely results can be expected to contribute not only specific answers to those specific questions but also to the enhancement of broader [field of study] scientific theory.
1	The project can draw on and contribute to theory in other fields.
1	The proposal must make clear how [field of study] scientific theory is likely to benefit from the work [federally funded grantmaking agency] supports.
1	The proposal makes readers excited to learn what findings and products the project may yield.
1	The proposal outlines an important problem that is set in a broader intellectual framework.
1	The proposal explains why research findings are likely to have broader scholarly and practical value in ways that excite reviewers and make them eager to see the proposed work completed.
1	Proposal answers why the project is important to the field.
1	Proposal answers why is the project is important to the funder.
1	An innovative methodology; Solid on the methodology.
1	Solid on the theoretical framework.
1	The ability to communicate what you're doing.
1	The ability to communicate why it's important to people who are not in your discipline.
1	A proposal that is critically thinking.
1	The best ones include a theory of change (A specific type of methodology for planning, participation, and evaluation that is used in the philanthropy, not-for-profit and government sectors to promote social change).

Table 6.4

Question 3a: What are some of the common errors that are frequently seen on submitted grant applications?	
Total Number of Responses	**Answer Description**
5	Not following directions/guidelines.
4	Incomplete application; All information fields not filled in; One of the most common mistakes of beginning grantseekers is committing “errors of omission.” That is, applicants omit specific pieces of information or documents that are requested in the application guidelines; Incomplete (or missing) responses to criteria.
2	Not understanding or not having done the homework or research to understand who it is you are asking money from and what their interests are; Not doing enough homework on the funding agency; Not really digging in and paying attention to what a foundation says it wants to do in the world. Doing good homework on a foundation means reading what they say they are wanting to fund, and looking at what they fund; Not having researched their target of request.
2	The proposal fails to frame the project in a broad context, some investigators are so focused on the specific case on which their project will focus that they fail to establish a broader conceptual framework.
2	Basically not connecting the dots/The applicant poses an interesting broad question, but it's not clear how the specific aims of the project are going to address that broader question or fail to adequately describe methods.
2	Writing in specialized jargon, People who tend to write in jargon are going to get dinged, Some investigators become so caught up in specialized jargon that they fail to communicate what broader intellectual contributions their project might make.
2	Not a good research design, Some investigators outline plans that are flawed in design.
2	Among new investigators, the most common error is overambition/the applicant plans to do too much in the however many years of the award they are asking for.
1	Having done some homework and then writing specifically to that—The applicant would see a fit, "Oh, they fund what we do" and then they would stay focused on what they do, and it wouldn't help the reader or reviewer understand the alignment with the foundation's interests.
1	Remembering the foundation has a mission, and a grant to you/your organization, is to help the foundation accomplish its mission.
1	That even if there was alignment, the proposal didn't show it.

1	Most of the proposal is description of the core dissertation and it's not clear what the new stuff is with regard to how they are going to expand or improve on the core dissertation.
1	The context of the core dissertation is not described sufficiently enough and they are not distinguishing between what's the core dissertation and what's new.
1	The applicant takes shortcuts—some of those shortcuts mean that they're not doing good research, not really looking to make sure that they're a fit, sometimes they don't answer all of the questions, missing questions that are asked and/or not providing full information that the grantmaker is looking for.
1	A research question needs to be exactly that, it needs to be a research question or hypothesis. It can't be, "This research will show that... "
1	The biggest error is that the person hasn't figured out actually the genre of grant writing. The genre of writing a grant is very different than the genre of writing a journal article which is what most people are trained to do, where you present an idea that the evidence is going to prove to be true in the rest of the journal article. In the case of a grant application, you basically want to present these possibilities and how you're going to try and understand whether these possibilities might be true or not.
1	Technical errors can make a difference.
1	Not having a clear hypothesis.
1	Naiveté among young people about what's going to be funded (People make the error of thinking that if they propose something that's really remarkably new and different that they're going to have peers support that).
1	Don't read the eligibility criteria correctly.
1	The applicant hasn't clearly stated what they're going to do.
1	One of the issues is whether something is descriptive or not (funders are generally looking for things that have testable hypotheses, we want there to be specific aims and want to be able to see how those are going to be tested.)
1	Reviewer isn't able to believe from the proposal that it's possible/it's feasible (need to demonstrate that you can actually address the questions that you say you're going to address with the data that you're going to collect and the analyses that you're going to do)
1	Students need to understand what are the different components of a proposal and they need to address all of them clearly and carefully.
1	The biggest omission is why a method becomes a methodology, how a technique of investigation will become a way of learning, and how you will learn what you need to answer your original research question.
1	Applicant misses submission deadline.

1	Applicant fails to meet funding priorities.
1	Applicant does not comply with mandatory formatting requirements.
1	Applicant exceeds e-grant character (or word limit) allowance.
1	Requested attachments not uploaded.
1	Mandatory pre-application or letter of intent not submitted.
1	Applicant did not attend mandatory technical assistance webinar.
1	Proposal content is not organized in/according to review criterion.
1	Proposed project lacks significance.
1	Sources cited were out of date.
1	Proposed project appeared beyond the capacity of the grant applicant to carry out.
1	Implementation plan lacked clarity and did not incorporate best practices.
1	Budget too high or too low.
1	Costs appeared greater than the benefits.
1	Rationale for choosing a particular approach as the best solution to a problem was unclear or missing.
1	Constraints most likely to be encountered in carrying out the implementation were not considered.
1	Lessons learned from previous projects are not shown.
1	Proposed beneficiaries of the project had no role in identifying problems and solutions.
1	Work plans are too vague; Lack specifics on what activities are to be done, why, how, when, in what sequence, and by whom.
1	Detailed monthly or quarterly schedules are missing.
1	Timetables for accomplishing work are too optimistic.
1	Management responsibility and capability are not clear.
1	Quality of the writing is poor.
1	Proposal contains an unreasonable number of mechanical errors [e.g. orthography (spelling and capitalization) and punctuation]
1	Some investigators will spend too much time outlining that (broader conceptual) framework and leave themselves too little time to present their research plan.
1	Some investigators provide too few details with respect to the research plan.
1	The investigators seem to have determined what answers they want to attain and their research plan seems more designed to selectively gather information to "prove" what they want to prove, an approach that does not conform to the scientific model of being open to refuting hypotheses based on an open and systematic collection and analysis of relevant data.

1	The conceptual framing of the project and the research plan are both solid, but they don't align well, because the investigator sets the conceptual stage for a compelling focal question and outlines a solid plan to assess the validity of answers to a focal question, but they're not the same questions.
1	Topics are either too big and unmanageable with the time and budget available, or too small and not interesting.
1	The research questions cannot be answered through the methods proposed.
1	Failure to answer questions or frame projects in ways that will be legible and persuasive to peer reviewers.
1	Inadequate description of the problem statement, which weakens the significance statement.
1	Use of weak or wishy-washy language (A common example is: “We hope to have XX result” or “We think we will yield XX” as opposed to “The project will result in XX.”)
1	The proposed project is really not appropriate for the grant program (So just a kind of a mismatch in terms of, "Yeah it's interesting but it's not really what were into.")
1	The proposal fails to articulate a sound theoretical framework or situate the research problem in a relevant body of literature (So the theoretical framework's not very good. Or they don't do sufficient background literature review and background research.)
1	The theoretical framework might be fine but there is a failure to describe the research methods in sufficient detail (So insufficient detail in the methodology... A really common problem, particularly with those people who rely on qualitative methods, is they talk about how they're going to collect the data, but they don't talk adequately enough about how they're going analyze it. How they're going to triangulate different sources of data and so forth.)
1	There is a kind of inappropriate fit—poor/weak theoretical framework, insufficiently detailed research methodology.
1	The theoretical framework is good, the methods are good, but the two don't match.
1	The proposal is too focused on a specific case study and doesn't emphasize enough to the more general theoretical contributions, the basic science contributions (We have a an acronym term for this which is WISC, which stands for wallowing in a specific case). They don't make a strong enough case for strong relevance beyond the project itself.
1	A lack of detail in terms of what actions are actually going to happen.

1	Need to discuss completely how you plan to spend the funds and what are the risks associated with that, and show the reviewer how you think about that—Many are good at hitting the emotional heartstrings and so good at using data to show why you need the money but so bad using data to show how that money will be effective.
1	Be able to measure the outcomes that you want to achieve.
1	Discuss the impact that it’s going to have.
1	The reviewers are trying to look for a project that can be done in the time that you have for the dollars that you've asked for... And that's frequently different from what's been requested.

Table 6.5

Question 3b: Why do you believe that grant applicants make these errors?	
Total Number of Responses	**Answer Description**
2	Applicants don't have experience in grant writing.
2	Students are not really schooled or knowledgeable about writing a grant proposal, Students are not trained in how to write a grant.
2	Applicants don’t read the guidelines in full/don’t follow directions, A lot of times applicants just don't follow directions.
1	Applicants are so passionate and committed to this idea they have, they forget that the funding agency has a mission too.
1	Sometimes applicants take shortcuts.
1	Applicants are not doing good research.
1	Applicants are not really looking to make sure that they're a fit.
1	Frequently applicants are under tremendous pressure, because they're either missing the deadline or they're very close to the deadline.
1	Students are trained in the art of critique but not in the art of intellectual production.
1	New investigators want to show that they can accomplish something.
1	A lot of it has to do with naiveté among young people about what's going to be funded, the people I think make the error of thinking that if they propose something that's really remarkably new and different that they're going to have peers support that.
1	Applicants don't read the eligibility criteria correctly.
1	Perhaps a lack of mentorship.
1	Students don't know how to communicate their research yet.
1	The applicants just haven't really thought through the project.
1	It's just not a very good project.
1	Careless.
1	Failing to understand how/why grant applications get funded.
1	Applicants leave too little time to do the necessary preliminary work, to outline and articulate the proposal, and to write, revise, revised and revise a proposal yet again, getting solid feedback from others before each revision.
1	Applicants are so focused on their own specific case that they forget to articulate how research will be valuable far beyond that specific case... we have come to describe proposals of this kind as WISC proposals—proposals that Wallow In a Specific Case.

1	Applicants don't want to be presumptuous (Applicants can clearly see the problem/need and how their solution will alleviate that need. Some applicants feel it is obvious, but for reviewers, it may not be. It can be difficult to be bold, but a reviewer needs to be confident that your work will yield results).

Table 6.6

Question 4a: What percentage of grantseekers would you estimate are in contact with your funding organization prior to application submittal?	
Total Number of Responses	**Answer Description**
2	I don't think there's a correlation, if you're looking for one. I think people think there is, but I don't think there is; I'm not sure if there'd be a strong correlation on that point.
1	When I was a grantseeker for 15 years before I went to the [grantmaking private foundation]. I probably thought there was. "Boy, if I could just talk to a program officer. I could find out the magic secret of how to get funding." I don't think it works.
1	I think the comment I made about homework, and really only applying when you have confidence there's alignment, that that program officer reading your proposal will get it, and be just as passionate about your idea as you are. If you got that, your odds of getting funded are quite high.
1	Having a communication with the program officer in advance of submitting a proposal... It just never seemed like it was useful to the applicant, even though the applicant thought it might be.
1	If and when people had a conversation, what they were really asking was about the [funding agency]'s interests, kind of part of the homework process... Maybe that's productive.
1	For dissertations... very, very few students call.
1	Almost all of the queries are technical ones rather than substantive ones.
1	They're not asking about sort of substantively about the advice for the proposal... almost no graduate students bother to ask any advice.
1	Very occasionally, very occasionally.
1	Even for the regular proposals, maybe 20% bothered to ask.
1	What the grantmakers told me was that they just don't hear from the (applicants) prior to application.
1	Many of the grantmakers, I'm not going to say all, but many, maybe most of them are willing to have a conversation. They're willing to be available. If they won't have a conversation, they're willing to do an email exchange and applicants just don't take them up on it.
1	I would say that the majority of the applicants are submitting cold applications without that kind of contact. And that when that contact happens, it increases the likelihood of getting a grant, because the grantmaker knows the applicant.

1	I'm not saying that in every instance it's going to happen, but when someone is respectful and understands that grantmakers do have a job, and that part of it is to communicate with you, but they also have tons of other things, in terms of review, and reporting, and stuff, but when they hear from you, and it's done in a respectful way...
1	An "educated grantseeker" means when you really know your stuff and you're on the phone asking for information, where the grantmaker can tell that you've really done your homework, that's the great conversation--that if not the first time, the second time is going lead to getting a grant.
1	I can't quantify it for you.
1	I'd say definitely less than half.
1	Among faculty, it's probably on the higher side, among graduate students it's probably lower.
1	I don't think maybe even 20% of students contact me before they submit a grant.
1	I wish more would.
1	Some of them may be reluctant to... There may be hierarchical issues (in that they perceive that the) [Program Director] or [Senior Program Director] or whatever, don't have time to talk to students.
1	I think graduate students are just busy.
1	Of those that do contact me, or that we're able to do outreach to, that we do a teleconference or something with the departments and talk to people for a couple hours about grant writing, I think those folks tend to do better.
1	I think more contact with the funding organization definitely helps the proposal itself.
1	We have widely varying degrees of unsolicited proposals coming to different program staff.
1	The area of the [grantmaking private foundation] that supported [specific field of study] has huge numbers of people coming in for support.
1	My area was sort of in the middle, probably had something on the order of 10 or 20 requests for funding (letters of interest we called them) a week. And almost none of those would have had conversations with me before.
1	If I were just to add that up, that's roughly 500 unsolicited proposals, and every year I've funded about 20, those would have been people I would have supported. So if I can do the math, that's roughly 4%.
1	If they contact us for clarification before they apply... I would say somewhere in the realm of 15% to 20%.

1	I give presentations to different colleges and universities and I encourage them to do that (be in contact with your funding organization prior to application submittal), and we pride ourselves here on being accessible to the grantees.
1	I want to convey to our future grantees that we're accessible and that by talking to me, it won't affect their application one way or the other.
1	I don't have the percentage for those applicants who have contacted me before, how many of those we funded. We just don't gather that data.
1	Some agencies actually require you to be in touch with the program officers and they'll ask you to submit a mini proposal in advance, talk to the people who are in the agency and they'll give you a very good feel as to whether or not your proposal is apt to get funded, or at least be given very serious consideration.
1	There are agencies who I think very few people get in touch with the program officers before they actually submit the applications.
1	They may get in touch with them after they've either been turned down, or their priority score just misses, and request some time to find out how they can improve their application if they resubmitted it.
1	I think a relatively high proportion of younger people don't avail themselves with getting in touch with the program officers before they submit applications.
1	We had almost 1,800 people who started applications on our website, and only 900 people submitted applications, and so the percentage of people who had questions that ended up submitting applications are... It's something that we just don't track. But it looks like about 300 people contacted us between when the application opened and when it closed three months later, to ask questions.
1	It's not uncommon for only 50% of people who start applications to actually submit the applications.
1	Many of people start applications, and then ask questions, and then don't submit them.
1	I don't know if I can actually answer that question in the way that you might want me to answer it, because we just don't keep track of all the data.
1	Too few is the answer on that one.
1	The people who contact program staff are more likely to get funded than those who don't—I actually did an analysis on my own way back and it was something like three or four to one ratio.

1	It doesn't mean that they get wonderful advice from us, they get some advice from us. It just means that when you've got the nose to sense to contact program staff, you are better tuned to what the [federally funded grantmaking agency] is about and what funding is about because that is a very sensible thing to do, and so you are indeed more likely to get paid because you are just more in the game when you're doing that.
1	The best way to contact most staff these days is via email. And it's very common to share a couple of paragraphs of what you're doing, so that you get a reaction from the staff. The basic reaction you need to get is, "We are interested in this research and we will code it to us when it comes in", which means that we'll take the assignment and therefore it has a chance of being paid.
1	You'll often get other advice too (from the program staff) because they know the study section well and they know the kind of things that the study section is looking for, and they can often give you pointers in the application because of that things to avoid, things to do in your application. So you do get useful stuff from program staff.
1	That's a difficult thing to measure.
1	If I were just going to come up with an estimate, it's a pretty small percentage of people who are contacting me ahead of time.
1	I would say when people do call, a lot of times they have questions about the policies, the [agency's] grant policies, what should go in their application, where it should go.
1	Well, in terms of the scientific aims of the project, yeah, not as much advice questions.
1	So one would hope that they're contacting us and they already have an idea, a fairly specific idea. And we can tell them about what needs to go where in the proposal and answer questions about budgets and things like that.
1	If it's a student who's asking about a dissertation project, some program officers will provide a little bit more support and feedback in terms of what would be a good way to present things, making sure that somebody knows what their hypotheses are and that they can communicate that.
1	I would to like to think 100%; however, in reality, likely 25%.
1	I would guess that one-quarter to one-third of the total number of doctoral candidates who submit proposals have contacted a program director before a proposal is submitted.
1	It is hard to answer this question because it varies across programs.
1	Some programs have built in mechanisms for preliminary contact and sometimes even focus on proposal preparation.

1	Certainly candidates who are in touch before have a much higher chance of being funded, assuming that the quality of their work is similar, because they can better adapt their approach to the focus of the grant, and get feedback on their issues.
1	We run over a dozen fellowship programs at the moment, with all these applications every year, and yet have a very small staff to administer the competitions. Because of that and because we entrust peer reviewers with making decisions about which projects to fund, it makes little sense for prospective applicants to seek out staff prior to submitting their applications.
1	Certainly we receive tens of thousands of emails and maybe a thousand phone calls every year from prospective applicants who had questions about applying (usually because they failed to note information posted on a fellowship program's website or within the online application system, or wanted to clarify such information), but none of this impacts success rates.
1	I always encourage students to contact the funding agency and do so myself with some frequency.
1	So this is a little bit difficult to answer because we have different kinds of people who are submitting proposals. You have first time submitters, and then you have kind of veteran submitters.
1	The percentage is small, but that doesn't mean that everyone who submits a proposal hasn't at some point previously been in communication with the funding organization—It's the way which you're thinking about the question's a little bit challenging, because it's not that simple.
1	So in terms of first time grantseekers, it's probably pretty small.
1	If you mean people who sort of call me up, I might get a handful of people, three or four people.
1	We also get a lot of proposals from people who've got funding from [federally funded grantmaking agency] before, who've submitted before, and maybe were in communication at that time but now they're not this time.
1	So it's kind of hard to make out that distinction.
1	I don't know that you could say there's necessarily a strong correlation between being in contact with the funding organization and having a proposal get funded.
1	I think what's critical is that you understand what the priorities of the particular program are and if your proposal is appropriate, then it's about how good of a proposal have you written, how important is the question that you're asking? Are you asking it in a potentially transformative way, are you articulating a clear theoretical framework? It gets to those kind of criteria.

1	You don't necessarily have to be in contact with the funding organization to be successful in putting together a strong proposal. On the other hand, it certainly helps.
1	If you have any doubts, it certainly doesn't hurt you to communicate with the funding organization in advance.
1	But even people who communicate with us, they don't necessarily write good proposals.
1	I think what's more important is if your proposal is not successful, what would be nice is if after reviewing... After reading the reviews and kind of digesting them, if a person wants to resubmit a proposal, at that point it might be helpful to contact the program, the funding agency, to get more feedback on specifically what went wrong. And that, I imagine, that that's a stronger correlation perhaps, for resubmissions.
1	The percentage of people who actually do follow up I think is kind of small… kind of low.

Table 6.7

Question 4b: Of that percentage, how many would you estimate have applications that are funded?	
Total Number of Responses	**Answer Description**
1	What percentage would have applications funded... at that point you're talking about such a small number, it can't be calculated.
1	Unable to quantify.
1	50%.
1	Of those who do so, I would guess that the likelihood of their being funded is 20% or so higher than those who submit a proposal without prior contact.
1	I would guess that for those not having prior contact, the success rate is in the upper teens (15% to 19%), while for those who do make contact, the success rate is in the lower twenties (20% to 25%). Those are gut-feeling guesses, but they feel right to me.
1	Certainly candidates who are in touch before have a much higher chance of being funded, assuming that the quality of their work is similar, because they can better adapt their approach to the focus of the grant, and get feedback on their issues.
1	None of this impacts success rates.
1	The funding proposal success rates are really low. That's just sort of the nature. But I think ours is about 16%.

Table 6.8

Question 5: Beyond the basic requested information, what else would you suggest to have included in the proposal?	
Total Number of Responses	**Answer Description**
7	Nothing, only what they ask for—In fact, that would be an example of a mistake that's often made—people believe that attachments, and evidence, and evaluation reports, and letters of support and such, strengthen a case for a proposal, and they don't; Grant applicants want to send brochures, reports, anything that they've got. And the grantmakers are saying, "Please don't do it."; In general, nothing; Applicants should submit what an application wants or it asks for, and nothing more; I don't think anything.
2	Once you've put everything in the application that is required, that really is it, because the application is designed to be complete; I'd advise that you include the required information and documents.
2	Instructions in the competition solicitation should be followed carefully; Follow directions;
1	Give them exactly what they want on both fronts. In other words, don't give them more than they ask for, and also don't leave something out.
1	That one's easy because you're not allowed anything extra. [Federally funded grantmaking agency] has very strict rules about what's allowed and what's not allowed.
1	Well, so technically... [federally funded grantmaking agency] is going back and forth about whether or not you're supposed to be allowed or not allowed.
1	What we always tell the reviewers is you're not required to look at anything outside the proposal itself.
1	For dissertations, its probably not going be useful most of the time.
1	Where it's an issue is with things that involve databases and the reviewers need to go into the website to check to make sure the database is doing what it's supposed to do. Those kind of things involving online software.
1	In general, links are actually discouraged.
1	Use the cultivation time with a grantmaker, both before and after a submittal, to send additional things.
1	Ongoing communication (with a grantmaker) is so important and is also something that is lacking.
1	The application should be purely what the grantmaker is asking for—It might be a cover letter, and the proposal itself, and then an appendix of documents. Usually those documents are the standard ones.

1	Even among the documents that are the standard ones, I would never send a grantmaker something that they haven't asked for.
1	You want to be respectful of the fact that the grantmakers are getting tons of applications, especially if there's a submission deadline, and anything extra is just going to drive them crazy. The grantmakers are under huge pressure at this point.
1	Don't give anything extra, either in the narrative or in the attachments.
1	Use the cultivation time, both before and after the application, to send other things, so that the ongoing communication with the grantmaker is not just submitting a proposal, but it's communication before and communication after.
1	Absolutely send the grantmakers a link to your website or to something else that you would like them to be aware of. But be careful. Number one, make sure the link works. That was the big frustration on the grantmakers part, having links that they then tried to use and the link didn't work. And number two, just because it's electronic, don't think you should throw in the kitchen sink, because then the grantmaker will get tired and they won't go and look at the things that its absolutely important for them to see.
1	That's something I think you always want to ask the grant officer about.
1	Generally, people don't want to see more and there's a number of reasons for that.
1	The kind of stated reason at the [federally funded grantmaking agency], which I think you find across agencies and foundations, is that somebody giving more than what the application asks for gives that person an unfair advantage, and there's reasons why for things like say page limitations and so forth. Everybody would like to have more space to say what they want to say, but there's reasons you put the page limitation.
1	The reason is that standard is there for a reason. Everybody has the same space to make their case and so forth.
1	The reason you do want to ask is there may be differences in the ways that you've interpreted from the ways that the organization interprets what's allowed to be submitted or not—Say the grantmaker doesn't allow letters of recommendation or a letter of support from an organization that has agreed to work with the applicant, but if the letter is actually saying, "We're going to extend you the rights to use our museum facilities," or something like that, that actually helps because it proves feasibility. That's the kind of thing that helps in terms of speaking with the grant officer.
1	Pay attention to what is requested.
1	Different [funding agencies] have differing requirements, some of them crazier than others.

1	There are systems that have been developed at these [funding agencies] that expect a certain packet of information, you need to provide it or its going to make a lot of work for somebody, or you'll get rejected for technical grounds, and why even bother submitting if you're going to get rejected for technical grounds?
1	I think to the extent that a point of view can come through in a proposal, I think that makes it more interesting and compelling. Probably that point of view or perspective is what got the [funding agency] interested in the proposal in the first place, or the body of work in the first place, so you should play that up.
1	From time to time, I found some kind of media accompaniment to be helpful, but something that's really quick, that can be useful—So not like a 60 minute documentary or what have you. A three to four minute quick summary of the organization and what it's up to on YouTube with a link in your letter of request.
1	If you submit too much it doesn't help, but if they will allow you to submit an example of your work, what you would consider to be one or two of your best papers, if you've gotten to that stage in your career where you've published papers, I think that might help. It sort of backs up your credibility and makes it clear that you're capable of doing first class work.
1	We don't accept anything that we don't ask for... We won't decline the application, but we just won't review it.
1	The instructions are quite detailed and in fact they are too detailed, and we are busy trying to modify them and simplify them frankly because they are overwhelming.
1	There are a couple of other things, there are appendices and there are some rules for what can go in appendices. There are, like for example, tests that you're using, like psychological tests if you're doing that kind of thing, can go in an appendix if they are not ones that are published and available. But publications which used to go in appendix nowadays, of course they are online most of the times so you can just refer to them online. But if there are any prepublication that they're still in press but they are not yet published and therefore not online, then you can put them in an appendix.
1	At [federally funded grantmaking agency], you're not supposed to have active links in your proposal.
1	The proposal is supposed to be a standalone document.
1	The panelists are supposed to assess the proposal based on what's in it, not on what else they know about the PI, not on what else they know about the PI's work. And that means that the onus is on the PI to present it in such a way that everything is there.

1	All of that's laid out in the guide, in terms of you have your project summary, you have the project description, you have the budget, the budget justification, your bio sketches, which are important. And letters of collaboration or permits, things that show the feasibility of the project, that you will have access to the data that you talk about or you will have access to a field site.
1	I would say at [federally funded grantmaking agency], the only thing that a lot of people don't know about, especially when they're more junior, is that there's the option to include a list of suggested or not suggested reviewers. So it seems like a lot of junior people don't know about that and don't provide that list.
1	At [different federally funded grantmaking agency], it's the opposite. If you were to send a list like that, the review officer would not be able to use any of those reviewers because that would be perceived as a conflict.
1	Different agencies do it different ways.
1	The advantage to a program officer of having a list like that... Of course, if it says, "Oh, please don't ask this person," you would try to avoid that, unless you just really think that the reason is not substantial. But in terms of the list of suggested reviewers, I think most program officers assume that if somebody has put a name on that list, they're going be someone that they know and that... They can't be in conflict with that person. They can't have collaborated with that person in the last four years. But you assume that it's going be a fairly positive review. So if you ask people on that list and you get a bunch of excellent ratings, that shouldn't be too surprising. What's informative is when somebody on that list that you've asked to review gives it a bad rating. Because then you say, "Oh, wow. Well, presumably, they wouldn't put somebody on here that they know is going to torpedo their proposal." But they still had major concerns about it, so that's actually more informative in terms of ad hoc reviews—These are the mail-in reviews, not the panelist.
1	There's two kinds of reviews. There's the people who come here in person and sit around and talk, and they review some of the proposals. And then there are ad hoc reviewers who are topical experts and they provide a written review that the panelists have access to at the meeting.
1	Usually it's seen as superfluous (unnecessary).
1	Some funders want to know why this research is going to contribute to changing the world.
1	Some funders want to know why this research is going to be important theoretically.
1	Some funders want to know how this research will improve knowledge.

1	If you're studying [field of study], some funders want to know what you're going to contribute to [field of study] and others want to know what you're going to contribute to theories of [field of study].
1	When you apply to this [grantmaking nonprofit organization], our goal is to improve social science, not to change the world necessarily. We think good social science can contribute to the world but we're interested in theoretical developments more... As the first step, anyway. That's what we support students to do. Often students will add a thing at the end saying, "And I'm going change the world." That's just a waste of time and space for us. That doesn't contribute to a proposal.
1	Students need to stick to the goals of the funder and what the funder asks for, and if you submit something more, well, I don't think it necessarily helps. Often it's viewed as, "Wait, you're going outside of what we asked for. This is a distraction. It can be negative." That might not be true for all funders.
1	Don't add any additional content.
1	The [federally funded grantmaking agency's type of application] allows only a very limited number of supplementary documents, and there are strict guidelines regarding the format of many of those documents.
1	[federally funded grantmaking agency] does not permit letters of recommendation from advisors or letters of support from groups with whom a student may work that gush about the value of the project to that organization.
1	Certification that an IRB has approved plans for the conduct of human subjects research are permitted, but detailed specification of research protocols are not permitted as supplementary documents.
1	Other funders may permit additional items, and in those cases, applicants should take advantage of that opportunity.
1	Extra materials that aren't allowed will incur admonitions from [federally funded grantmaking agency] program officers to remove offending materials, and in some cases, they can result in proposals being returned without review.
1	Usually funders do not want material they do not ask for.
1	If it is possible, and applicants have it, previous published work is always helpful.
1	[grantmaking nonprofit organization]'s programs typically require applicants to fill-in work and education histories as well as request letters of reference, but the main items in each application are a narrative describing the proposed project along with accompany materials, which, depending on the program, may be bibliographies, budgets, non-text supporting materials such as images or musical scores.
1	More specifically, read the guidelines (RFP, FOA, etc.) from start to finish; It's important to read the guidelines very carefully.

1	Some applications will allow optional or even encourage certain attachments (letters of support, for instance), while others will strictly forbid it. It is important to read the RFP from start to finish to determine which attachments are required, which are optional, and which are not allowed.
1	You don't include a lot of extra stuff because it just kind of messes things up.
1	Funding agencies get a lot of proposals; people who are asked to review the proposals don't have a lot of time and if you have to wade through stuff that's not required and it's tangential, it just bogs down the process.
1	If there's something that's required then you definitely want to include that. If there's something that's optional, then include it if it's appropriate and will strengthen your application but don't feel compelled.
1	For example, one thing that might be included that's not required but would be helpful is if you are conducting research overseas in a particular locale and you're going to be collaborating or being hosted by an organization overseas, it might be helpful to have a letter acknowledging that that organization has agreed to host you and that will offer you certain support; like office space or help finding a translator or whatever. That kind of thing could be important and helpful.
1	Sometimes people try to put in letters of recommendation, which when they're not called for they're annoying and actually we send those back. We tell people you have to remove those. Those aren't actually allowed.
1	So it really depends on the particular agency and what it wants in its packet.

Table 6.9

Question 6: What advice would you give to first-time grantseekers?	
Total Number of Responses	**Answer Description**
3	Following directions are just incredibly important; Follow directions... our application process is very succinct and to the point and they really need to just follow the directions. That's really truly, amazingly the biggest problem with a lot of the applications. And we discuss it here, should we just reject them out of hand? I'm not for that but other people are, so we're working on that.
2	The fit and the homework is important; Do your homework.
2	For that beginner, don't do it alone. Have a support system that helps you make sure that the product you submit is really well written, so that the focus of the reviewer is on the content and they're not struggling to find it; For a beginner just to set up a system of support so that what you produce is really well written and avoids that issue of "not well written but is a great idea" because I would worry that reviewers might set it aside too quickly if they can't understand it, because of the writing.
2	Research your funder, know what their interests are and do a candid self assessment of whether or not you're going to fit that area of interest or not; Do your research on the funder.
2	Actually read the grants guide. Everything is in there, and it is like reading stereo instructions—It's not fun reading, but it's there; Read the application guidelines—and believe them.
2	Contact the program officer, letting them know that they're going to be seeing a proposal from you, making sure that you're sending it to the right place is really important, because you don't want to waste time writing something and then find out that it went to the wrong review panel; The message of contacting program staff, if you can get one thing out to folks in your dissertation, that's a big one.
2	Seek out a mentor who is a successful grant recipient from the funding agency that you're applying to. And maybe even asking to help somebody with a proposal—So doing it is how you learn, and in that way, it is a little bit less risky, it wasn't like I had to depend on the grant; Seek advice from people who have a history of getting grants from the same agencies. They, I think, at your own university, can probably give you the best advice about how to begin.
1	If you're just beginning the process, and you're learning to do homework, working with somebody who's done it before, and getting good counsel, that's probably great advice; Talk to other folks who have been successful with it before.

1	I think maybe the most important thing is, set up a system close to you that ensures that you write well. Generally speaking, people don't write well at all. It's actually sort of disappointing. And so if you're just getting into it, if you're really a great writer then this advice isn't useful, but most people, in my experience now, aren't great writers. So if you set up a system of support, which means you find some good writers and get some people to help you edit your work. And have a planning committee on the project to then help you develop an outline before you start writing. All are good writing practices.
1	One of my mentors in this work uses an old frame of reference about four kinds of proposals. There's the really well written proposal that's got a great genius idea that fits the [funding entity], so you can read it easily, you find the fit, and it's an easy decision. There's the really well written proposal and there's no fit—And you have to be careful to not get swept and enamored by this great presentation, you have to work hard to be sure that you find the fit. Then there's the really poorly written proposal that there's no fit. But the tough one is the fourth one... It's not very well written but the fit is magical.
1	I think the comment I made about homework, and really only applying when you have confidence there's alignment, that that program officer reading your proposal will get it, and be just as passionate about your idea as you are. If you got that, your odds of getting funded are quite high.
1	I really encourage you to go look at what we've done with our money, and back to that, look at what we say we do and look what we do.
1	Get lots of people to read over what you've written before you submit. Especially give it to people who are not experts on the topic, because they can give good advice on, "Does this make sense to me or not?"
1	The mistake that everybody makes—Don't wait 'til the last moment to submit a proposal, because 90% or 95% of proposals come in on the last day, and then they get screwed up and you don't have a chance to fix things. Submit early. Download the submitted proposal, make sure it's okay. Because if you find a mistake before the deadline, you can always fix it.

1	Do good research. It isn't just using the Foundation Center's database and doing word searches. It's going beyond that, and looking at the guidelines, and looking at the donor list in the 990, and if there's a website, to look at the website, and to really make sure that you're a fit. Wishing that you would be a fit is not the same thing as just knowing that you're a fit, having that conversation with the grantmaker around your research, and getting their acquiescence, that indeed, you should submit. And what I find happens often in the conversation, is that when I go in knowing how much I want to ask for and what the project is, the grantmaker will say, "Yes, I think that project is a fit."
1	And maybe the grantmaker will correct the amount of money I'm asking for. And that's very important, because I don't want to go in asking for $50,000 when they might only give me $10,000. That will lead some grantmakers to turn you down, because you asked for too much.
1	And using the 990 as a guide, within the 990, it's looking for who are similar (research/projects/organizations). And so it's not the range of giving in the entire 990, but it is for my kind of (research/project).
1	Read successful proposals. When you feel you've gotten comfortable with what it is that you want to argue, contact the grant officer.
1	Don't assume that the grant that you're writing is like writing an article. You're not writing a paper for a class, you're writing a design about how to write your research, and it's like nothing you've ever done before and so you have to understand this particular genre of writing.
1	In each field they're going to have people who have published things about how to write a grant, how to be successful in the grant writing process. There's literature on this that you can get... A lot of that could be rewritten into how to write successful grants and so forth. So become familiar with these.
1	If the funder permits it or is interested in it, pick up the phone, drop an email, do some sort of outreach before you actually submit a full letter of proposal or letter of inquiry or full proposal. And there are many different ways, not always do you have to have an appointment. Sometimes it's making sure you go to conferences or meetings where funders show up, and that just gives you a high proximity to them and an opportunity to meet them in a casual encounter. I think that's always a good idea.
1	And then pay attention to submission requirements and processes. So if they ask for a letter of inquiry, do a letter of inquiry, don't put together a whole proposal. If they ask for a proposal, make sure you're covered for everything that's supposed to be in the proposal.

1	Pray hard because one of the real problems which we now have is that the success ratios are so, so limited. 10%-12% of those who apply in most programs at [federally funded grantmaking agency] and at [different federally funded grantmaking agency] get funded.
1	It's a bit of a crapshoot and we know from studies that I've done and others have done that to some extent, the result is, to a great extent, the luck of the reviewer draw. And that means which people they sent your proposal out to and what their attitudes and stances are towards your proposal.
1	The advice I'd give to first time grantseekers is if you get rejected, don't give up. You just have to keep working at it, plugging away, being in touch with program officers and keep applying because eventually you will succeed. Some people will take it very personally if they're rejected the first time around and think that they're not good enough to get a grant from that particular agency. That's a mistake because there's too much randomness in the process for one to pin the blame on not getting funded on yourself.
1	One of the things that young people should do is if there are foundations out there that happens to support their kind of work, then they should get to know the people in that foundation and the people who are particularly dealing with the program that would oversee the kind of work that they're doing, because grants from foundations are far more personal than the impersonal nature of the peer review system used by the federal government. And so if you get to know an officer at a foundation and they get to like you and they think highly of you, while the grants may not be as large, they may be very good startup grants. They may be based as much on your interpersonal relations with the officer who will give you guidance about how to construct a proposal, what to leave in, what to put out. And so it's a different kind of process. But I would advise people to get to know the foundations that support work in their particular area of interest.
1	Look at the eligibility.
1	Be honest with yourself, and if it works for you or not.
1	I don't want to say this in a flippant way, but don't ask stupid questions. I feel like a lot of students think that if they make themselves known to the funder, then they will be remembered, and that's a good thing. And sometimes that's actually not a good thing because the questions that are asked are ridiculous.
1	We don't select (the award recipients), we have a selection committee for that, so that doesn't have any bearing on who is selected. But it can irritate us, and as you know, as a staff of [very few people] here, we don't have a lot of time for a lot of back and forth.

1	A lot of students don't really understand... They think that we give out money. They don't understand that the most important part of our particular program is the training.
1	A lot of students don't write their application in a way that resonates with the program.
1	Apply. That sounds stupid but the number of times people stop short of applying is sad, The number one rule of funding is this: If you don't apply you will not get funded.
1	Know what to apply for, so what stage are you at in your career, what stage is your research at, what kinds of activities will work for me.
1	Know what it is you want because that's going to affect the kind of grant that you write. Do I want training? Do I want further career development? Do I want a new model to be developed? There are different kinds of things that you want, and there are different grant activities that match those kind of things. So match them to your particular need, and program staff can be a big help in doing that.
1	Get people to help you. In other words, writing a grant these days is often a group activity. It's not an activity by a single individual. There are nearly always experienced people around you who can help. Use those people. Don't be shy about it.
1	Grantsmanship is really important.
1	That it is marketing, you are marketing your project to the reader. That means don't use tiny font. That means make sure that it's comfortable reading.
1	Don't try to put everything you've ever learned into the proposal.
1	It should be something that you spend a lot of time on.
1	The project summary, your abstract or the specific aims page, that may take longer than almost anything else to get really nicely streamlined because it's a short document and it has to say a lot.
1	There are a lot of web resources.
1	I think what new grant-seekers underestimate is how much work they're going to have to do to produce a good grant proposal.
1	Find someone who has been successful with this particular agency. Because there are all these differences and idiosyncrasies of each grant process.
1	Get trained!
1	Read the solicitation carefully, and ask questions about specific facets of it if you're uncertain about certain points.
1	Leave plenty of time to write the proposal.

1	After you have what you think is a good first draft, share the solicitation and the draft proposal with your advisor and with others whose opinions you value. Ask them to read the draft and give you honest and blunt feedback. Take their comments to prepare a revision, and go through the "internal" review process again. Repeat two of three more times if needed. That first draft should be completed at least two months before the proposal-submission deadline if the student wants to have the greatest chance to benefit from the feedback others can offer.
1	Understand the funder's priorities.
1	Get in touch and discuss your proposal with the funder if possible, perhaps sending a short outline.
1	Focus on the criteria and make sure you meet them.
1	Review funder's lists of previous grantees and then contact a few to learn about their experiences. Past grantees did something right, which led to their receiving an award, and their process may be replicable by others, whether their tip is to “start early” or “revise and resubmit twice.”
1	Ask the funder whether a particular rubric is used to score proposals. If so, use the same headings and subheadings in the proposal so that reviewers can find answers easily.
1	Ask the funder for feedback on the proposal, regardless of whether it was awarded or declined. Written or verbal feedback may provide insights about exactly what reviewers liked as well as which areas were identified as in need of improvement.
1	Recognize that persistence pays. While a funder’s “no thanks” message can be disappointing, a “no” does not necessarily mean “never”; it may mean “not right now.”
1	Read thoroughly all materials associated with a particular grant or fellowship in preparation for applying. This includes noting the organization’s mission and the limits of its purview and the specific program’s objective. This should prevent you from wasting time applying for funding that is unsuitable, but more importantly give you context so that you can write to your audience.
1	Ask your colleagues for help. Ask to read their applications for funding (so you have some ideas) and if they’d be willing to read drafts of your proposals. If they can understand your proposed project and are convinced of its significance, then you’re on your way.
1	Review the abstracts of previously funded projects to ascertain the types of projects that the agency tends to fund, the size/scope of projects that they tend to fund, whether collaborations tend to be funded more heavily, and so on.
1	If time allows, request copies of previously funded proposals.

1	Once you have a great idea (and a brief one-pager developed), get in touch with the program officer to talk about the project idea. Some funding agencies are great about providing helpful feedback on your project idea. Others may not be able to provide much feedback.
1	Ask someone on the periphery of the project (or completely outside the project) to review your proposal prior to submitting. This will help eliminate leaps or assumptions that a writer can make who is deeply immersed in the project.
1	Keep trying! If you don’t succeed the first time around, refine and try again. And again. And again. Proposal writing can definitely be an iterative process, especially when you are just getting started.
1	Give yourself plenty of time. Because preparing a good proposal takes a lot of time and so you want to make sure you give yourself that time. So you can get feedback, revise it. You can think through your methodology et cetera. Proposals that are hastily thrown together usually don't do very well.
1	When you're thinking about where to submit your proposal, target agencies appropriately.
1	Do your homework. Read up and make sure you understand what the funding agencies' priorities are and determining if it's an appropriate place for you to submit your proposal.
1	Spend time reading the proposal solicitations, reviewing lists of recent awards, gathering information about the agency or organization that you're thinking of submitting to, and then ask questions.
1	One thing that you shouldn't do is call up a program officer and ask questions like, "When's the proposal submission deadline?" Don't ask for information that's readily available in organization documents or agency websites. Instead, familiarize yourself first with everything that's readily available, and then, contact program officers with more specific questions, or to clarify if it's something that you're not clear on.
1	You want to design a research project with significance and intellectual merit.

1	A strong research proposal starts with clear and compelling research questions. And I think sometimes, writing research questions is really hard for people. What we're all doing is we're conducting investigations. And investigations ultimately center around questions whether we articulate and think in that frame of mind or not, but my point is that think in terms of questions. "I want to understand this relationship." Okay, so put it in the form of a question. And you'll want to ask questions that are compelling and that are of interest to a community of people. It's not just some quirky thing that you personally are interested in, but the questions have broader relevance, either within your discipline or society, and so on. And then, you should ground the project once you have your research questions. That drives the theoretical framework.
1	You want to develop a robust theoretical framework.
1	Do the literature review.
1	Develop sound methods.
1	Take the time to prepare and write a well written, solid proposal.
1	If at first, you don't succeed, revise and submit again, So it's really easy to get discouraged or angry when you don't get funded the first time around, but just because you are declined doesn't mean that the idea wasn't good or the project's not worth pursuing.
1	So you want to make sure that you, first of all, respect the review process, so don't get mad. And bear in mind that a lot of worthy proposals don't get funded due to limited funds, or other kinds of constraints.
1	It's important to read the reviews and feedback that you get. Seek out additional information about the proposal shortcomings, and then, determine if it's worth revising.

1	Don't get discouraged. What we see a lot of people do, if they don't get funded, they have a good idea, and with just a little bit of revising, they probably could get funded. But instead of doing that, they jump on to a new project. Because they get discouraged. And so, I would say don't get discouraged. But the funding proposal success rates are really low. That's just sort of the nature. And so, recognize that that's the reality. Now, sometimes, proposals are submitted, and they're bad ideas. And you can tell when you read the reviews. "This is not a very significant problem," versus a review that says, "This is really an interesting problem, but the methodology needs more detail." If you get that kind of feedback, then that's definitely you should take the time. It's much more in your interest to revise and submit a new (revised) proposal, it's much better to stick with what you started with and clean it up and strengthen it than to just move on to something new. Not everything should be revised, sometimes people do just have bad ideas, but if you read between the lines in your review, if it seems like there's potential then you definitely should revise it and submit it again.
1	If its your first time applying for a grant, I would argue that its more of a numbers game. Its kind of like a date, don't put all of your hopes and dreams into one number. With grants, don't put all of your hopes and dreams into one place, try and find the thing that you need, try and find the right partner that will help you succeed. Because most of the time, the grant isn't just the money. A good grant is the relationship that you get with it.
1	My advice to anyone who is applying or certainly for the first time, first couple of times is first of all, keep the faith and don't be discouraged if you're turned down because a lot of it's random and 90% of the people are going to be turned down.

Table 6.10

Question 7: What print or digital publications might be recommended to beginning grant proposal writers?	
Total Number of Responses	**Answer Description**
5	There are resources out there but I am unable to give any names/titles/authors; I don't know of any. I know there are some; I'm not actually familiar with... I'm sure there are good books out there about how to write good grants; There's a lot out there. I think people can find it; I know that there are guides to writing grant proposals out there that I would suggest generally, but off the top of my head, I don't know of anyone, I don't have a particular title in mind.
4	The competition solicitation and related materials provided by the funding agency; The individual funding agency's web pages; Certainly whatever the particular funding organization has made available in terms of guidelines, you should definitely read that.
3	On the Art of Writing Proposals available on the Social Science Research Council website (https://www.ssrc.org/publications/view/7A9CB4F4-815F-DE11-BD80-001CC477EC70/).
2	There's literature on this and that you can get, just look up "successful grants" in Amazon and you'll come up with some books; I know there are a number of books and articles that gives advice on how to write successful grant proposals, so do a literature search.
2	The Foundation Center; Foundation Directory Online (foundationcenter.org).
1	GrantCraft (http://www.grantcraft.org/).
1	Most states have a state association of nonprofits. And most of them provide both support for grant seeking in the publication side, materials, and they also do educational programs. And they have conferences where they have workshops and I think that it would be good to connect into that network of support through a state association, and if you're in a state where there isn't one, go next door because they're always eager to have a broader reach.
1	National Council of Nonprofits (https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/). It's the umbrella membership association for all the state associations and nonprofits. And it's a DC based association that does the same kind of thing nationally.
1	Grantmakers for Effective Organizations (https://www.geofunders.org/). On the grantmaking side, they've done a really good job helping get funders to do more than program grants, they actually help with grantmaking investments in capacity building for those organizations. GEO was created to try to promote responsible grantmaking.

1	Foundation Center's "Guide to Proposal Writing" book, it’s a real how-to. It helps the novice figure out what to do and how to do it.
1	In each field they're going to have people who have published things about how to write a grant, how to be successful in the grant writing process.
1	In anthropology specifically, there's articles by Sydel Silverman, who was the president of WennerGren for a long time and Stuart Plattner who's one my predecessors, and Deborah Winslow, and so forth, that talk about what makes something successful or not. Tom Boellstorff when he editor of AA, of American Anthropologist, wrote something about how to write a successful journal article that's useful just in terms of trying to understand the genre of writing. A lot of that could be rewritten into how to write successful grants and so forth. So become familiar with these.
1	Another thing that might be helpful is many of the strategic philanthropy, even community foundations, participate in what are known as 'Foundation Affinity Groups'. These are groups of funders who, maybe you know them, are organized around particular topic areas or kinds of grant making or what have you. Peruse those websites and see what at least the collection of foundations funding in that area are up to. It's also a good bit of intelligence in terms of who are some of the leading voices or funders who are most active in that area.
1	You're not going to find that much in print or digital publications. I think you have to have a mentor. If you're a first-time person applying for these grants, this is where your mentor helps you. And this is where your colleagues help you who have had experience with it.
1	A lot of university offices also have either graduate school fellowship offices or writing centers, and they'd be able to say something that is of help to the students.
1	The NIH website itself has a whole lot of useful information for applicants, that really is a great starting place.
1	I would just reiterate looking at the online resources for the given agency or organization that you're applying to. Knowing your organization and knowing the rules of their grant process.
1	I don't know where students can get good advice. Common sense is more important than getting good advice, I think.
1	Philanthropy News Digest (https://philanthropynewsdigest.org/), a service of the Foundation Center.
1	Grant Writing for Dummies.

1	If you are at an institution that subscribes to funding search databases, connect with those. For example, at [public university], we use InfoEdGlobal SPIN (http://spin.infoedglobal.com). Other institutions will use different search databases, but they can be a great central location for finding funding opportunities.
1	Grants.gov is great.
1	The federal register (https://www.federalregister.gov/).

Table 6.11

Question 8: What are some of the social and cultural influences that either help or hinder the development of skills and attitudes supportive of fostering effective grant applications?	
Total Number of Responses	**Answer Description**
1	My immediate reaction is the notion of diversity of all kinds, whether it's race or culture or geography or field of practice, is an essential element in the work we do, so it has to be an essential element in how we represent it, such as proposals.
1	One of the things that we would almost always do at the [grantmaking private foundation] because we held that value really high, this issue of capitalizing on diversity as an asset, because we were looking for how that was woven into the work of an organization. If it didn't look like it was, we would typically not consider a proposal. Ways that appear in proposals maybe most pronounced would be if an organization was doing its work to, or for, a constituency versus with them. So the old top down expert model, the supplicant receiving our funding didn't consider the constituent, participant, the audience, et cetera as a resource in the process. Regardless of what that diversity was, we would typically not fund it.
1	We were looking for those organizations that were of a community and working with a community in order to both create, implement, evaluate, operate, et cetera.
1	So if it was done, whatever the opposite is in doing something to somebody or for them, suggested to us that all those different elements to diversity, but particularly issues of culture and context, were not being given the opportunity to have impact on the organization—because if you're doing something with somebody, truly and genuinely, and they own it and value it, the potential of it being sustained by that community is quite high. And if it's not, sustainability is almost always at risk. When money goes away and the organization changes its focus, that thing you may have helped create may not exist anymore.

1	Something that most funders are looking for is that life is complicated and the working community is very connected and integrated. When we would get a proposal where an organization would say, "We're the only ones that are doing this." That, "It's us, it's ours," and maybe even territorial about it but there's no mention of who they're working with or what the connections are. Generally we wouldn't fund it, that would be a reason to not read further, because we know life is lived in this complex and integrated way, and most really impactful organizations have a whole bunch of relationships. Some formal in alliances, and some informal in just cooperative working. For example, if you go into an area of poverty, where children are vulnerable because of that poverty, and people are working on some aspect of improving the lives of those children, that aspect is not in isolation of a whole bunch of others. So this notion about making your case about what your organization's role is in this comprehensive approach, is then kind of like capitalizing on diversity. You're capitalizing on all of the assets, and commitments and actions that are trying to serve this population. Showing that, doing a map to say, "Here's what it is, here's everybody's involved and here's our role," then that sounds real. And I've always thought that a proposal got stronger when people painted the realistic picture of their role in some complex situation versus their declaration that they were so distinct and different.
1	Anything that inhibits people from showing their proposals to others or hinders getting advice from others. Sometimes people are afraid, "Oh, people are going to steal my ideas" or it's just they're shy about showing their stuff to other people, or they're shy about showing things to other people because they may not be fully polished.
1	I have had so many grantmakers say to me, "If I love the project, and the proposal isn't well written, and I understand why that's happened," meaning that they know that this is a very poor organization, that might not have the best writer, or it's an executive director, or it's a student, they will go out of their way to make exceptions and to provide assistance in getting those documents, whatever it is that has to be submitted in.
1	I don't think that there are hindrances to getting the money, except people being afraid that they won't get it, and then not doing the application.
1	The grantmaker sees themselves as a partner. A very long time ago, grantmakers were benevolent. Now, they're partners. And so they really work so hard to make sure that they are equitable in how they distribute funds and how they respond to organizations. There is that power difference, and many of them are so concerned about that, and work very hard to overcome it.

1	I think the biggest impediment is probably a hubris about what it is that the genre of writing a grant proposal is. People think that because they're a good writer that they have something that's worth funding. These are very, very bright people... The proposal writing process and the grant process is not about rewarding who are the smartest folks out there, any more than getting a tenure track job is about rewarding the brightest graduate students out there. They're targeted, they're specific to a particular idea.
1	To graduate students who are looking for the celebrities in the discipline and so forth, those people have gotten very large sums of money from us because what they're doing fits with our agency more—Not all celebrities in the field get awarded funding from every funder because their projects/work may not fit with every funder.
1	The biggest impediment is people believing that there is a level playing field in terms of some standard what constitutes good anthropology versus bad anthropology, instead of looking to the specifics of each individual organization. "Is this the right organization for me? Am I applying to the right place for this particular project?"
1	There's maybe some fear about the process that seems overwhelming that people don't ask for help. They don't get feedback from others. They don't communicate with their grants officers and so forth. All those kinds of things can actually I think hinder the development of skills and attitudes.
1	I think the big thing though is that really people have a hard time understanding that proposal writing is not just another kind of academic writing, but it's in the same way that writing a journal article is, there's not just one kind of writing. And I think a lot of graduate programs tend to teach students that there is a way to write anthropology, and that essentially all we're doing is writing ethnography. And there's different ways of writing things. Of course if your academic career, if you're an academic, you're going to have to write grant proposals. You're going to have to write. You're going to have to write memos. You're going to have to write administrative kinds of things. You're going to have to write things or articles that are headed for a public kind of audience, things that are headed from maybe members of Congress. If you're doing expert testimony, it has to be to a legal audience. Within the discipline, you might be writing different kinds of individuals. Sometimes you're writing to cultural anthropologist. Sometimes you're writing to across several disciplines because it's different kind of a journal or something. So teaching that there's more than one of writing, more than one kind of audience, more than one kind of writing style, I think that's the key thing.

1	That's the university. We see the results of that in that we get a lot of applications from one or two or three or four particular schools so we know that they are promoting our [grantmaking private foundation], that they are encouraging their students to submit. And so I think that that burden is on the shoulders of the academic institutions that the applicants are from.
1	I think there are a lot. See "The Outer Circle" which discusses the finding that female scientists publish fewer articles than male peers matched for age, rank, and institution. The authors discuss whether discrimination or self-selection is at fault and examine the impact of reduced productivity on female scientists' professional status, rewards, and access to resources. The authors dismiss marriage and motherhood as an explanation of diminished productivity, finding that scientist mothers are as productive as single female scientists. The authors suggest that women's own devaluation of professional success limits their scientific careers. One of the interviewees for the article concludes that women are more responsive to colleagues' interests in their research and more sensitive to negative reception of their results than men. The authors then conclude that small gender disparities accumulate into large differences in career-long productivity, rewards, and advancement.
1	I think that a lot of this is really going to depend on the stage of the student. Undergraduate students have different motivations than graduate students do, as far as I've seen and so I think that the social and cultural influences that inform how they go about seeking grant applications, it's very different. It's more of a scholarship mentality, as opposed to a fellowship or grant mentality to fund research.
1	Some of the cultural influences—in terms of academic culture—some of it is the culture of a department. There are some students that their department just doesn't have a culture of pushing students to seek out funding. And then there are other departments that do, a lot of Anthropology departments have very good infrastructure for pushing out students to seek grant applications, and that's because most of them have to do field research, and so they need money to go out in the field. We don't get a lot of applications from Economics, Philosophy, Psychology, and a lot of that has to do with the fact that in those disciplines there's just not a culture of going out and doing field work. And so, they don't necessarily need money to do that, that doesn't mean that their work is not valuable, it just means that you might not find them in your ranks, because they either have lab money from their advisors or what have you, or they just are working out their formulas in the comfort of their own library, and so they don't need that funding.

1	Social influences? I think a lot of times what we see is that there might be one or two departments of a university that tend to apply to us more, and that's because a lot of students from those disciplines or departments have been successful in getting our funding, and so it kind of spreads like wild fire, the, you know, "Blah blah blah did this, you can do it too."
1	At the undergraduate level, many of [federally funded grantmaking agency]'s grantees come from primary undergraduate institutions like private colleges or even state universities. And they do well at the state universities and then they go on into graduate school, a prestigious graduate school, and move on. So, in terms of fostering interest in science, we have a broad number and range of institutions in this country that are able to do it successfully at the undergraduate level.
1	Instead of a broad number and range of institutions in this country that are able to successfully have grantees, it concentrates more at the graduate level and there, you choosing your graduate institution well is an important thing. And having an institution which has a strong foundation in research, beyond just your specific mentor, is an important thing. At the graduate student level, it is a truism to say that more people are more successful and more applications come from those institutions where research is a priority, where there's a history of funded research. And so, it is clearly the case that those institutions that have a strong research background, do foster that identity in their students and therefore advance their students.
1	By the time people are faculty members, some people may feel like they should already know how to do this. And then they'll be embarrassed to ask for help. Other people might be like, "Oh, I really need somebody's help." For students, it's the same, but I think it's driven more by the relationship that they have with their advisor. If the culture of the department or of the advisor is, "You're on your own. You got to pull yourself up by your bootstraps and do everything yourself and I'm just here to tell you when you do it wrong or right." That's one model of fostering independence but I think that hinders the development of effective grant-writing.
1	I think that it is a skill, it is a learned skill. It is not something that comes naturally to almost anyone. So it requires mentorship. If you don't have an advisor or a department that really supports and fosters grantsmanship... I think most places you're going to have a research methods class that usually utilizes a grant-writing mechanism as part of the class. But I don't know how common that is. I'm assuming that's true, but it may not be. And again, it will depend on how big the department is.

1	Well, we talked students being open to criticism and not internalizing criticism as being crucial to learning. Whether there are social and cultural differences in that, I suppose comes from to what extent minorities feel their identity as a minority becomes part of how they are being treated within academia and sometimes they're right, sometimes they're wrong.
1	I think there are social and cultural influences that are related to discrimination and social hierarchy and legitimacy of research questions that make a difference. But both on majority and minority students' sides. Do those hinder and help development of skills? Yeah, I think they do. Sometimes segregation helps but integration also helps. So you have to do both.
1	Faculty members would do a great service to students by allowing students to observe and, to some extent, participate in the development of research projects and research proposals for the faculty member's work. Such efforts might result in the student's being able to be supported as part of the project, but more importantly, the student will have direct awareness of the process of developing project plans and proposals so that the student's preparation of proposals to support her/his own work is not her/his first exposure to the process.
1	Advisors and other faculty member should play active roles as sounding boards for ideas, and they should read and offer blunt, honest, and constructive feedback to the student to enable the student to learn about strengths and weaknesses (especially weaknesses) in their proposal before it undergoes external review. Too many advisors seem to take the attitude that it's the student's work so the student can have a proposal submitted even though it makes a weak case for funding. External evaluation of a weak proposal can provide to be humiliating to a student, and the advisor's own reputation can suffer in the eyes of peers engaged in the review process.
1	Good academic advisers can be very helpful as can mentors who have secured funding.
1	Students who come from professional families or social strata have advantages in terms of general cultural capital and sources of feedback and support.
1	High quality mentoring is crucial to success in a scholarly career, and that goes to all aspects of it and not just applying for funding.
1	Communities of scholars who share their work help the development of skills and attitudes supportive of fostering effective grant applications.
1	Institutional frameworks that incentivize and logistically support applying for funding help the development of skills and attitudes supportive of fostering effective grant applications.

1	The ability to accept criticism with grace. At the proposal development stage, being able to accept others' comments about improving your application requires setting aside your pride and can be a huge challenge. An applicant also needs to be able to take a lot of rejection from funders and use the rejection to improve the next application. If an individual has a predisposition because of cultural or social influences to be accepting of corrections and criticisms, he/she is more likely to succeed.
1	There is a lot of literature and different things that are coming out about first generation college students, which can be people from a working class background or from an ethnic minority or whatever. I think that probably some of the same influences that hinder or help groups of students from particular social classes to succeed or not in college are probably similar for grant applications. We know that students from low income backgrounds, they might be very, very smart... and yet there's all kinds of psychological and social pressures that make it difficult. Writing, succeeding in academia in general, and this would include grant applications. The universities, the academies are kind of a culturally specific entity. And if you didn't grow up being part of that world and if you're an outsider, it can be difficult to sort of navigate.
1	Grantwriting is just one little piece of the general process. So succeeding in graduate school, for example, some students from a kind of a working class background might have a more difficult time/might not make it through grad school without assistance from those with a more academic background/college educated background. Children of parents with an academic background/college educated background may have a better understanding of the language that people speak, what they mean when they say X, what they mean when they say Y, that some from a working class background may not have at their fingertips coming in from a kind of different social and cultural background. Writing grant applications are sort of similar because it's part of a larger kind of process. So understanding how to frame your research problem in a particular language, what kinds of phrases to use, how to actually frame questions. There are a lot of those kinds of things that sort of you learn, and you're socialized into, and if you're not from the kind of in-group, then access to that sort of information is more difficult to acquire. But it just means that you have to be aware that you need to learn and figure out how. You need to learn. One needs to know that if you don't have information, figure out who you can get that information from.

1	Every once in a while, someone get phone calls from faculty or students who are upset that their proposal didn't get funded. And they seem to have a kind of sense of entitlement. And they can't understand. They think the idea's brilliant, and they can't really understand why no one else thinks it's brilliant. And there's almost a closed-mindedness... a kind of arrogance. So they're not open to criticism or considering the possibility that their idea is not actually that great or innovative.
1	The thing about some students is that they've sort of grown up being told everything they do is great, like, "Good job." In terms of the kind of things that teachers and parents tell kids, it's all very positive reinforcement, and sometimes, that's not very helpful in the long run. That this not knowing how to fail is a problem, at some point.
1	If you are free of debt, you are more able to take risks, such as entrepreneurship, and it fills in to the inequality gap.

Table 6.12

Question 9: Following the acceptance of a proposal, what would you advise should be the next course of action for a grantseeker?	
Total Number of Responses	**Answer Description**
4	Celebrate. Pat yourself on the back because everybody else is going forget to do it; Mostly I just sort of advise them to be jubilant.
2	Say "thanks." Some expression of appreciation for the award, excitement about working with the [grantmaking private foundation], asking for instructions as what to do next; Immediately to say thank you to the grantmaker.
2	Well, once they've got the award, start working on the project; Start work on the project!
1	In most organized philanthropy, the commitment comes in the form of a kind of an official commitment, used to be in writing, now it's electronic, but if you're receiving a grant then you get an award letter, some call it a commitment letter, and it requires you to read it, and then designate that you agree to the conditions. So being sure that you read it, you understand all the conditions and you've agreed to it, once you've done that, the instructions will follow.
1	Some formal communication will occur, a lot of if depends on the scale of the grant, sometimes it makes a difference on if it's a general grant or a strategic grant, more focused strategic grants, or initiatives of the [grantmaking private foundation]. There's usually some formal meeting after an award. But you just wait, they'll tell you what comes next. The [grantmaking private foundation]—all of them I've ever worked with—they're thorough about next step instructions, and if for any weird reason you don't hear from them within a short period of time after an award, within a couple of weeks, call the person to just check in, say, "Hey, we're getting ready to kick off on the project and just wanted to see if there was anything you needed us to do before we did," and maybe they forgot something too, but being transparent in those cases will always pay off.
1	So if we say we're going to fund it, then there are a couple of different steps that they have to go through, particular kinds of paperwork, so for example, if they're working on animals or human subjects, they have IRB or IACUC paperwork that they have to submit to us, but that's going to be very specific; There's a certain set of steps, which then they have to go through once we've told them that it's getting funded.
1	Our manners and our communications with grantmakers are horrible, so you've got to make sure you say thank you.

1	As soon as you have said thank you, you want to fill out their paperwork. Sometimes what happens is you do the proposal and it's submitted, and then you get a letter back saying, "You've been funded," and this is probably after lots of back and forth. And then there's paperwork, and you don't get the check until you fill in the paperwork and send it back. Grantmakers say the number of grant awardees that never fill in the paperwork and send it back is just shocking. So you want to make sure that you get the paperwork done.
1	You want to make sure that you understand with the grantmaker about the reporting requirements. And if your project will look better with different reporting, you want to talk to them about the flexibility of doing that. And you want their permission, if they say that they can be flexible, and that that there are times when a grantmaker will say, "You have to report at three, six, and nine months." Well, maybe your project looks better at four months, and seven months, and 10 months. Well, ask, don't just assume, ask. And then, if they've said yes that you can change the reporting, you would want to make sure that you put that in writing.
1	If an organization wants to publicize a grant, they need to get the permission of the grantmaker, and the grantmaker is probably going to need to see any language. A grant can be front page in the newspaper or in the electronic version of the newspaper, so you want to make sure that a grantmaker approves any press release.
1	And my last two points, it sounds very greedy and I don't want it to be, because I think it's part of partnership, but, "When can I come back and ask for more money, if I've done a good job?" Sometimes it takes a long time to get the first grant and you have to go back fairly soon, in order to get a renewal, and you want to make sure you're not talking to yourself on that, but you're asking the grantmaker. And ask, "Who else should I be going to for money?" This is my partner now. Things have changed, and it's very possible that my partner might have some ideas about what other funders I can go to, and they might even open the door. And so you might find yourself submitting a request to somebody that you would never go to, because you think you're not a fit, but the grantmaker is interested in you, because of your donor and that they've partnered with that donor before. That's a lot of stuff, when you first get the money.
1	Obviously, you want to talk to your staff and make sure—this should've happened at the proposal writing—that they can deliver what's been said, and that finance can deliver on the financial reports, and set deadlines for information for the reporting.
1	In the case of the [federally funded grantmaking agency], we're very clear about what you should do next.

1	We're intending to fund you, but you have to let us know if you have any other grants already.
1	You have to get us an IRB approval.
1	You have to continue to be communicating with me so that I can actually make this recommendation and so forth.
1	It's always good form to thank the team that helped get your proposal funding. I don't think that should be an overblown thing, even just a little email, that's certainly very important.
1	Get ready because once the grant is approved, you're going to want to be able to hit the ground running. Whether that's for scholarship work or for programmatic work, get ready. Get everything lined up so that when the dollars actually do come forward and the grant agreement is signed and executed, you can get started on the work, which is ultimately what the funder really wants to see accomplished.
1	You have to consult with your colleagues who are somewhat senior to yourself about how do you get the actual activity of doing the science, or doing the behavioral science underway? How do you get it organized? How do you organize it well? And how do you minimize the paperwork that you have to do?
1	A recent study that came out of Yale and the government partnership suggested that 40% of scholars' time who receive grants from the [federally funded grantmaking agency] is spent filling out paperwork. Now, that's time taken away from their doing science. So the question is how do you minimize that given the structure of federal regulations and requirements? And that can help you spend a lot more doing the work that you're interested in doing and less time doing bureaucratic paperwork, which doesn't amount to a damn thing. So I would certainly give them that advice as well.
1	They should do what we tell them to, I mean, where we follow up with them and say, "We need x, or y, or z documents from you."
1	We have specific workshops and trainings, and so they're going to need to do certain things in order to participate, whether it's logistics or their own research or writing or what have you, so they need to do what we tell them to.
1	For programs that are really more field work based, they're going to have probably different instructions, but really it's that they need to follow the terms and conditions of the program.

1	Realize that you've only got a particular amount of time to do the work or to get the training. You will probably have had notice before then that you are going to get the award. At that point, you should do preparatory work so you can be up and running when the funding arrives. And it is basically what you have to do is maximize your productivity from resources that you're given so that you can get the most out of this award that you can. And that starts at Day One. Well, Day Two. You celebrate at Day One but that's what it's about. So the notice that you're going to get the award is important because you can prepare for it sometimes. If you're hiring staff, you start hiring staff before the money actually has arrived because you've got a signal that it's coming, all to get going early because that's the only way you're going to maximize the productivity from the grant.
1	That'll be dictated by who the grant's from.
1	Be ready to provide any information that [the funding entity] will need after the fact. Here that mainly involves if they need IRB approval for human subjects or if they need vertebrate animals approval. Getting that documentation, which they may or may not already have, sometimes that's what holds things up.
1	Be ready to discuss the budget. And [the funding entity] may say, "You know what? The budget is too big. This is the amount that I'm able to offer you and we need you to turn in a revised budget, or tell me that you can't do it for that amount." And nobody ever says no. Nobody says, "Oh, I'm sorry. I can't do it."
1	Find out why you were successful.
1	Learn how to manage the grant.
1	Carefully consider the reviews, panel summary, and comments from the program officer. Even if a project is to be funded, it often can become even better if comments and suggestions in those documents are considered.
1	Investigators should also follow directives from the program officers promptly so that tasks like providing IRB certification and revising budgets or data-management plans have been completed in a timely and satisfactory way.

1	I would advise the grantee review all grant requirements. Not only does this include confirming your own timeline for implementing the project, but also checking with the funder about all reporting requirements. Ensure that you have a handle on what will be required (both in terms of written reports and fiscal reports). Note that there are some awards to individuals which may require you to hire an accountant to keep your books. Awards to individuals are also likely to have tax implications, so an appropriate savings plan should be considered. Before diving right into the project activities, I would advise getting a handle on these administrative requirements from Day 1 so that you are not struck with any surprises.
1	There's not anything that's really required in terms of communicating with the funding agency.
1	Make sure that you get your reports in on time, and that you produce results.
1	If they have an award coming, they have to start working with their institution to make sure that they know what to do internally.

Table 6.13

Question 10: Following the rejection of a proposal, what would you advise should be the next course of action for a grantseeker?	
Total Number of Responses	**Answer Description**
2	Take time—at least a few weeks—to let the disappointment subside. Criticisms in reviews and panel summaries will hurt at first, but with some time, the investigator often gets better perspective and realizes what shortcomings and weaknesses have been identified. If there are questions that linger, the investigator can contact the managing program officer to ask for clarifications or more information; Make an extra copy of that review statement that you've carefully printed out, lock it in a drawer. Take the first copy and tear it up because that will get rid of your frustrations. [There's a strong emotional experience, even among senior researchers, they still get that reaction. It doesn't go away. And you have to distance yourself from it and sometimes, literally, you distance yourself from it in order to manage it.] Go away for two weeks, come back down when you're settled down and then read the review that you got and find out whether, a.) they thought it was strong but there were particular weaknesses that meant they could not fully support it, and if that's the case, then it means that you can resubmit that thing and you can probably fix the weaknesses and get it back. Or alternatively, that they just didn't think this would go anywhere, the research. And if they think, in that latter case, then there's no point in submitting that one to that agency again because they don't really think that one's going anywhere. If you think it's going somewhere, submit it to another agency, don't get it back to that review group. They're just going to kill it again, but you can put it somewhere else.
1	It's usually not at all productive to have a conversation with a foundation after you've been declined. It's in that awkward world of the passion you have for your work will often get in the way of reason. And so in a conversation where you're trying to find out why it was declined, the program officers very typically don't say much, and the reason is because anything they say may sound critical of the project, and you don't want to hurt feelings, you don't want to do harm.
1	There are staff who would go in great detail about why something was declined, trying to coach them to help improve the project and almost always that was a rabbit hole that didn't go anywhere. Because the person would say, "Well, but that's what we do. You didn't understand our proposal." The staff got the sense that they didn't help them either.

1	I think the very best thing to do when you receive communications about a decline is to communicate back in the same form, whatever that form is, and just say, "Sorry to hear about it, appreciate the consideration and hope that you will be willing to receive proposals in the future." A nice courteous response, and keep doing your homework thereafter, pay attention.
1	Two things happen as you learn along the way doing homework on one foundation. One is you might discover how the proposal that was declined may not align because you get to know what alignment looks like. Or you might get more convinced than ever that it does align and then you might consider resubmitting.
1	Take the responsibility on the shoulders of the grantseeker and not try to put it back on the grantmaker, remembering that even with the very best aligned proposal it's almost always a selection among equals, and a decline is not a criticism of the quality of the proposal.
1	If you're going to resubmit, then it is always a good idea to talk to the program officer. Once you've had a chance to read the reviews and think about what they've said, as I tell people, what's on paper is never the entire story because, first of all, things get said in the panel discussion that don't necessarily make their way into the panel summary. Plus, as a program officer, I can often help interpret what reviews actually mean, because what the criticism seems to be may not really be the root cause of the problem. So, talking to your program officer after a rejection is always very useful.
1	Say thank you. It took a grantmaker to say this to me, "Those of us who are seeking money, never think about the person on the other side of the desk." It's so true. And especially a program officer, who has gone to bat for you, they feel bad at this point, because they got turned down also. And so saying thank you to the program officer for really helping, and saying thank you to the organization for taking time to do due diligence, I think it's very, very important. And to me, that's the next step in getting me closer to a grant. I just see a turn down as part of the process.

1	At this point, after I've sent my thank you letter, I'm now going to pick up the phone and I'm going to call the person that I've been working with. I'm not going to ask why I was turned down, but I am going to ask, "What do we do next? Can we come back with the same project?" If they say no, I think that's a big message. If they say yes, I might, at that point, say, "Do you have any feedback for me at all, about what I might do differently?" And what we need to keep in mind, is that most times we're turned down, number one, because there isn't enough money from the foundations and the corporations. They can never fund all the projects that come to them. And number two, there's huge competition. And number three, maybe somebody else's project really was better. None of us want to admit that. My conversation isn't going to be, "What was wrong? Why didn't you fund me?" This isn't peer review, like from the government. But what I do want to know is, "Can I come back?" And, "Can I come back with that same project?" And then, if they say yes, then I want to know, "Well, is there anything I should do a little bit differently here?" Because most times, they may not have very much information for me. And if there is a lot of information, it could be confidential in the board's discussion and the staff person may not have it. I think this is a point to be very sensitive.
1	Another sensitivity is that some of our colleagues are not very gracious to grantmakers at this stage. And as a matter of fact, they're downright nasty. And I've heard quotes from grantmakers of grantees, going to their board and saying, "Your program officer is stupid and they don't know the guidelines." Yeah. And yelling and screaming at the staff person over the phone, "You should've funded me. You don't know what you're doing." People are downright rude. It's really pretty bad. Being gracious is going to help you stand out. And even the grantmakers say this part of the relationship defines whether you're going to wind up getting the money in the future or not.
1	Learn from your mistakes. One of the best things that can happen to you is to get a grant rejected by the [federally funded grantmaking agency] because you get really elaborate a detailed feedback afterwards. It stings, nobody likes to be told no. But the thing is when you're told no by us, you're told no and given very specific reasons why we can't fund this, and the kinds of things that you would need to do to make it competitive.
1	We can only fund about 20% and sometimes not even that of the things that we receive. Sometimes there's things we'd love to fund, we just don't have the money anymore, we're out of money. So, learning how to constructively deal with the rejection process I think is important.

1	Rejection of your proposal is not a rejection of you or your idea. Sometimes there's a wonderful proposal and then you look at the research to your design and you're like "This has no chance of actually happening, but the idea is so damn good." And people are really encouraging about that. So, don't look at it in terms of absolutes, actually read the comments.
1	Talk to the grant officer afterwards. I talk to people all the time about whether their grants were successful or not.
1	The first thing you want to do is stay in touch with the funder.
1	Having rejected a proposal once, people are much more likely to consider a second proposal.
1	You shouldn't take "no" as in "not ever."
1	If you've been given encouraging signs from the funder that this is an area of interest for them, and this isn't to say you should spam the funder with 100 new proposals, but I think it's always good to stay in touch and to keep in contact with the funder. And sometimes that's just a matter of every six months or so saying, "Listen, just wanted to let you know. Here's what's up with the organization/project. Here's what we're doing," as a way to just sort of stay in touch.
1	It's all about building the relationship, right? And even if the first proposal is not going anywhere, where you want to be is building a longer term relationship, at least for organizational funding.
1	Don't give up.
1	If reviewers have given comments, not all reviewers will give comments on all applications, but if we have comments for a student on their application, we'll send them out so they can read them, and they can talk to their advisor.
1	One piece of advice I would give is that, among very good applications, there is, I don't want to say it's arbitrary nature of it, but I don't think students should necessarily be discouraged just because they didn't get a particular grant or fellowship, I mean, that sometimes might have very little bearing on the quality of their work, so they shouldn't give up, or throw the baby out with the bath water.
1	Unless you have something like six comments and all of them say, "This is complete garbage," which really never happens, then I don't think that students should give up.

1	One piece of advice that I would say students should never do is write the funding organization and complain that they didn't get it, and that they should have. We get at least one of those a year and I'm sure every funding organization has at least one story like that. I think what applicants don't realize is that we remember those people—we don't hold it against them, that would be completely unethical and unprofessional—but don't be one of those people to just air your grievances on the people who happen to be running the competition. The people that are running the competition, by and large, don't make the decisions, and we're just trying to ensure that there's a fair competition, so it doesn't behoove you to kill the messenger.
1	A lot of times, (students) want to email or call the program officer right away. They need to wait and see what the feedback is, both from the written feedback from the panel and from the ad hoc reviewers and from the program officer. And after that, if they still feel they need to, they can talk to the program officer.
1	If they have a rejected proposal, they need to take a deep breath after they read the reviews and then work. If it's a student, work with their advisor on talking about whether they should try to resubmit it or submit it to a different agency or organization, or scrap it.
1	The next step should never be getting all dejected and giving up. I think something that students may think is that getting rejected means they may just feel dejected and feel like they're never going to get a successful award. It's one of those irritating parental things to say, but if you don't submit a proposal, you definitely won't get funded. So grantwriting is part persistence.
1	Even really famous superstar researchers don't have a 100% successful grant award rate. The success rate for my program is 20 to 25%, maybe as low as 15%. So no one should expect to get something on the first try. And if you do, it's nice.
1	Find out why you did not get funded.
1	If there has been in the discussion that the proposal was really excellent but was flawed in a specific way that would have a good chance of being funded if the flaw were remedied, we communicate that to the grantee. In the past we have encouraged resubmission, but we're rethinking that policy because we've been getting many more applications than we've ever had. And so we're beginning to think, we were pretty liberal about encouraging first time applicants whose application was really considered quite meritorious, but needed some tweaking to resubmit and now we're wondering if we have the luxury of doing that, if it was denied the first time, we're wondering, just say that's it. But we're not there yet. So we still do accept and in some instances, especially when the proposal was really good, allow to resubmit with revisions.

1	Try to understand why it was rejected. If the funder will not tell you, then look at the criteria and try to figure out what was not right. If everything seems fine it may just be that the competition was too stiff or your topic/approach was not a good fit for the funder. Consult with academic advisers and get their feedback if possible. Then rewrite your proposal and apply elsewhere.
1	If this is asking should the applicant give up, the answer is no.
1	Most applications are unsuccessful most of the time.
1	Applicants are more successful the second and third time they apply. If there is feedback from reviewers on their applications, request it, learn from it, and try again.
1	If the funder has not expressly stated that they do not provide readers' comments, request them. Read the comments side by side with your proposal, making notes about how you can improve the project to respond to the comments. In some cases, the comment will present insurmountable challenges. In this case, you will want to rethink your project for that particular funding agency/opportunity. The readers' comments can be very helpful in refining your proposal, even if you choose to submit it elsewhere.
1	Keep trying.
1	Keep seeking funding opportunities and be flexible in your project design. Your ideas may be a better fit for a project if you have a partner or include a new component, for example.
1	Read whatever feedback is made available, whatever written feedback is made available, read that carefully and consider it. And then, after you let that digest for a couple of weeks, then contact the program officer to try to get more insight into the review process, and what the reception was... Sometimes, you need further guidance in knowing how to interpret and understand what the feedback is. And so, seeking that out, I think, would probably be the next course of action.

1	In terms of advice for first time grantseeker, it's important to understand what the review process will be for a particular agency. [Federally funded grantmaking agency] uses ad hoc and panel reviews. Basically scholars within a discipline, specialists in the field would read proposals and then evaluate their intellectual merit and broader impacts and then produce written reviews. Other agencies use a different kind of process. At universities, for example, summer research grants are often evaluated by committees of faculty members from multiple disciplines. And so you have to understand who your audiences is and speak to that audience. There are some private entities that have a combination of academic and nonacademic reviewers. So, I think it's important to understand who's going to be reading and evaluating your proposal and where are they coming from and how do I need to speak to them, effectively. And then if you don't know that, then when it's rejected those are some kind questions that you could also ask at that point, if you hadn't asked them previously.
1	I think it's perfectly fine to call up and just ask for more information or clarification or help in understanding and getting advice about where the next step might be. A lot of times at [federally funded grantmaking agency] we can't tell you specifically, "Well, you should rethink this particular idea in this way," because now I'm not maintaining my objectivity, I'm getting involved in how you should write up for revision. But we can tell you, "Well this is what the reviewers thought, these are the issues that they identified and you might want to think about how you could address those concerns." So, yeah. I think that's important.

Table 6.14

Question 11: Do you believe that there are grants that are easier to obtain than others, why or why not?	
Total Number of Responses	**Answer Description**
1	Well, so this answer would be in the context of private philanthropy. I don't think this would apply in corporate, community or family foundations. In private philanthropy, if the foundation is of any size, and by size I mean the amount of annual grantmaking, it's not uncommon for them to have something they call general grant. And that's what they're trying to do, not to direct or initiate everything they fund but to leave an open transom for proposals to come in unsolicited, unconnected to RFPs, et cetera, so that there's always an opportunity for people in the fields of interest to apply. And then for genius to be discovered, if you will. I think that when you look at the general grantmaking of most large private foundations, you see a little bit wider range of alignment. Because they might be testing something and they haven't written about it on their website yet. They might be curious about a new area developing around their mission that they haven't funded before, and so in that kind of general grantmaking, across the transom, as we say, that is a little bit less competitive. If the foundation initiates something in writing, sends out an RFP, or invitation for proposals, an IFP, publicly states an initiative and invites the world to apply around that initiative, those are so much more narrowly tasked that the competition is almost always a little bit tougher. One way to respond is look at the kind of grantmaking they're doing and if it's more general in nature, probably a little less competitive.
1	In general, it's going to depend on what the success rate is. So, for example for [federally funded grantmaking agency application type] funds about 25% of the proposals. In contrast, the [federally funded grantmaking agency application type] are funding around 18% these days.
1	I don't. We celebrate every single dollar that we get, because I just don't think there's any easy money out there.
1	I don't know.
1	It's probably easier to get a Fulbright than it is an NSF. NSF and Wenner-Gren are probably the same. It's probably easier to get a Fulbright in some place where they don't have a lot of Fulbright seekers, like the Middle East versus a Fulbright in Germany, or the UK, which are famously very difficult.
1	They're all hard. There's nothing really that's easy.

1	Inevitably that is the case. At the [grantmaking private foundation], we tried to be up front with grantseekers that, very few unsolicited proposals were funded from a letter of inquiry. Folks needed to have some sense that if they were submitting a letter of inquiry without some of the background conversations and so on, that it was a remote chance that they would be considered for a full proposal and for funding. I'm not sure how transparent funders are about that, but there certainly are many foundations where that is the case. I think there is a trend now to not take unsolicited letters of inquiry just because it's just a waste of everybody's time is the general perspective. I will say, at least while I was at [grantmaking private foundation], we felt it was important to at least offer the opportunity and to be transparent about it because you just never know. I once had a colleague at [grantmaking private foundation] who said he tried to fund one unsolicited request every year just to keep himself open to new ideas, which I thought was sort of a neat idea.
1	The key here is research to understand, "Is the request that you're making a fit for that organization," and to get a sense—which you can do from the Foundation Center—of the volume of activity that the organization is engaged in in this area, the kinds of organizations that they're funding, and then to do the assessment of whether or not you're a likely fit or not.
1	They're all highly competitive. I wouldn't say any are easier. You never know, there's so many variables about how competitive a proposal might be even if they're all equally let's say, well prepared. It has to be the topic, it has to be if several applicants are covering the same topic, which one is deemed better for the goals of the [grantmaking private foundation]. So there's just too many variables to say what's easy and what isn't.
1	I think the fact that when a grantor has a lot more money makes it easier in some ways or more likely to get funded and we with such a limited budget makes it very competitive.
1	You can find out what the rejection rates are in journals for submitted papers.
1	You can find out what rejection rates are in different agencies.
1	The agencies have got to fit with the subject matter that you're interested in, obviously.
1	That is incredibly dependent on the situation and the background and the needs of the student.
1	Statistically, there are some grants that have lower acceptance rates and so they might be harder to get from that standpoint, or the probability of someone getting them might be a little lower.
1	It really is dependent on the fit of the student to what they're applying for.

1	Yeah, sure. Most organizations and agencies, not all but most, will publish their success rates. So that's one way to start thinking about where you want to look for funding.
1	It varies by agency and organization. At larger agencies like [federally funded grantmaking agency], there are different proposal mechanisms, there are different grant mechanisms. So, at [federally funded grantmaking agency], there's a [federally funded grantmaking agency grant application type], that's the standard five-year research grant. You'll be competing with different people when you apply for this [federally funded grantmaking agency grant application type] than you would be if you applied for a [different federally funded grantmaking agency grant application type], which is a pilot grant, or a [another different federally funded grantmaking agency grant application type], which is an exploratory research grant. And it's going vary by which institute within [federally funded grantmaking agency] you're applying to, whether they even accept those different mechanisms. I think everybody accepts a [federally funded grantmaking agency grant application type]. At [different federally funded grantmaking agency], there's not a whole lot of different options given a person's particular place in their career. There's the graduate research fellowship program for graduate students. There may be a handful of other things that tend to be really competitive because they're across the entire agency. There's the dissertation award, which only some of the programs participate in. And then there's the standard proposals which I think all programs participate in. So it really does vary by agency and organization.
1	Well, yes. Only in the sense that grants for which the fewest people apply they're easier to get.
1	Is an NSF grant easier to get than an SSRC grant versus a Wenner-Gren grant, just because of who is providing the money? No, I don't think so.
1	I guess one way is there may be a lower standard so it's easier to reach that standard, that may be true, but that means it doesn't get easier if more people apply. If two funders are supporting one out of 10 proposals and some do it in a very undiscriminating way, and some do it in a very discriminating way, they're both going to be equally hard to get, numerically. But then if they're doing it in an indiscriminating way well then it's more serendipitous about whether you're going to be the one to get it or not.
1	So it doesn't make it easier, the fact that their criteria is easier to fill. I think it just has to do with how many people are applying.
1	No. They are all highly competitive and it's highly likely that only 1 in 10 get recommended for funding. Too many applicants and not enough grant funds to award larger pools of grant applicants.

1	Of course, and for a variety of reasons.
1	Quite simply, some grant and fellowship programs give out more awards per application than others.
1	Yes. Not all grants are created equal. Some are going to be highly competitive, while others will focus on a more narrow field, which may eliminate competition. Some are huge, months-long work intensive projects and others are short two page write-ups followed up by a conversation with a program officer.
1	Every one is different and will be more or less competitive or a better or worse fit for you and your project.
1	I'm not really sure. Probably. There's a wide range of entities that provide grants for research and for some of them the competition is stiffer than for others. So, it really depends on how many other people are applying for the same funds. There are some programs that have a relatively small number of applicants and so those are easier to get.
1	The more components the grant application requires (such as research plan, education plan, longer term project), especially if one is given a limited amount of space to describe the details, the higher the bar for receiving an award.
1	It depends on the funding. Some agencies are really well endowed and so they have a lot of money and when there's a lot of money your chances of getting funded are higher than when only funds for one or two or three, a handful of projects are available.
1	There's a lot of factors that determine whether it's easy to get a grant or not.
1	Yeah. There are grants that are easier to obtain than others, there's no doubt about that. For example, we have a [federally funded grantmaking agency program], where the success rate is about 50%. And this is at a very tight time for funding when success rates are miserable in our major grant opportunities and there's our [federally funded grantmaking agency program] sitting at a 50% success rate.

1	Fellowships at [division of a federally funded grantmaking agency] have become easier lately and this at a point that the competitiveness of awards tends to go up and down with factors that vary across time. In the case of the fellowships, until about two years ago [division of a federally funded grantmaking agency] was one of the few institutes that awarded individual predoctoral fellowships. And as a result of that, probably quite a lot of graduate students who are not particularly interested in [field of study], nevertheless wrote their fellowships in [field of study] because this is where the money was. And that made our fellowship program very competitive. But within the last two years because of recommendations from various senior advisers, the rest of [federally funded grantmaking agency] was told to do what [division of a federally funded grantmaking agency] was doing, basically which is to introduce individual predoctoral fellowships and have those in their program. So suddenly it meant that those people who weren't very interested in [field of study], it didn't matter they could apply to the [federally funded grantmaking agency program] or wherever else they thought they really did want to go. So the pressure on our fellowship applications then got easier and as a result it's in the last couple of years been easier to get a fellowship awarded at [division of a federally funded grantmaking agency] than it was just two or three years ago. So you get this up and down nature of competition.
1	No matter how competitive it is or how easy it is, if you don't apply you don't get funded.

Table 6.15

Question 12: Do you feel that it is acceptable for an applicant to ask a funding organization for an explanation why the application was not selected for the award, why or why not?	
Total Number of Responses	**Answer Description**
9	Yes, it is acceptable; Yes, absolutely; Yeah, I think it's appropriate; Yeah, absolutely, it's acceptable; Yes, of course; Yeah, I think it is generally.
2	Absolutely depends on the organization and program; it depends upon the funder.
1	I just don't think it's a good idea because I don't think you're going to learn much from it. And I think it's like a courteous reply, "Sorry it wasn't funded. I hope that the door's open for future proposals," in other words, a communication back from the declined organization that's courteous. Much more than that I just don't think it's productive, that's been my experience.
1	The "why" part is because that comment I made about most of the time it's a competition among equals and you're probably not going to learn anything.
1	If you do find an opportunity to have a conversation with a program officer about why your grant was declined, don't get defensive. Because it won't serve you well. It doesn't help a proposal at all to say, "Well, wait a minute, that's what we're doing." The reviewer might say, "Well, I couldn't tell in your proposal." You don't want to do that.
1	If you get feedback, just take notes and end the conversation with an appreciation for the information and you're going to use it and we're going to consider reapplying in the near future.
1	My experience has been that people's hearts are so tied up with their work in this sector that any feedback is really kind of a personal affront, they get really angry—I've had people yell at me on the phone. I had national leaders, who you have read about in school, who felt so entitled to get money from us that after they got a decline letter from me, because of their position, they called and got really angry at me on the phone and it didn't help them at all, it didn't change anything. And then sometimes they felt good because they got it off their chest, and other times they felt embarrassed and later apologized, but it doesn't serve anything at all to get upset. I'd be careful in that area.
1	[Federally funded grantmaking agency] provides a lot of reviewer feedback and the reviewer summary. So there is what the reviewers provide, and then as program officers, we're always willing to provide additional feedback.

1	They should provide you with one. If they don't do it voluntarily, you should ask for them. You put in the effort, they reviewed it, and those kinds of things should be communicated.
1	So if you have a longstanding relationship, absolutely you should ask, "What was it about this that didn't fit for you or didn't seem to work out?" And the other thing I would say is how you ask. Not, "Why did you not fund my incredibly worthy work?" Because the truth is almost every funder gets many compelling requests every single day, and so this is nothing personal and in fact I think it's more about if you have a relationship with the grantmaker or the grantmaking team, and if you feel you can ask the question in a way that isn't going to put them on the defensive, then I think you should have the conversation. If you don't feel like you can answer both those questions comfortably with a yes, I don't think it's probably going to be helpful.
1	After the process is done, we send a letter and we provide the anonymous reviews for them and several of them commonly will call and want more clarification and we're happy to give it to them.
1	We happen to have a policy where we'll provide comments to all applicants. We didn't used to, and then it was something that I instituted a couple of years ago, because I felt that, particularly at this stage, students don't get a lot of feedback on their work, and are looking for any and all feedback.
1	Some programs have a policy of not giving comments.
1	We don't ever tell students why they got an award. It's because the selection community felt like they were the people that were the best fit to receive award in this cohort. And we actually don't give comments to students who receive the award, because we figure that those comments actually might be almost harmful, and unhelpful, because they are going to be going through an entire training program with us, where they will receive more feedback, and more personalized feedback on their entire project, and not just an application.
1	I think every single person that applies for our program would be able to benefit from the program in some way. But a lot of it is, where do we feel that our program can make the most impact, and where do we want to be? We have to be strategic in how we spend [grantmaking nonprofit organization]'s money. There's always going to be a student that you invested a lot of time and effort and resources, and they might not pan out in the way that you would want them to. But that doesn't mean that they didn't benefit from it in some way. Even for students who didn't finish the program, even for students that didn't finish their PhD program, that doesn't mean that they didn't benefit from it in some way.

1	A discussion with the program officer along those lines is good because you're actually trying to find out information from the program officer whether that person thinks that you should resubmit it or not. Because that person is in a good position to have good advise on that. And so yeah, that part of that conversation is exactly why was it not paid (awarded). And what you're trying to find at that point is, "Should I resubmit it?" And what it comes down to is you have productive conversations. You don't go in just to find out "Why they don't like me." Okay? You go in to find out, "Whether there's a chance they will like me and what I have to do to make them like me?" So in other words you're looking for a productive consequence to the call when you go into the call. But yes, you should have that call.
1	That's the way that it should be that there's transparent feedback to the PI.
1	Now, there are cases where people will call and they want to know why something didn't get selected, and there's not a whole lot that the program officer's going to be able to tell them that's not already in their written feedback.
1	Sometimes, especially students call, "Oh, what did I do wrong?" If you're a nice program officer that has time to do this, you could talk to them about what was it about the way they structured their proposal, or was there something in particular that the panel was concerned about, was it feasibility, was it just a bad idea, what were the issues and expand on that. But again, that's going be in their written comments.
1	One of the things that might not be in the written comments is about whether the panel thought that this should be resubmitted or not. And that's a really hard thing to have a conversation with someone about. Telling somebody that they shouldn't even bother resubmitting, that's hard to hear, especially as a student. But that is one thing that we do talk to applicants about.
1	Do all the program officers feel that it's part of their role as a program officer? Or is it just dependent on the personality of the person? I can't really speak for others... I can think of a couple program officers who take supporting students very seriously, supporting them in terms of their growth as grantwriters. But I don't think that's true across the board.

1	Well, let me see is it acceptable to ask? I guess one is, "Is it a good idea for the student to ask, but then is it an obligation of the agency to respond?" And I think, yes, it is an obligation of the agency to respond. Students need it and agencies need to be held accountable. Private foundations and government foundations give out money, public funds. The monies that foundations have are monies that are available because the government hasn't taxed them. Foundations are the creation of tax deductions that people give money to foundations. And foundations get 501c3 status because they're serving a public good. They are obliged to be publicly accountable, because they're using public funds for a private purpose. Or even if it's an NGO or nonprofit, still they're using it for a purpose that they've proposed that's in the public good. So yes, funders are obliged to account for themselves, so yeah, students should know why. Foundations should provide that information, regardless of why a student wants to know.
1	A public funding agency (government) has to provide peer review feedback. A foundation does not.
1	We want to know our writing weaknesses so they can be improved. Writing poorly over and over leads to frustration, and eventually, burnout.
1	It is very acceptable for an investigator whose [federally funded grantmaking agency] proposal is declined to ask for clarification or to ask specific questions. I recommend such requests be made via e-mail to the managing program officer. In some cases, an e-mail response can provide the information the investigator seeks. In other cases, an appointment for a phone conversation can be made to provide better lines of communication given the issues to be addressed.
1	It is acceptable to ask unless the funder specifically says it will not give a reason, and it is a good idea. But not good to pester funders if they do not respond.
1	All [grantmaking nonprofit organization] fellowships are determined by peer review and we encourage (but do not require) reviewers to provide feedback to applicants. Such feedback hopefully is helpful to applicants as they revise their projects and application materials, though that feedback may not add up to a precise rationale for why a project was not selected for funding. With over 1,000 applications for 70 awards in our central [grantmaking nonprofit organization] fellowship program, numerous really good projects are not selected for funding because there isn’t enough money to go around.

1	Most federal agencies will provide readers’ comments and scores (if applicable) for the application, without having to make a formal request. In the odd case that they are not provided, it is nearly always appropriate to ask for comments. Private funders, however, vary. Many will state plainly that they will not provide feedback. In those cases, do not ask for the comments. If a private funder is mute on the subject (on whether they provide feedback), go ahead and ask for feedback.
1	I think you want to do it carefully and in a respectful... I mean, I think it's perfectly fine to ask for feedback. I wouldn't put it in like, "Why didn't I get this funded?" But in terms of, "What would've made my proposal more competitive?"
1	Here's the thing, grant funding organizations have money so we want to give awards, and we want good proposals so that we can feel comfortable awarding money to projects. And so, we are quite comfortable and welcome the opportunity to give feedback on if it's going to result in a better, a strength in proposal in the next round. And I think that also it's not unreasonable to, particularly for public agencies like [federally funded grantmaking agency] or [different federally funded grantmaking agency] or state level organization that's using taxpayer funds, I think program officers have a duty to be able to justify our decisions, and I don't think it's inappropriate to provide that justification when it's requested in a respectful manner.

Table 6.16

Question 13: What might be suggested as the best resources for student grant writers to utilize?	
Total Number of Responses	**Answer Description**
5	Their advisors. Very often, especially the scientific executive committee will be looking at who the student's advisor is and that can often weigh on the decision. If this advisor is really a superior advisor, we know that the student will be well mentored during this process. So that's very important. They need to be in touch with their advisor before submitting, submit their proposal to their advisor. That often does not happen. We are very surprised about that; The first and probably best resources are their advisers; Their advisors are also good.
4	The Foundation Center is pretty helpful; A research source that's available for students or for individuals, the Foundation Center does have a database of foundations—Foundation Center's Online Directory—that will give to individuals. It isn't just students, but it will mostly be scholarships; So certainly the Foundation Center is a great place to start, the Foundation Center has a resource for tracking grants to individuals as well as grants to organizations. I often find, now being on the grantseeking side of things, that it is a helpful place. I think I know the world pretty well and then I'll look at the Foundation Center and there's a funder I hadn't considered. So I'm certainly a big fan of using the Foundation Center's grants database and information on funders. And of course, as you probably know, in most places in the country, there are libraries or other organizations that can give you free access to those resources.
1	GrantCraft.
1	Your state or national association of non profits.
1	The best resource are faculty in their department who have had students who have been successful, who have gotten funded themselves, or people who have served on panels. We have faculty who serve on panels, and then they have a sense of what makes good proposals, what doesn't make good proposals.
1	The Foundation Center's "Guide to Proposal Writing" book... I'm assuming there that they're looking for scholarship money and for research money.
1	Some universities have small departments, but some of the larger departments will keep their successful grants on file for future students to take a look at.

1	You might think about trying to find people with similar research projects who are successful, look at the awards database and find out if they're willing to share a copy of that with you.
1	Clarence Gravlee, at the University of Florida. If you just Google his name, and "Clarence Gravlee, proposal writing" or something, you'll find a webpage that he's done for his course that has sample grant proposals on it of successful Cultural Anthropology proposals.
1	Your campus will have resources about how to find grants to apply for.
1	There's a database that most universities belong to that you can have that stuff sent to you.
1	You definitely want to talk to your research office at your campus, or whoever is handling it for your department to find out what things to apply to.
1	Some departments, like say the University of Chicago, have elaborate resources on their website for students and so forth.
1	I think it's the student's sponsors, mentors, lab leaders, members of the faculty who've had experience with this.
1	It should really be in the department's interest as well to set up a mechanism by which they guide young people in how to seek and get grants. But if they don't do that, I think you just have to rely on the experience of your colleagues.
1	I would consider that the writing centers, fellowship offices, especially ones that provide one-on-one consultations are good.
1	Other peers that have received any particular kind of funding
1	I don't think there's one best resource. I think it really depends on the student, what he or she needs.
1	The best resources are local resources, first of all. There usually are people locally that you can talk to. And honestly, they are a huge resource for you, and learning to use them is the game.
1	You've got mentors around you. They were students once, believe it or not. And they can offer and provide great guidance because they know the system, they've been through it, and so they can actually tell you, "This is what you should do. These are the steps you should take."
1	Don't listen to just one voice, Get more than one voice.
1	Students are nearly always members of professional societies too, or very frequently members of professional societies. Watch out for the kind of things that the professional societies put on for students because they are also very useful stepping stones. You'll often, in those events, meet grant staff from different institutes, so you actually see them face to face, they aren't anonymous names behind an email. And that, again, gets you further into the process and moves you closer to the goal.

1	[Federally funded grantmaking agency] puts on workshops and things, and if you can get yourself into one of those workshops—and some of them are highly competitive—I will say, they are again tremendous resources where you can get one-on-one advice from the program staff over career moves as well as getting funding for your career as you go on.
1	Their own online reading.
1	Their research office. Now, that's going to really depend on what kind of place they're at. If they're at a really small institution, the research office might not have a lot of resources. But at bigger institutions, I know there are classes in grantwriting. They often have LISTSERVs or websites where they announce different opportunities that students might not otherwise know about.
1	The Social Science Research Council (SSRC)
1	Grant writing books.
1	Mentoring from a veteran grant writer.
1	Tuition-based internships with a veteran grant writer.
1	I am aware of some guides that proposal writers often use to prepare proposals because of similarities in outlines. Those may be useful, but they can also result in too much attention being placed on things that aren't important for a specific competition and too little attention given to other items.
1	I am not aware of others but I am sure there are lots online.
1	InfoEdGlobal SPIN (http://spin.infoedglobal.com).
1	I think that always the organization's information is a good source.
1	I think it's good to circulate... Ask people, both colleagues, both within your discipline and outside to read a draft of your proposal, because they can comment on how comprehensible it is, how well written, how sound it is. So people within your discipline can give you feedback on, "Yeah this makes a lot of sense," or, "No, this doesn't make a lot of sense." And then people from outside of your discipline can give you valuable information, about if this is understandable to someone who's not right in the field.
1	Well, I don't know of a specific thing. I would say there's a wide variety of resources.
1	If you have colleagues who have been successful in getting a grant from a particular agency that you're interested in, to ask them to see their proposal. Reading some proposals that have been successful I think is a really great resource because it just gives you an idea like, "Oh okay, I see how they framed it and how... " Even if it's not on the same topic you can just get a really good sense of how to frame projects, proposals, how to express things and so forth and to see what's successful.

Table 6.17

Question 14: Following the rejection of a proposal, is it acceptable for the grantseeker to ask for suggestions as to how to improve their request?/Do you feel that it is acceptable for an applicant to ask a funding organization for suggestions as to how to improve their application for future submittals?	
Total Number of Responses	**Answer Description**
1	Well, part of our job is to help people try to improve their proposals.
1	Yes absolutely, that's something I think that students should be asking front and center, especially.
1	That happens a lot of the time that the applicants will ask a program staff member for suggestions. Most program staff will say the suggestions were in the summary statement, in other words, read the review. The reason for that is that the program staff do not have a lot of influence directly in who gets funded. The people who have the influence are the reviewers, because they are the ones who vote the score, which is the single most influential factor in being paid (awarded). So when they say "Read the summary statement", they are correct. In other words, the advice is contained in the summary statement. They can sometimes help you interpret a summary statement. And sometimes there's one critical reviewer and there are two positive reviewers and the program staff member can sometimes have information like, "Oh well, I know that reviewer's going off to study [blank blank] so that person won't be around if you were to do a resubmission. That might be of interest to you." So they can pass on information like that.
1	Do you feel it's acceptable? Yeah, sure. It doesn't hurt to ask. It doesn't hurt to ask and the funder can always say "No."
1	Sure.
1	Why or why not? I guess for the same reason that the funding process should be a learning process. Foundations should learn from their applicants, what the trends of research are, and what they can do to improve and focus their funding. Similarly, it should be a process of mutual learning. It's like grading. The purpose behind grading... One purpose is for students to understand what they've learned and what they've not and to help to identify what they need to learn, in order to become better scholars. The other purpose for grading is just to rank people, so you can decide who gets what, and it's prestige and elite kinds of stuff.

1	A lot of it is that this should be informative learning. I think it's very important that students get feedback about their proposals and in the past, 20 years ago, we did not, as a whole, did not have a policy of giving feedback to students. We now do. We ask evaluators to write... To describe at least in a sentence why they evaluated the proposal as they did, negatively or positively. And we make that any student who wants that feedback can get it from us. Not all programs do that.
1	I think it's very important for students to hear why they got turned down. The hard thing is, just because you get an explanation, the evaluation might not be a good one. If faculty misunderstand the proposal or misread it or they use a criterion that's not necessarily the most important but it's hard to help students use criticism, and take it with a grain of salt. To take from it what they can learn and not necessarily take everything as being the truth. Not "necessarily"... That's not the right word, but you have to learn from it but you don't have to see it as the whole explanation for why you didn't get funding. I think equally, it would be helpful to students who do get funding to hear those same comments. What was it about their proposal that was convincing and persuasive? I think it's equally, especially for our program where they're going to be developing their proposals, to hear why someone thinks that they deserve support can be very helpful in thinking about how to take advantage of that support. What a faculty member thinks about what a student can learn may be different from what the student thinks, so it can be equally valuable. No one who ever gets a funding proposal calls up and said, "Why did I get it? Can you explain to me why I got it?" But that could be hugely helpful, I think. So, it's something that never happens. But I think it could be... Why does [Federally funded grantmaking agency] give funding to one person and not another, or the person who gets it. It could be very helpful in terms of thinking about the importance of what they're doing and planning how to do it. And making it even more effective. Yeah. But that just never happens. Success is an end in and of itself. Not a means to an end.
1	Yes, It shows that you want to be a new funded partner and you truly want to correct weaknesses in your funding request.
1	It is acceptable to ask. Some funding agencies can provide more directed feedback than others, but a polite inquiry to inquire whether specific questions can be asked or more information can be requested is permissible in most contexts.
1	It is acceptable unless the funder indicates that they will not respond.
1	It will vary from funder to funder.
1	If a funder explicitly states that they will not provide feedback, then it is not appropriate to ask for suggestions to improve an application.

1	If I were going to ask about how to improve an application, I would wait to do so until I am ready to begin preparing the new application (as opposed to immediately following a rejection). I would also be prepared with my own suggestions or thoughts on how I propose to improve the application. Then I would move forward with contacting the program officer.
1	It is important to note that some funders will be extremely helpful in providing guidance and suggestions, while others will provide little to no feedback (some federal agencies are prohibited from providing any assistance to an applicant that might be deemed inequitable, so be patient with these folks).
1	As long as contact with the funder is not forbidden or discouraged, it is appropriate to begin a conversation with them to see what kind of feedback you get.

Chapter Seven: Findings, Discussion, and Conclusion

Introduction

The goal of this dissertation was to examine grant-proposal writing as a craft and potential ways to improve grant-proposal writing knowledge and application readiness for students seeking funding assistance attending postsecondary education. In working to achieve that goal, this dissertation set out to answer the question "What might experts and professionals in the field recommend to students involved in grant-proposal writing to assist them to better understand the process, develop the necessary skills, utilize the available resources, and explore the possible avenues to writing grant-proposals to enable students to be more successful in their funding pursuits?" Using ethnographic field methods to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data, the results are discussed in further detail in the paragraphs below. The Data Management - Data and Ethnographic Codebook and the Draft Language of Email Correspondence from Researcher to Interviewee and Interview Questions are available respectively as Appendix A and Appendix B.

This chapter begins with a summary of findings, organized by interview question; followed by a write-up of the conclusions, also organized by interview question. The chapter next provides a discussion on the ways in which the research and results have answered the research question as well as how the results relate to the literature. In addition, limitations of the study will be examined and suggestions for future research are also offered. The chapter then evaluates the dissertation's broader impacts and concludes with a summary of the key aspects presented in the dissertation.

Summary of Findings (Organized by Interview Question)

All findings discussed in the paragraphs that follow will provide the results listed in descending order of frequency of mention with the actual count number in parentheses following the response. In instances where the response listed has the same frequency count as another response listed for the same question, the responses will be listed in a random order with no value assigned that is greater than or less than any other response with the same frequency count. Unique responses with only a singular mention by an interviewee will be collectively presented by the sum of how many unique responses occurred per question followed by the range of answers within these unique responses.

Question 1a: What are the criteria upon which proposals are ranked?

The top criteria expressed by multiple interviewees, listed in order of frequency of mention, were: intellectual merit (8), significance (7), broader impacts (5), fit (5), the quality of the proposal (5), innovation (3), research design/approach (3), investigators (3), credibility (2), environment (2), evaluation and reflection mechanisms in the proposal (2), feasibility (2), reasonable budget (2), and quality/clarity of the research question (2). This question elicited 13 other unique responses. The range of answers within these unique responses included: the contents of the proposal, overall impact, whether the student will benefit from the program, the likelihood that the project will be conducted successfully, and responses that did not directly answer the question.

Question 1b: Why do you think there is validity in using these criteria?

The explanations of validity most frequently discussed by multiple interviewees, listed in order of frequency of mention, were: criteria based on the mission of the funding agency/ criteria seek to advance the funding agency's mission (3), criteria established a long time ago (2), and criteria vetted through peer review practices (2). This question elicited 14 other unique responses. The range of answers within these unique responses included: organized philanthropy is such a small pool of money, that nearly all of them are interested in using their small resource to try to leverage somehow affecting change, or improvement, or develop their testing of an idea in their area of interest; criteria resonate with funding agency interests; the standards that are generally used by peers are those of the mainstream thinking within the disciplines (and that's what your proposal has to be oriented towards); criteria developed to elicit the types of applications the funding agency desires; criteria focus on the main aspects of the project; there is a general agreement among scientists that these are the important questions to be asking when you're evaluating a project or a project idea; criteria depends on the funders' goals and the researchers' goals and the universities' goals, so depending on what your goals are, you're going to have to change the criteria for judgment; criteria are designed to give the funding agency a complete view of the project; criteria are designed to identify the potential for a project to make significant contributions to generalizable knowledge that extend well beyond the specific project; and following the funding agency’s criteria is fundamental in presenting information that the funding agency finds important, the criteria that they set forth are designed to give them all the information that they need in order to assess the proposal.

Question 2: What aspects make a proposal stand out from the others?

The aspects mentioned by multiple interviewees, listed in order of frequency of mention, were: clarity in writing (5), very well written (4), proposal looks like it would help the funder accomplish their mission (3), things that are pushing the terrain of knowledge past what we already know (3), some unique perspective that was different from what we were hearing (2), follows the directions of the application process (2), addresses an interesting and compelling problem in an innovative way (2), the proposal articulates a complete and coherent approach for conducting research in a scientifically sound way (2), clearly expressed research questions and a design that makes it possible to answer them (2), and how persuasive an application is as to the significance of the project proposed (2). This question elicited 30 other unique responses. The range of answers within these unique responses included: recognizing that there's a lot of competition for this small amount of money, format the proposal to make it easier for the reviewer to read it, the most successful ones for our purposes are usually someone who's done a pilot study and can offer some results that show that the proposed work is doable and relevant, succinct but complete, has clear hypothesis and predictions as well as ways of testing them, makes a persuasive argument that the research can be done and propose persuasively how it will get done, has to convince peers/reviewers that this is outstanding work in the top 10% of those that apply, applicant shows potential, the proposal explains why research findings are likely to have broader scholarly and practical value in ways that excite reviewers and make them eager to see the proposed work completed, the proposal makes clear one or a few core questions grounded in the theoretical framework on which the project will focus, the project can draw on and contribute to theory in other fields, proposal answers why the project is important to the field, and proposal answers why is the project is important to the funder.

Question 3a: What are some of the common errors that are frequently seen on submitted grant applications?

Common errors discussed by multiple interviewees, listed in order of frequency of mention, were: not following directions/guidelines (5), incomplete application (4), not understanding or not having done the homework or research to understand who it is you are asking money from and what their interests are (2), the proposal fails to frame the project in a broad context (2), basically not connecting the dots/the applicant poses an interesting broad question, but it's not clear how the specific aims of the project are going to address that broader question or fail to adequately describe methods (2), writing in specialized jargon (2), not a good research design (2), and overambition/the applicant plans to do too much in the however many years of the award they are asking for (2). This question elicited 61 other unique responses. The range of answers within these unique responses included: that even if there was alignment, the proposal didn't show it; remembering the foundation has a mission, and a grant to you, is to help the foundation accomplish its mission; most of the proposal is description of the core dissertation and it's not clear what the new stuff is with regard to how they are going to expand or improve on the core dissertation; the context of the core dissertation is not described sufficiently enough and they are not distinguishing between what's the core dissertation and what's new; the applicant takes shortcuts—some of those shortcuts mean that they're not doing good research, not really looking to make sure that they're a fit, sometimes they don't answer all of the questions, missing questions that are asked and/or not providing full information that the funding agency is looking for; technical errors can make a difference; not having a clear hypothesis; naiveté among young people about what's going to be funded; the applicant hasn't clearly stated what they're going to do; students need to understand what are the different components of a proposal and they need to address all of them clearly and carefully; proposed project appeared beyond the capacity of the grant applicant to carry out; proposed beneficiaries of the project had no role in identifying problems and solutions; and why a method becomes a methodology, how a technique of investigation will become a way of learning, and how you will learn what you need to answer your original research question.

Question 3b: Why do you believe that grant applicants make these errors?

Opinions regarding explanation for errors offered by multiple interviewees, listed in order of frequency of mention, were: applicants don't have experience in grant writing (2), students are not really schooled or knowledgeable about writing a grant proposal (2), and applicants don’t read the guidelines in full/don’t follow directions (2). This question elicited 18 other unique responses. The range of answers within these unique responses included: applicants are so passionate and committed to this idea they have, they forget that the funding agency has a mission too; sometimes applicants take shortcuts; applicants are not doing good research; applicants are not really looking to make sure that they're a fit; frequently applicants are under tremendous pressure, because they're either missing the deadline or they're very close to the deadline; students don't know how to communicate their research yet; the applicants just haven't really thought through the project; applicants are so focused on their own specific case that they forget to articulate how research will be valuable far beyond that specific case; failing to understand how/why grant applications get funded; and applicants leave too little time to do the necessary preliminary work, to outline and articulate the proposal, and to write, revise, revised and revise a proposal yet again, also getting solid feedback from others before each revision.

Question 4a: What percentage of grantseekers would you estimate are in contact with your funding organization prior to application submittal?

Response provided by multiple interviewees, listed in order of frequency of mention, were: no correlation—I think people think there is, but I don't think there is (2). This question elicited 71 other unique responses. The range of answers within these unique responses included: being unable to quantify, actual number or percentage estimates, statements that very few grantseekers contact the funding agency, opinions expressed that more grantseekers should contact the funding agency, sharing ideas for why the results are what they are, and responses that did not directly answer the question.

Question 4b: Of that percentage, how many would you estimate have applications that are funded?

There were no responses provided that were shared by multiple interviewees for this question. This question elicited 8 unique responses. The range of answers within these unique responses included: actual number or percentage estimates; that none of this impacts success rates; and candidates who are in touch before submitting a proposal before have a much higher chance of being funded, assuming that the quality of their work is similar.

Question 5: Beyond the basic requested information, what else would you suggest to have included in the proposal?

Suggestions beyond the basic requested information mentioned by multiple interviewees, listed in order of frequency of mention, were: nothing, only what they ask for—in fact, that would be an example of a mistake that's often made—people believe that attachments, and evidence, and evaluation reports, and letters of support and such, strengthen a case for a proposal, and they don't (7); once you've put everything in the application that is required, that really is it, because the application is designed to be complete (2); and instructions in the competition solicitation should be followed carefully (2). This question elicited 62 other unique responses. The range of answers within these unique responses included: different funding agencies have differing requirements, some funding agencies go back and forth about whether or not you're supposed to be allowed or not allowed, absolutely send a link to something you want the funding agency to be aware of, links are discouraged, submit a sample of your work or previously published work, include a list of suggested or not suggested reviewers, IRB documentation permitted, letters of support accepted/encouraged, letters of recommendation discouraged, letters of collaboration permitted, it might be helpful to have a letter acknowledging that that organization has agreed to host you and will offer you certain support, the idea that the standard is there for a reason so that everybody has the same space to make their case, and responses that did not directly answer the question.

Question 6: What advice would you give to first-time grantseekers?

The advice offered by multiple interviewees, listed in order of frequency of mention, were: following directions is just incredibly important (3); the fit and the homework are important (2); for that beginner, don't do it alone. Have a support system that helps you make sure that the product you submit is really well written, so that the focus of the reviewer is on the content and they're not struggling to find it (2); research your funder, know what their interests are and do a candid self assessment of whether or not you're going to fit that area of interest or not (2); actually read the grants guide. Everything is in there, and it is like reading stereo instructions--It's not fun reading, but it's there (2); contact the program officer, letting them know that they're going to be seeing a proposal from you, making sure that you're sending it to the right place is really important, because you don't want to waste time writing something and then find out that it went to the wrong review panel (2); and seek out a mentor who is a successful grant recipient from the funding agency to which you are applying (2). This question elicited 71 other unique responses. The range of answers within these unique responses included: set up a system close to you that ensures that you write well; get lots of people to read over what you've written before you submit—especially give it to people who are not experts on the topic, because they can give good advice on, "Does this make sense to me or not?"; do good research; read successful proposals; if the funder permits it or is interested in it, pick up the phone, drop an email, do some sort of outreach before you actually submit a full letter of proposal or letter of inquiry or full proposal; pay attention to submission requirements and processes; pray hard because one of the real problems which we now have is that the success ratios are so, so limited; if you get rejected, don't give up; apply–That sounds stupid but the number of times people stop short of applying is sad, the number one rule of funding is this: If you don't apply you will not get funded; know what it is you want because that's going to affect the kind of grant that you write; a grant proposal is marketing, you are marketing your project to the reader; new grant-seekers underestimate is how much work they're going to have to do to produce a good grant proposal; leave plenty of time to write the proposal; first of all, respect the review process, so don't get mad… And bear in mind that a lot of worthy proposals don't get funded due to limited funds or other kinds of constraints; read the reviews and feedback that you get, seek out additional information about the proposal shortcomings, and then, determine if it's worth revising; recognize that persistence pays—while a funder's "no thanks" message can be disappointing, a "no" does not necessarily mean "never", it may mean "not right now."; if at first, you don't succeed, revise and submit again; and finally, it is really easy to get discouraged or angry when you don't get funded the first time around, but just because you are declined doesn't mean that the idea wasn't good or the project's not worth pursuing.

Question 7: What print or digital publications might be recommended to beginning grant proposal writers?

Responses regarding print or digital publications by multiple interviewees, listed in order of frequency of mention, were: there are resources out there but I am unable to give any names/titles/authors (5); the competition solicitation and related materials provided by the funding agency/the individual funding agency's website (4); On the Art of Writing Proposals available on the Social Science Research Council website (3);

there's literature on this and that you can get, just look up "successful grants" in Amazon and you'll come up with some books (2); as well as The Foundation Center and Foundation Directory Online (2). This question elicited 18 other unique responses. The range of answers within these unique responses included: GrantCraft; that most states have a state association of nonprofits and most of them provide both support for grant seeking in the publication side, materials, and they also do educational programs; National Council of Nonprofits; Grantmakers for Effective Organizations; Foundation Center's "Guide to Proposal Writing" book; the idea that in each field they're going to have people who have published things about how to write a grant/how to be successful in the grant writing process; the NIH website; Philanthropy News Digest; Grants.Gov; the federal register; the comment that a beginning grant-proposal writer is not going to find that much in print or digital publications; and additional responses that did not directly answer the question.

Question 8: What are some of the social and cultural influences that either help or hinder the development of skills and attitudes supportive of fostering effective grant applications?

There were no responses provided that were shared by multiple interviewees for this question. This question elicited 38 unique responses. The range of answers within these unique responses included: the notion of diversity of all kinds, whether it's race or culture or geography or field of practice, is an essential element in the work we do, so it has to be an essential element in how we represent it, such as proposals; we were looking for those organizations that were of a community and working with a community in order to both create, implement, evaluate, operate, et cetera; so if it was done, whatever the opposite is in doing something to somebody or for them, suggested to us that all those different elements to diversity, but particularly issues of culture and context, were not being given the opportunity to have impact on the organization—because if you're doing something with somebody, truly and genuinely, and they own it and value it, the potential of it being sustained by that community is quite high. And if it's not, sustainability is almost always at risk. When money goes away and the organization changes its focus, that thing you may have helped create may not exist anymore; something that most funders are looking for is that life is complicated and the working community is very connected and integrated; anything that inhibits people from showing their proposals to others or hinders getting advice from others; I don't think that there are hindrances to getting the money, except people being afraid that they won't get it, and then not doing the application; the grantmaker sees themselves as a partner. A very long time ago, grantmakers were benevolent. Now, they're partners. And so they really work so hard to make sure that they are equitable in how they distribute funds and how they respond to organizations; the biggest impediment is probably a hubris about what it is that the genre of writing a grant proposal is; the biggest impediment is people believing that there is a level playing field in terms of some standard what constitutes good anthropology versus bad anthropology, instead of looking to the specifics of each individual organization. "Is this the right organization for me? Am I applying to the right place for this particular project?"; I think the big thing though is that really people have a hard time understanding that proposal writing is not just another kind of academic writing, but it's in the same way that writing a journal article is, there's not just one kind of writing; that's the university. We see the results of that in that we get a lot of applications from one or two or three or four particular schools so we know that they are promoting our funding agency that they are encouraging their students to submit. And so I think that that burden is on the shoulders of the academic institutions that the applicants are from; I think that a lot of this is really going to depend on the stage of the student. Undergraduate students have different motivations than graduate students do, as far as I've seen and so I think that the social and cultural influences that inform how they go about seeking grant applications, it's very different; there's maybe some fear about the process that seems overwhelming that people don't ask for help. They don't get feedback from others. They don't communicate with their grants officers and so forth. All those kinds of things can actually I think hinder the development of skills and attitudes; some of the cultural influences—in terms of academic culture—some of it is the culture of a department. There are some students that their department just doesn't have a culture of pushing students to seek out funding. And then there are other departments that do, a lot of Anthropology departments have very good infrastructure for pushing out students to seek grant applications, and that's because most of them have to do field research, and so they need money to go out in the field.

Question 9: Following the acceptance of a proposal, what would you advise should be the next course of action for a grantseeker?

The advice offered by multiple interviewees, listed in order of frequency of mention, were: celebrate (4); start working on the project (2); and say "thanks" and some expression of appreciation for the award, excitement about working with the funding agency, and asking for instructions as what to do next (2). This question elicited 32 other unique responses. The range of answers within these unique responses included: some formal communication will occur, a lot of if depends on the scale of the grant, sometimes it makes a difference on if it's a general grant or a strategic grant, more focused strategic grants, or initiatives of the funding agency. There's usually some formal meeting after an award. But you just wait, they'll tell you what comes next; our manners and our communications with grantmakers are horrible, so you've got to make sure you say thank you; as soon as you have said thank you, you want to fill out their paperwork; as well as you want to make sure that you understand with the grantmaker about the reporting requirements, and if your project will look better with different reporting, you want to talk to them about the flexibility of doing that.

Question 10: Following the rejection of a proposal, what would you advise should be the next course of action for a grantseeker?

The advice extended by multiple interviewees, listed in order of frequency of mention, was: Take time—at least a few weeks—to let the disappointment subside. Criticisms in reviews and panel summaries will hurt at first, but with some time, the investigator often gets better perspective and realizes what shortcomings and weaknesses have been identified. If there are questions that linger, the investigator can contact the managing program officer to ask for clarifications or more information (2). This question elicited 39 other unique responses. The range of answers within these unique responses included: it's usually not at all productive to have a conversation with a foundation after you've been declined. It's in that awkward world of the passion you have for your work will often get in the way of reason; two things happen as you learn along the way doing homework on one funding agency. One is you might discover how the proposal that was declined may not align because you get to know what alignment looks like. Or you might get more convinced than ever that it does align and then you might consider resubmitting; take the responsibility on the shoulders of the grantseeker and not try to put it back on the grantmaker, remembering that even with the very best aligned proposal it's almost always a selection among equals, and a decline is not a criticism of the quality of the proposal; having rejected a proposal once, people are much more likely to consider a second proposal; you shouldn't take "no" as in "not ever."; and say thank you. It took a grantmaker to say this to me, "Those of us who are seeking money, never think about the person on the other side of the desk." It's so true. And especially a program officer, who has gone to bat for you, they feel bad at this point, because they got turned down also. And so saying thank you to the program officer for really helping, and saying thank you to the organization for taking time to do due diligence, I think it's very, very important. And to me, that's the next step in getting me closer to a grant. I just see a turn down as part of the process.

Question 11: Do you believe that there are grants that are easier to obtain than others, why or why not?

There were no responses provided that were shared by multiple interviewees for this question. This question elicited 34 unique responses. The range of answers within these unique responses included: in general, it's going to depend on what the success rate is; I don't. We celebrate every single dollar that we get, because I just don't think there's any easy money out there; it's probably easier to get a Fulbright than it is an NSF. NSF and WennerGren are probably the same. It's probably easier to get a Fulbright in some place where they don't have a lot of Fulbright seekers, like the Middle East versus a Fulbright in Germany, or the UK, which are famously very difficult; they're all hard, there's nothing really that's easy; you can find out what rejection rates are in different agencies; statistically, there are some grants that have lower acceptance rates and so they might be harder to get from that standpoint, or the probability of someone getting them might be a little lower; it really is dependent on the fit of the student to what they're applying for; is an NSF grant easier to get than an SSRC grant versus a Wenner-Gren grant, just because of who is providing the money? No, I don't think so; not all grants are created equal. Some are going to be highly competitive, while others will focus on a more narrow field, which may eliminate competition; every one is different and will be more or less competitive or a better or worse fit for you and your project; as well as responses that did not directly answer the question.

Question 12: Do you feel that it is acceptable for an applicant to ask a funding organization for an explanation why the application was not selected for the award, why or why not?

Opinions offered by multiple interviewees, listed in order of frequency of mention, were: yes, it is acceptable (9); as well as it absolutely depends on the organization and program/it depends upon the funding agency (2). This question elicited 13 other unique responses. The range of answers within these unique responses included: I just don't think it's a good idea because I don't think you're going to learn much from it, and I think it's like a courteous reply, "Sorry it wasn't funded. I hope that the door's open for future proposals"; the "why" part is because most of the time it's a competition among equals and you're probably not going to learn anything; if you do find an opportunity to have a conversation with a program officer about why your grant was declined, don't get defensive; my experience has been that people's hearts are so tied up with their work in this sector that any feedback is really kind of a personal affront, they get really angry; they should provide you with one—if they don't do it voluntarily, you should ask for them—you put in the effort, they reviewed it, and those kinds of things should be communicated; we happen to have a policy where we'll provide comments to all applicants; some programs have a policy of not giving comments; a discussion with the program officer along those lines is good because you're actually trying to find out information from the program officer whether that person thinks that you should resubmit it or not; one of the things that might not be in the written comments is about whether the panel thought that this should be resubmitted or not—and that's a really hard thing to have a conversation with someone about—telling somebody that they shouldn't even bother resubmitting, that's hard to hear, especially as a student, but that is one thing that we do talk to applicants about; a public funding agency (government) has to provide peer review feedback, a foundation does not; as well as responses that did not directly answer the question.

Question 13: What might be suggested as the best resources for student grant writers to utilize?

Suggestions for resources discussed by multiple interviewees, listed in order of frequency of mention, were: their advisors (5) and the Foundation Center is a great place to start, the Foundation Center has a resource for tracking grants to individuals as well as grants to organizations. I often find, now being on the grantseeking side of things, that it is a helpful place. I think I know the world pretty well and then I'll look at the Foundation Center and there's a funder I hadn't considered. So I'm certainly a big fan of using the Foundation Center's grants database and information on funders. And of course, as you probably know, in most places in the country, there are libraries or other organizations that can give you free access to those resources (4). This question elicited 34 other unique responses. The range of answers within these unique responses included: GrantCraft; your state or national association of non profits; faculty in their department who have had students who have been successful, who have gotten funded themselves, or people who have served on panels; the Foundation Center's "Guide to Proposal Writing" book; some universities have small departments, but some of the larger departments will keep their successful grants on file for future students to take a look at; you might think about trying to find people with similar research projects who are successful, look at the awards database and find out if they're willing to share a copy of that with you; Clarence Gravlee, at the University of Florida; your research office at your campus, or whoever is handling it for your department to find out what things to apply to; some departments, like say the University of Chicago, have elaborate resources on their website for students; there usually are people locally that you can talk to; professional societies; their own online reading; some federally funded grantmaking agencies puts on workshops and things; InfoEdGlobal SPIN; mentoring from a veteran grant writer; and grant writing books.

Question 14: Following the rejection of a proposal, is it acceptable for the grantseeker to ask for suggestions as to how to improve their request?/Do you feel that it is acceptable for an applicant to ask a funding organization for suggestions as to how to improve their application for future submittals?

There were no responses provided that were shared by multiple interviewees for this question. This question elicited 16 unique responses. The range of answers within these unique responses included: part of our job is to help people try to improve their proposals; yes absolutely, that's something I think that students should be asking front and center; it doesn't hurt to ask and the funder can always say "No"; a lot of it is that this should be informative learning—I think it's very important that students get feedback about their proposals, it's very important for students to hear why they got turned down. The hard thing is, just because you get an explanation, the evaluation might not be a good one. If faculty misunderstands the proposal or misread it or they use a criterion that's not necessarily the most important but it's hard to help students use criticism, and take it with a grain of salt. To take from it what they can learn and not necessarily take everything as being the truth; yes, it shows that you want to be a new funded partner and you truly want to correct weaknesses in your funding request; for the same reason that the funding process should be a learning process—funding agencies should learn from their applicants, what the trends of research are, and what they can do to improve and focus their funding—similarly, it should be a process of mutual learning; it will vary from funder to funder; and as long as contact with the funder is not forbidden or discouraged, it is appropriate to begin a conversation with them to see what kind of feedback you get.

Conclusions (Organized by Interview Question)

All conclusions discussed in the paragraphs that follow will discuss the results in terms of how the findings are important or relevant based on the aims and scope of this dissertation—particularly the aim of assisting and encouraging the development of skills, knowledge, and attitudes supportive of fostering effective funding applications. Additional observations of interest will be noted as applicable.

Question 1a: What are the criteria upon which proposals are ranked?

The criteria provided by experts and professionals in the field was diverse but all of the responses appeared to be useful to help students better understand what qualities funding agencies are looking for as they review grant applications. What was deemed really valuable beyond noting the most prevailing criteria used by these funding agencies was the different ways of discussing the same criteria. People simply have different learning styles and a grantseeker may gain a greater understanding from one way of discussing criteria over another. One interesting takeaway from the unique responses to this question which drew an interesting parallel between criteria mentioned was that the idea of intellectual merit essentially consists of investigator, environment, and research design/approach; and the idea of broader impacts essentially consists of innovation and significance.

Question 1b: Why do you think there is validity in using these criteria?

It is useful for grantseekers to note that funding agencies associate the validity of the criteria that is used as based upon and/or involved with advancing the mission of the funding agency. That knowledge will assist grantseekers to pay closer attention to the mission of the funding agency so that proposals may be written to be better aligned. However, with regard to the other responses with a noted frequency of mention, they were not deemed to be as important based on the aim and scope of this research. The ideas that criteria were established a long time ago and are vetted through peer review practice does little to help a student grantseeker understand why the criteria are important and has a rather “because others say they are” vibe. Unique responses were deemed more valuable to facilitating student grantseeker understanding, especially the ideas that criteria are designed to give the funding agency a complete view of the project, and without designating specific criteria, there would be very little uniformity between proposals, and it is likely that many applicants would inadvertently omit information that the funding agency needs to make a funding decision.

Question 2: What aspects make a proposal stand out from the others?

The diversity of aspects that make a proposal stand out proposed by experts and professionals in the field, from those with a frequency of mention to the unique responses, added an array of constructive insight for student grantseekers to take in to consideration as they draft their proposals. In particular, the different ways of discussing the most frequently mentioned aspect of “clarity in writing” were beneficial to address the range of ideas that funding agencies may intend that aspect to include.

Question 3a: What are some of the common errors that are frequently seen on submitted grant applications?

The collection of responses put forth by experts and professionals in the field with regard to common errors frequently seen on grant proposals were incredibly valuable in terms of providing student grantseekers with a list of mistakes to avoid so as to help them develop their skills to be more successful in their funding pursuits. It is fascinating that "not following directions" and "incomplete application" were the most frequently mentioned errors since they are by far the easiest errors to avoid.

Question 3b: Why do you believe that grant applicants make these errors?

Experts and professionals in the field offered some very sound opinions on why they believe that applicants make the errors that they do. From those responses with a frequency of mention to the unique responses, the opinions shared in this question called attention to a variety of ways in which student grantseekers can work to better develop their skills before submitting a grant-proposal. It was interesting to note that the top two answers based on frequency of mention—that students don't have experience in grant-proposal writing and are not trained in how to write a grant—relate to the student's background and/or experience, whereas the vast majority of the other responses put the accountability on the shoulders of the students for what they are not doing but should be.

Question 4a: What percentage of grantseekers would you estimate are in contact with your funding organization prior to application submittal?

Of the opinions provided by experts and professionals in the field, the only answer with a frequency of mention count stated that the funding agency did not think that there was a correlation between contacting a funding agency before submitting an application and being awarded funding. In contrast, the unique responses ran the gamut for diverse answers as to whether contact with the funding agency by the applicant before an application submittal was beneficial—some said it just never seemed like it was useful to the applicant, even though the applicant thought it might be; while others said when that contact does happen, it increases the likelihood of getting a grant, because the grantmaker knows the applicant. It is interesting in and of itself that there was such a difference of opinions from funding agencies regarding this topic. The key takeaway from the results to this question was that funding agencies do not think negatively of respectfully contacting them with a legitimate reason for the contact before an application submittal but whether it is beneficial depends on the interaction and the attitude of the funding agency personnel.

One incredibly valuable point that was made in the unique responses was that "this is a little bit difficult to answer because we have different kinds of people who are submitting proposals. You have first time submitters, and then you have veteran submitters. The percentage is small, but that doesn't mean that everyone who submits a proposal hasn't at some point previously been in communication with the funding organization—It's the way which you're thinking about the question's a little bit challenging, because it's not that simple." Admittedly, when this question was conceived, the researcher had not given thought to those factors in what is, without a doubt, a justifiable difference in approach for contacting a funding agency from one grantseeker to another. As a result, this question was not written in a way that took into account the difference between first-time and veteran grantseekers contacting a funding agency, nor was not written in a way that took into consideration whether the applicant could have been in contact at some point previously with the funding organization thereby explaining why there was the absence of contact later on. Although the variety of responses obtained from this question as it was originally written brought forth useful information for grantseekers to consider as intended, the researcher acknowledges that this question would have been better written if it had addressed those two aforementioned factors.

An observation regarding the unique responses from this question was that there was unexpected ambiguity in the question regarding why and in what form the contact was taking place. Several interviewees differentiated as to whether grantseekers were contacting the funding agency to determine if the applicant was a good fit for submitting a proposal, for technical assistance, for advice, to give an unsolicited proposal, or if the contact took place during some kind of outreach event or workshop. Regardless of the type of contact, a common theme expressed was that funding agencies are willing to communicate with grantseekers and that they wish applicants would contact them but very few applicants actually do contact the funding agencies before submitting an application.

Another important point worth noting from the unique responses was that “If you have any doubts, it certainly doesn't hurt you to communicate with the funding organization in advance. But even people who communicate with us, they don't necessarily write good proposals." This comment is noteworthy because it reminds grantseekers that even if they cultivate a positive relationship with the funding agency, they still need to develop their skills and submit a well written proposal if they want to be awarded funding.

Question 4b: Of that percentage, how many would you estimate have applications that are funded?

Although there were no responses provided that were shared by multiple interviewees for this question, the vast majority of opinions expressed by experts and professionals in the field held the general belief that, assuming that the quality of their work is equal, applicants who have been in contact with funding agencies before submitting an application (not differentiating what that type of contact was) have a higher chance of being funded than those applicants who are not in contact. Those interviewees who did not share that opinion either said the number could not be calculated/quantified or they maintained that none of this impacts success rates.

Question 5: Beyond the basic requested information, what else would you suggest to have included in the proposal?

The overall sentiment from both responses with a frequency of mention and unique responses was not to include anything additional. Including additional items can have a negative impact because the application is designed to be complete and it may be perceived as distracting or disrespectful to the grantmakers. Several interviewees suggested that applicants should use the cultivation time both before and after the application to send additional things.

The suggestions by experts and professionals in the field offered in the unique responses varied on the subject of website links, media accompaniments, appendices, lists of suggested or not suggested reviewers, and letters of support from host organizations helping to prove feasibility for the applicant's project; reaffirming the notion that different agencies do things differently as well as reiterating the importance of reading the grant application guidelines and any specific instructions related to that particular funding opportunity provided by the funding agency.

Question 6: What advice would you give to first-time grantseekers?

The advice provided by experts and professionals in the field covered a range of topics that were deemed to be very beneficial to help students with an array of aspects about grant-proposal writing. The responses with a frequency of mention—following directions, doing your homework to make sure the fit is right, don't do it alone/have a support system, research your funder, read the grants guide, contact the program officer, and seek out a mentor—are undoubtedly useful advice to give to first-time grantseekers. The unique responses also shared valuable suggestions for student grantseekers to consider as they prepare their grant application, some which were new ideas altogether and some of which were different ways of phrasing similar aspects of advice, which, as previously mentioned, is advantageous for student grantseekers to gain a greater understanding of the concepts.

One interesting idea that emerged from the unique responses to this question was that, from the perspective of the funding agency, there are four kinds of proposals:

- There's the really well written proposal that's got a great genius idea that fits the funding agency, so you can read it easily, you find the fit, and it's an easy decision.
- There's the really well written proposal and there's no fit—And you have to be careful to not get swept and enamored by this great presentation, you have to work hard to be sure that you find the fit.
- There's the really poorly written proposal that there's no fit.
- The tough one is the fourth one... It's not very well written but the fit is magical.

This idea reiterates not only the significance of making sure to find a good fit with a funding agency before applying but also the importance of involving others and not waiting until the last minute to draft the proposal to ensure that the proposal that is submitted is very well written.

Some additional advice from the unique responses that was interesting to hear from funding agencies was that getting funding is "a bit of a crapshoot and we know from studies that to some extent, the result is, to a great extent, the luck of the reviewer draw. And that means which people they sent your proposal out to and what their attitudes and stances are towards your proposal." The concept that there is a bit of randomness involved in getting awarded funding is important for student grantseekers to be aware of because some students take it very personally if they're rejected the first time around, they think that they're not good enough to get a grant and may stop trying as a result.

Within the unique response were two analogies that seemed especially relatable for student grantseekers. The first is that grantseekers need to "actually read the grants guide. Everything is in there, and it is like reading stereo instructions—It's not fun reading, but it's there; Read the application guidelines—and believe them.” The second analogy is that: “If it’s your first time applying for a grant, I would argue that it’s more of a numbers game. It’s kind of like a date, don't put all of your hopes and dreams into one number. With grants, don't put all of your hopes and dreams into one place, try and find the thing that you need, try and find the right partner that will help you succeed because, most of the time, the grant isn't just the money. A good grant is the relationship that you get with it.”

Question 7: What print or digital publications might be recommended to beginning grant proposal writers?

Based on frequency of mention, the top response from experts and professionals in the field was that they knew that there are resources out there but—even with advanced notice of this question—many were unable to give any names, titles, or authors. It was surprising how few experts and professionals in the field could provide the names of actual print or digital publications that they recommended and even more surprising that some suggested to simply Google or go to Amazon to find publications, since it is rather random what a grantseeker might find and there is no vetting involved to ensure that the publication was even any good.

The second most common response based on frequency of mention from experts and professionals in the field was to direct grantseekers to the funding agency’s website and whatever the funding agency has made available in terms of guidelines, which is important advice to reiterate to grantseekers. Other mentions of print or digital publications that may be useful to grantseekers from both the frequency of mention and unique responses included: On the Art of Writing Proposals available on the Social Science Research Council website, The Foundation Center, Foundation Directory Online, Foundation Center's "Guide to Proposal Writing" book, GrantCraft, state associations of nonprofits, Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, the NIH website, Philanthropy News Digest, Grant Writing for Dummies, Grants.gov, and the Federal Register. In anthropology specifically, there is also Sydel Silverman's article "Writing Grant Proposals for Anthropological Research" as well as articles by Stuart Plattner, Deborah Winslow, and Tom Boellstorff.

Question 8: What are some of the social and cultural influences that either help or hinder the development of skills and attitudes supportive of fostering effective grant applications?

There were no responses provided that were shared by multiple interviewees for this question, however the range of feedback on this topic from the unique responses appeared to be very useful for grantseekers to take into consideration as they prepare their proposals. In particular, the idea that funding agencies are looking for realism in an applicant's proposal that acknowledges that life is complicated and lived in a complex and integrated way. Experts and professionals in the field assert that most really impactful projects have a whole bunch of relationships that should be mentioned to achieve a comprehensive approach as opposed to trying to make the case that the applicant is the only one doing what they are doing. Additionally, research projects need to consider the constituent/participant/the audience as a resource in the process as there is a big difference between doing work to, or for, a constituency versus with them. Most funding agencies frown on the idea of doing work to or for someone else “because if you're doing something with somebody, truly and genuinely, and they own it and value it, the potential of it being sustained by that community is quite high. And if it's not, sustainability is almost always at risk. When money goes away and the individual/organization changes its focus, that thing you may have helped create may not exist anymore.” The message expressed here is important to remind grantseekers that funding agencies are more than donors, they are investors who invest in results that will help further that funding agency’s mission and goals.

Question 9: Following the acceptance of a proposal, what would you advise should be the next course of action for a grantseeker?

Within the advice offered by experts and professionals in the field, two of the top frequency of mention responses—celebrate/pat yourself on the back because everybody else is going to forget to do it and say thank you/some expression of appreciation for the award, excitement about working with the funding agency and asking for instructions as what to do next—provide a nice reminder to grantseekers of the human side to this process and that funding agency staff are people too. Unique responses noted a variety of valuable “best practices” for how a grantseeker should proceed after being awarded funding including discussions on communication, paperwork, reporting, press releases, reviewing the grant requirements, renewals, and the importance of hitting the ground running when it comes time to start the work after the funds have been issued.

Question 10: Following the rejection of a proposal, what would you advise should be the next course of action for a grantseeker?

There was only one response provided that was shared by multiple interviewees for this question, but the response was incredibly valuable: “Take time—at least a few weeks—to let the disappointment subside. Criticisms in reviews and panel summaries will hurt at first, but with some time, the investigator often gets better perspective and realizes what shortcomings and weaknesses have been identified. If there are questions that linger, the investigator can contact the managing program officer to ask for clarifications or more information.” Experts and professionals in the field shared that “There's a strong emotional experience. Even among senior researchers, they still get that reaction. It doesn't go away. And you have to distance yourself from it and sometimes, literally, you distance yourself from it in order to manage it.” Experts and professionals also recommend to keep doing your homework on the funding agency before you apply again, “you might discover how the proposal that was declined may not align because you get to know what alignment looks like. Or you might get more convinced than ever that it does align and then you might consider resubmitting” because even with the very best aligned proposal, it's almost always a selection among equals, and a decline is not always a criticism of the quality of the proposal. An important takeaway in terms of attitudes that foster successful funding applications is that grant-proposal writing is part persistence. Grantseekers need to see that being rejected for funding is all part of the process and shouldn't take "no" as in "not ever." Most applications are unsuccessful most of the time.

Question 11: Do you believe that there are grants that are easier to obtain than others, why or why not?

There were no responses provided that were shared by multiple interviewees for this question, however the unique responses offered useful insight for grantseekers on this topic. Experts and professionals in the field in general echo that whether a grant is easier to obtain has to do with what the success rate is (or conversely, what the rejection rate is)—the higher the success rate, then essentially the easier to obtain that grant. Additionally, unsolicited proposals are notoriously more difficult to secure funding. Most experts and professionals in the field acknowledge that there are so many variables about how competitive a proposal might be even if they're all equally well written. It has to do with the topic, and it has to do with if several applicants are covering the same topic, which one is deemed better for the goals of the funding agency. Most experts and professionals in the field state that it's highly likely that only 1 in 10 get recommended for funding because there are simply too many applicants and not enough grant funds to award larger pools of grant applicants. If a grant program gives out more awards per application than others, then that grant would also be considered easier to obtain. In that same sense, it also depends on how many other people are applying for the same funds. Programs with a relatively small number of applicants for their grants will additionally be easier to obtain. The key takeaway is that every grant program is different and will be more or less competitive or a better or worse fit for the applicant and their project. Further, experts and professionals in the field reiterate that no matter how competitive it is or how easy it is, if you don’t apply you don’t get funded.

Question 12: Do you feel that it is acceptable for an applicant to ask a funding organization for an explanation why the application was not selected for the award, why or why not?

As demonstrated by the frequency of mention responses, experts and professionals in the field generally agree that it is acceptable for an applicant to ask a funding agency why the application was not selected for an award, although they clarify that it is acceptable to ask unless the funding agency has specifically said that it will not provide feedback, in which case the applicant should not pester and should respect the wishes of the funding agency. The unique responses add additional insight to the funding agency's perspective as well as share some "best practice" suggestions for grantseekers to consider should they decide to follow up with a funding agency after being turned down for funding.

Question 13: What might be suggested as the best resources for student grant writers to utilize?

The suggestions provided by experts and professionals in the field showed a great deal of variety with regard to the best resources for student grantseekers to utilize. Top responses based on frequency of mention listed their advisors and the Foundation Center, respectively. Unique responses ranged significantly although each appeared to be useful for grantseekers to note. However, which suggestion would be deemed the most applicable would largely depend on the resources available to each individual student.

Question 14: Following the rejection of a proposal, is it acceptable for the grantseeker to ask for suggestions as to how to improve their request?/Do you feel that it is acceptable for an applicant to ask a funding organization for suggestions as to how to improve their application for future submittals?

There were no responses provided that were shared by multiple interviewees for this question, however the unique responses overall shared a similar message: Most funding agencies see providing feedback and helping applicants to try to improve their proposals as part of their job. However, it is important to note that some funding agencies will be extremely helpful in providing guidance and suggestions, while others will provide little to no feedback, typically because they are prohibited from providing any assistance to an applicant that might be deemed inequitable. It was interesting to have some experts and professionals in the field express that the funding process should be an informative and mutual learning process—it is important for grantseekers to get feedback as to why they got turned down and it is also important for funding agencies to learn from their applicants, what the trends of research are, and what they can do to improve and focus their funding efforts. This idea adds valuable new insight for student grantseekers as to the complexity of the relationship between grantseeker and grantmaker in that both sides can benefit from the experience, regardless whether funding was awarded or not.

Discussion

What might experts and professionals in the field recommend to students involved in grant-proposal writing to assist them to better understand the process, develop the necessary skills, utilize the available resources, and explore the possible avenues to writing grant-proposals to enable students to be more successful in their funding pursuits? This dissertation obtained the knowledge to answer this research question by achieving the aims set forth in Chapter One which were: to create a platform of knowledge regarding grant-proposal writing (as discussed in Chapter Two & Three); to promote a holistic understanding of the grant-proposal writing process (as discussed in Chapter Four); to generate significant findings about the art of grant-proposal writing (as discussed in Chapter Five); and to assist and encourage the development of skills, knowledge, and attitudes supportive of fostering effective funding applications (as discussed in Chapter Six and the first two sections of Chapter Seven).

The research and results presented in this dissertation answered the research question in the following capacity: In order to assist student grantseekers to better understand the process, experts and professionals in the field recommended that students gain a basic understanding of grant-proposal writing and its associated preliminary concepts, learn about the grantseeker's role in the grant making process, be informed about the criteria upon which proposals are ranked, and be cognizant of what to do when awarded funding as well as when funding is not awarded. To help develop the necessary skills so that student grantseekers can be more successful in their funding pursuits, experts and professionals in the field recommended that students should learn about proposal development and the components of the grant application package, consider grant-proposal writing as a craft that can be improved with practice and experience, learn about some of the common errors that are made, be aware of funding agency preferences as well as potential options of what to include beyond the basic requested information, and be knowledgeable as to what is acceptable when talking to a funding agency before submitting an application as well as after a proposal has been declined with regards to why a proposal was not funded or how to improve one's proposal. To better utilize the available resources, experts and professionals in the field recommended an array of useful resources for student grantseekers to consider, including print and digital publications. And finally, to facilitate student grantseekers to explore the possible avenues to writing grant-proposals, experts and professionals in the field provided valuable advice to first-time grantseekers on a variety of topics as well as offered some food for thought as to why some grants may be easier to obtain than others.

In answering the research question, this dissertation attained its goal of examining grant-proposal writing as a craft and potential ways to improve grant-proposal writing knowledge and application readiness for students. In doing so, this research also accomplished adding to the data on grant-proposal writing in general by building on the knowledge about grant-proposal writing that was previously established and complementing the information already available.

Due to the fact that support for anthropology is important to better understand the social contexts worldwide in which science is rooted, the topic of funding and the funding process for social science research has been important for decades (Boellstorff 2012:1). Many of the academic funding sources that comprise the largest contributors to student research today have made available grant-proposal application guidelines regarding how to approach their funding opportunities but those approaches are specific to their particular type of funding agency (e.g. federally funded grantmaking agency, grantmaking nonprofit organization, grantmaking private foundation, grantmaking public charity/community foundation, etc.) and even more specific to that particular program within that particular type of funding agency. In contrast, this research attempted to have the information disseminated have wider applicability. Along the same line, whereas the majority of associated literature from anthropologists discuss aspects of the funding process, funding patterns, or reflections on the importance of funding; this research attempted to achieve a big picture perspective of grant-proposal writing as that was deemed the most effective way to attain the goal.

Prior to this research, few anthropological studies focused on assisting student grantseekers specifically to obtain this coveted financial assistance. The target audience for this dissertation was clearly defined as student grantseekers, and, as such, the tone and content of the writing was shaped to help students understand, interpret, and relate to the information provided. Additionally, through the qualitative and quantitative data collected, this research contributed ethnographic data to our understanding of student grant-proposal writing.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study discussed in the paragraphs that follow touch on a number of problems with the data that potentially impacted the quality of the research findings.

Of the 36 total interviews that took place, 15 informal interviews were conducted. There was either no audio recording for these interviews or the audio recording was of a poor quality where the speaker is unclear so the researcher’s notes on these interviews are not consistently available in the data. Since the original design of this research intended to use informal interviews in the early stages of its development as a means of building a foundation to understand the topic, these informal interviews are not reflected in the tables in Chapter 6 and the lack of audio recordings was not deemed a concern.

3 interviews out of the 36 were conducted as unstructured interviews, with 2 of these interviews having a poor audio quality where the speaker is unclear and the interview was completely unusable and 1 interview having a poor audio quality where only a portion of the interview was usable so the researcher's notes on these interviews are not consistently available in the data. The portion of the interview that was usable is included in the tables in Chapter 6. Since the unstructured interviews were considered to be a useful method for further development of the researcher's growing understanding of the topic with the intention that the format of these interviews would allow the researcher to test out preliminary understandings on the topic while still being open to ways in which the respondents may facilitate new perspectives and knowledge, although disappointing, the lack of audio recordings for this data was also not deemed a major concern.

18 of the 36 interviews that took place were conducted in a semi-structured interview format with 6 of the interviewees submitting emailed responses and 12 of the interviewees allowing an audio recording of the interview for ease of note taking purposes only. All 18 of these interviews are reflected in the tables in Chapter 6. However, as completion of Tab 4 of the codebook progressed, it became obvious that the Descriptive Data which was for use with sensitive issues regarding people's opinions and attitudes to allow a type of measurement regarding estimates on how strongly one feels or appears to feel about particular events or phenomena was not going to be of any real value due to the inconsistency of its usage between data received from the written

emailed responses and that of verbal interview responses so the decision was made to delete that column and not include it for this research.

It should also be noted that there is a potential bias in that data collected for this research project may be shaped by the background affiliation of each respondent's applicable employment and, due to limitations beyond the researcher's control with regard to who was willing to participate in this research project, there is an unequal distribution of respondents who hold the same background affiliation of applicable employment. Since the original design of this research did not plan to compare responses across background affiliation of applicable employment, the unequal distribution of respondents who hold the same background affiliation of applicable employment was not deemed a major concern.

Additionally, due to the unequal distribution of respondents who hold the same title at their place of applicable employment, in an attempt to preserve respondent anonymity, the decision was made to delete the column detailing Respondent's Position Title at Place of Applicable Employment from Tab 4 of the codebook and not include it for this research.

Another problem with the data was there was an issue parsing out the data from two-part questions as well as from questions that discussed similar topics or aspects of topics that potentially could cross over. As a result, when attempting to sort responses by frequency of mention, many boundaries of the respondents' answers were fuzzy, difficult to explain precisely, and/or overlapped.

There was also a problem in that some respondents jumped around in their answers and would respond to other questions during their response to a different question. While the research design intended to allow for open-ended responses, it made the analysis of frequency of mention per question rather convoluted. In an attempt to mediate this issue, those answers in which the interviewee declared that they were providing a response that was answering another question were cut from their original location and added to the applicable question's responses. In all other circumstances, the answers were left in their original location and analyzed as a response to the question in which the answer was stated.

An additional issue with the data was that not all interviewees were asked/answered the same questions. This was in part due to the fact that, in accordance with the original design of the research, some of the interview questions were refined based on better ways to phrase the questions as new understandings were gained from the interviews. In particular, this refinement affected Question 14. Since Question 14 was essentially reworded in an attempt to be clearer with regard to the question that was being asked, both questions are included in any mention of Question 14, such as in Table 17 in Chapter 6 and in the Summary of Findings (Organized by Interview Question) and Conclusions (Organized by Interview Question) sections previously discussed in this chapter. The other factors influencing why not all interviewees were asked/answered the same question boiled down to interviewee decisions as well as time constraints. Some interviewees chose to skip questions if they felt that they had already adequately covered the material and other interviewees were given the option by the researcher to select whichever questions, if any, the interviewee still wanted to answer if time had exceeded the amount of time allocated for the interview.

Another issue was that the decision to use the analysis of frequency of mention was based on the assumption that the respondents' answers were going to be similar enough to allow them to be categorized by key word or phrases within the responses. As it turned out, many responses shared similar ideas but they did not share the same key words or phrases so the answers were much more individualized and unique than anticipated. Although there were definitely some answers that shared similar key words or phrases, the majority of the respondents' answers were unique enough to have value in and of themselves to warrant each being their own line item, which impacted the results with regard to frequency of mention considerably.

On a final note, whereas Chapter One discussed the many benefits to using qualitative research methods that led to the decision to use these methods for this dissertation, the use of qualitative research methods also had some notable limitations. Namely, the process was incredibly time-consuming to collect and analyze the data; the use of open-ended questions allowed the interviewees to have more control over the content of the data collected and additionally allowed the discussion to deviate from the topics to be discussed, resulting in the problems in the data previously mentioned; and finally the personal experience and knowledge of the researcher unavoidably influenced the conclusions, making it difficult to replicate since different researchers with different experiences and knowledge may arrive at different conclusions based on the same data.

Suggestions for Future Research

In reflection of this research project, there are two primary suggestions for future research: since the original design of this research did not plan to compare responses across background affiliation of applicable employment, the unequal distribution of respondents who hold the same background affiliation of applicable employment was not deemed a concern for this research, although, a future research suggestion would be to do a similar research project in which the researcher has the ability to compare responses across background affiliation of applicable employments to see how the responses were similar or varied (e.g. What federally funded grantmaking agencies recommended for follow-up best practices in contrast to recommendations from grantmaking nonprofit organizations or grantmaking private foundations); and further, a second future research suggestion would be for a similar research project in which the researcher has the ability to compare responses across position titles at similar places of applicable employment to see how the responses were similar or varied (e.g. Do executive administrative officers respond differently than program officers?), although it should be noted that a much larger sample would be needed in order to still protect the anonymity of the respondents.

Broader Impacts

> "Knowledge is important, but much more important is the use toward which it is put."
>
> *– H. H. Dalai Lama*

Anthropology is the study of what it means to be human. Every aspect of our lives can be studied in the past, present or future from an anthropological perspective. Anthropology has a growing importance in today's interconnected world as globalization continues to impact our lives in a myriad of both positive and negative ways. As such, student anthropologists will play an important role in not only how we interact within our changing world but also how our future is shaped.

By applying anthropological methods and ideas to the real world issues surrounding student grantwriting, this research is important as it assists Anthropology students on an individual level to further their skills and their potential in their chosen field of study and future careers, while also contributing to the field of Anthropology as a whole by facilitating anthropological research, and anthropological knowledge produced from that research, in the narrowing window of opportunity that is available in today's rapidly changing world.

It is no surprise that funding availability affects how anthropological knowledge is produced, not just in having access to resources to conduct that research but also funding plays a prominent role in shaping the format and content the knowledge it produces. Funding, and the politics that can be wrapped up within it, control whether research is conducted for the sake of knowledge in and of itself or under the influence of external pressures with particular agendas in mind.

While the topic of fundraising within the discipline of Anthropology has already moved into formal discussions regarding its importance as a key element in "shaping the broader trajectory of anthropological knowledge" (Brenneis 2011:3), this research study represents a different perspective and offers new insights as a contribution of knowledge to those discussions. In an attempt to disseminate this knowledge, not only will the insights gained from this research be available for free access on an upcoming website but this research will also provide a foundation, in conjunction with future research, for a published journal article to be adapted from this dissertation.

Additionally, in creating a more in-depth understanding regarding the phenomenon of student grant-proposal writing at postsecondary academic institutions, this dissertation can bring about positive change at the level of the student grantseeker as well as within the academic institutions that assist students in the grant seeking process in that these research findings will potentially help undergraduate and graduate programs to better support the grant-proposal writing efforts of their students. As such, this research could be especially valuable for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds as well as economically challenged campus communities where funding resources are scarce. Additionally, these findings may also prove valuable and informative to program officers and applicable funding agency personnel who work with individual grantseekers in a similar capacity to better target their instructional and outreach efforts which would benefit all grantseekers, not just students.

Conclusion

The goal of this dissertation was to examine grant-proposal writing as a craft and potential ways to improve grant-proposal writing knowledge and application readiness for students seeking funding assistance attending postsecondary education. Using ethnographic field methods in working to achieve that goal, this dissertation set out to answer the question "What might experts and professionals in the field recommend to students involved in grant-proposal writing to assist them to better understand the process, develop the necessary skills, utilize the available resources, and explore the possible avenues to writing grant-proposals to enable students to be more successful in their funding pursuits?" In answering that research question, this dissertation explored specific aims that represent the knowledge that was deemed necessary to answer the research question, which included creating a platform of knowledge regarding grant-proposal writing; promoting a holistic understanding of the grant-proposal writing process; generating significant findings about the art of grant-proposal writing; and assisting and encouraging the development of skills, knowledge, and attitudes supportive of fostering effective funding applications. Objectives were identified to address specific research actions in order to facilitate achievement of the goal, namely: providing a solid framework through which students may understand an overview of grant-proposal writing, associated terminology, proposal development, and the components of a grant application; assessing the grantseeker's role in the grantmaking process; exploring the craft of grant-proposal writing; and discussing feedback and suggestion results from interviews with experts and professionals in the field regarding student grant-proposal writing.

In conclusion, there is no guaranteed set formula for securing funding but rather a vast array of varying approaches, methods, suggestions, and guidelines that can be adapted to fit the different needs of each situation. Being successful at grant-proposal writing requires diligence, perseverance, flexibility, and a positive attitude, just as much as it does knowledge and expertise. It is important to bear in mind that grant opportunities exist because grantmakers need help achieving their goals. In that respect, to be successful one must have a clear understanding of the funding agencies' goals; be able to demonstrate one's abilities to deliver those goals; and finally, be able to persuade the funding agency of the ways in which one's abilities enable the potential to a better job of meeting those goals than any other applicant.

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