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NIH R01

Grant Application Mentor



Social &
Behavioral
Sciences

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Color Key:

Throughout this report, we have used highlighted text to indicate the following:

 — original text by authors of this report
 (no color)

 — directly quoted NIH information
 (pink)

 — paraphrased NIH information
 (yellow)

 — directly quoted information from successful NIH grant applications
 (blue)

Introduction

Applying for a National Institutes of Health (NIH) R01 grant is an involved process with many facets to consider and extensive guidelines to follow. This manual will guide you through the steps involved and help you submit the best proposal possible. This manual focuses on R01 grants for the social and behavioral sciences. This includes a broad range of projects coming out of the disciplines of Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, Political Science, Urban Studies, and sometimes Economics, as well as applied disciplines like nursing, social work, public health, public policy, and communications. Social and Behavioral Science applications look different from biomedical or purely clinical proposals, although social or behavioral science techniques may be components of a multi-methods project involving both social science and biomedical or clinical elements. In addition to drawing material from NIH, the manual relies on interviews with program officers at Institutes that fund a large number of social and behavioral science proposals as well as social scientists who have written R01 applications and served on NIH review panels.

Of course, all research begins with an idea, and you must determine if yours should be funded by an R01 grant. Your research must meet NIH's priorities, but it is just as essential that the grant is the appropriate mechanism for your project.

Once you've verified that an R01 is right for you, you'll need to work out the specifics. Think about when to apply, what to title your proposal, and how to articulate your hypothesis. But before you actually begin, consider creating a writing schedule. Chapter 2 includes a sample timetable that will help you move through the steps of the application process more easily and manage your time effectively.

As you begin writing your proposal, remember the message you are trying to convey. You should explain your project thoroughly so readers will understand all

aspects of it. But you also want to tell a compelling story and entice reviewers to approve your research.

Several chapters of this manual help guide you through the writing process. They offer advice for developing your Project Summary/Abstract, Biographical Sketch, Environment section and Research Plan. They also help you ensure your Research Strategy addresses your project's Innovation, Significance, Approach and Overall Impact.

When considering your project costs, refer to our chapter on creating a budget. You may also need to consult the section detailing considerations for special agents and human subjects. Each chapter includes checks to ensure you're following NIH guidelines every step along the way.

Before you submit your application, take time to review it. Make certain you've included all the necessary components and adhered to all rules. You'll also need to correct any errors and remedy weaknesses before sending your proposal to NIH.

Once you've submitted your application, it goes through a comprehensive review. The final chapter of this manual delineates that process. It also explains what NIH scores mean and what steps you can take after you receive them. Finally, the guide includes a resource list of specialty guides available through NIH and PIA on developing your proposal. Several academic articles on developing your proposal are also included in the resource list.