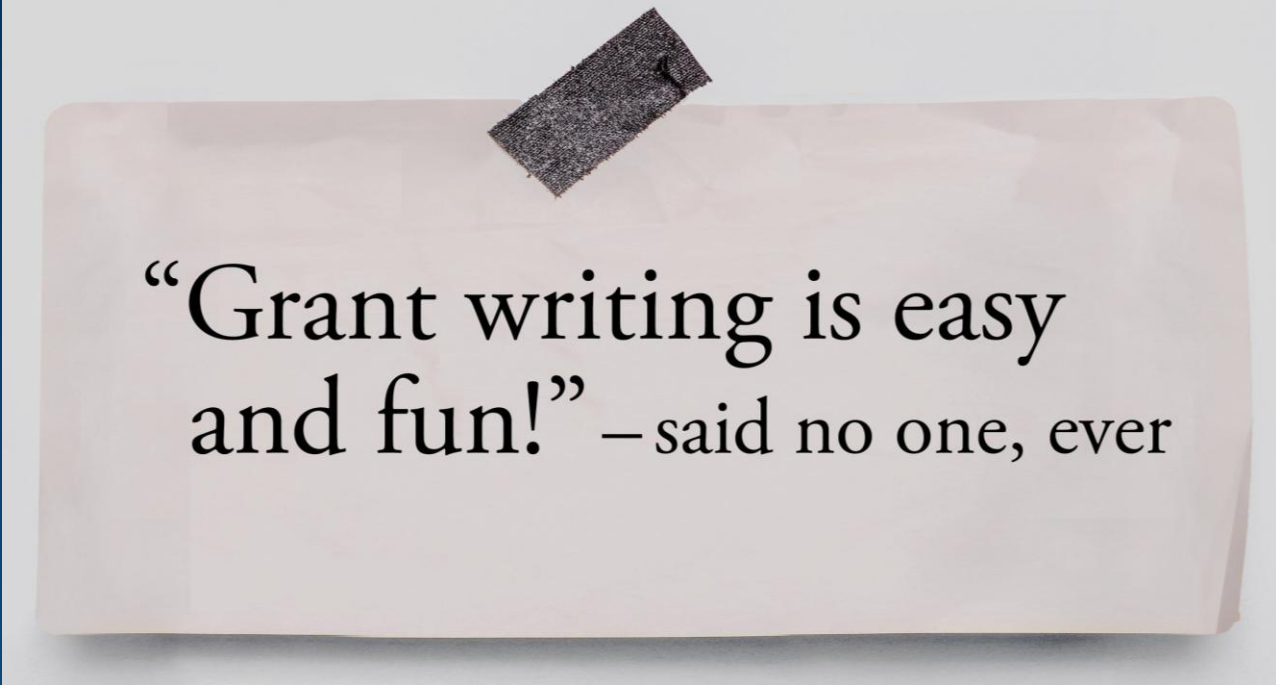


Research Development at UC Davis

Stephanie Etting, PhD
Proposal Development Services

pds@ucdavis.edu

UC DAVIS
OFFICE OF RESEARCH



“Grant writing is easy
and fun!” – said no one, ever

“The thinking you [do] to shape your ideas, the clarity you brought to your aims, the way you learned to communicate the value of your research... **Writing grants isn’t an administrative hurdle to clear before you get to do your research—it IS your research.** It’s where you do the deep thinking, design the approach, and chart the path for how your work will advance the field. Ergo, none of the work you do in service of your research is ever a waste of time.”

– Sarah Dobson

About Proposal Development Services (PDS)

Pre-Proposal



- Grantsmanship skills
- Developing a funding plan
- Evaluating an RFP

We help investigators in all fields, on grants of all sizes, and at any career stage!

Email us at pds@ucdavis.edu

Developmental Editing



- Developing a pitch
- Early drafts
- Framing for an agency

Comprehensive Support

- Copyediting
- Budget support
- Project management



Finishing Touches

- Supplemental documents
- Compliance checks



And at any stage of proposal development

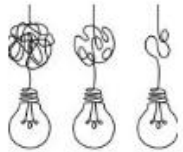
Research Development Toolbox

<https://proposaldev.ucdavis.edu>

Be sure to [log into your UC Davis account](#) to access the site links/content.

Welcome to the [Proposal Development Services](#) (PDS) team's Research Development Toolbox! Here you will find everything you need for successful grant writing. The toolbox includes an extensive library of templates, guides, checklists, and more to help UCD Faculty plan out your proposal. We also have recordings of previously held webinars and information about upcoming events and trainings. If there's anything you are looking for that you can't find, be sure to [reach out to us](#).

Research Development Blog



Grant Writing Tip: How to communicate more clearly about your work

October 14, 2025



Managing Federally Sponsored Projects in the Face of a Possible Federal Government Shutdown

September 30, 2025



Grant Writing Tip: Making a Plan for Early Career Funding

September 16, 2025

Grantsmanship Learning Lab

Proposal Templates & Tools

Grantsmanship Learning Lab



<https://canvas.ucdavis.edu/courses/940470>

UC DAVIS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Brought to you by
Proposal Development Services

Types of proposal development

Modules

First steps

- [How and where to get help on campus](#)
- [Developing Your Grantsmanship Strategy](#)

Pre-proposal

- [Strategies for Finding Funding](#)
- [Beyond Research Project Grants](#)
- [Reading an RFP](#)
- [Developing Your Pitch](#)

Proposal development

- [Framing the Project Description](#)
- [Developing Your Project Description](#)
- [Revising and Resubmitting](#)

Proposal components

- [Broader Impacts](#)
- [About You: Building a Biosketch](#)

Formatting, Writing, Editing,
and Graphics

- [Science Communication: How to talk about your research](#) (**New in Oct. 2025**)
- [Spit & Polish - Text Formatting, Style and Layout](#)
- [Grant Visuals and Design](#)
- [Grammar Hammer - Common Mistakes in Scientific Writing](#)

Current Programming

NSF CAREER Prep Series

- Starts in March
- Covers basics of NSF CAREER
- Advice from previous recipients
- Constructing an education plan
- Focused Canvas Bootcamp
- Weekly writing sessions just for CAREER applicants

E-mail Stephanie at sfetting@ucdavis.edu to be added to our CAREER email list and Canvas bootcamp

NIH Shift to the Common Form Office Hours

- Small, interactive sessions
- Will walk you through how to set up and connect ORCID, eRA Commons, and SciENcv
- Learn how to create compliant biographical documents

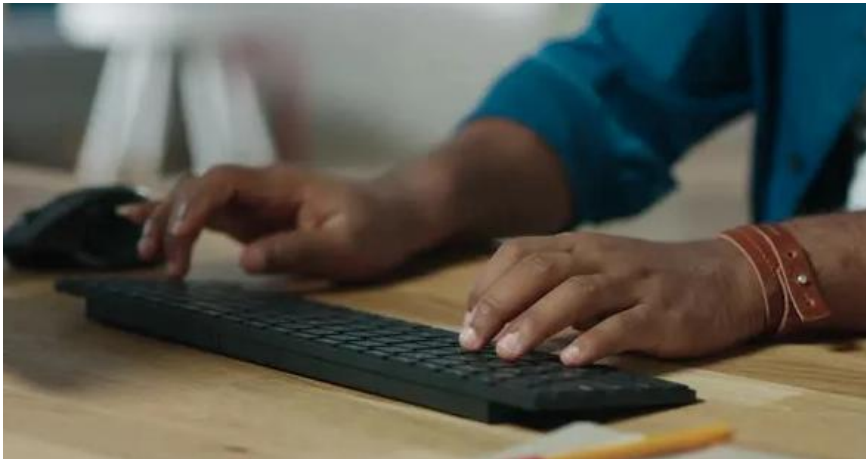
Visit the Events section of our Research Development Toolbox to see upcoming sessions and to sign up <https://proposaldev.ucdavis.edu/events>

Power Hours Sessions

- Weekly writing sessions on Zoom with our team
- Designated writing time to get started and make progress on grant writing
- Great time to ask questions in a supportive environment

Strategic Planning

Make a Writing Plan



Develop Connections

Strategic Planning: Grant Readiness

GRANT READINESS SELF ASSESSMENT

Assess your preparation, qualifications, expertise, network, resources, time, attitude and perspective to carry out a project

Intrinsic Factors
(within your control)

Is your research idea sufficiently distinct from your advisor to establish yourself as an independent investigator?
Is your research idea in a high-impact area of scholarship?

Do you have access to infrastructure and equipment?
Have you identified resources on campus to help develop a proposal?

Do you have a mentor who can discuss your ideas and approach?
Do you have connections with stakeholders who may benefit from your work?

Are you willing to pursue your project or idea in the face of repeated failure?
Do you have a publication record in the field?



Strategic Planning: Grant Readiness

GRANT READINESS SELF ASSESSMENT

Assess your preparation, qualifications, expertise, network, resources, time, attitude and perspective to carry out a project

Extrinsic Factors
(relates to others around you)

Does your project advance the goals of the funding agency?
Have you contacted the program officer to discuss your ideas?

Do you understand your department's expectations for research funding?
Do you know what programs on campus align with your work?

Are you knowledgeable of others in your field who may be competitors or collaborators?
Are you up-to-date on the scholarship in your field?

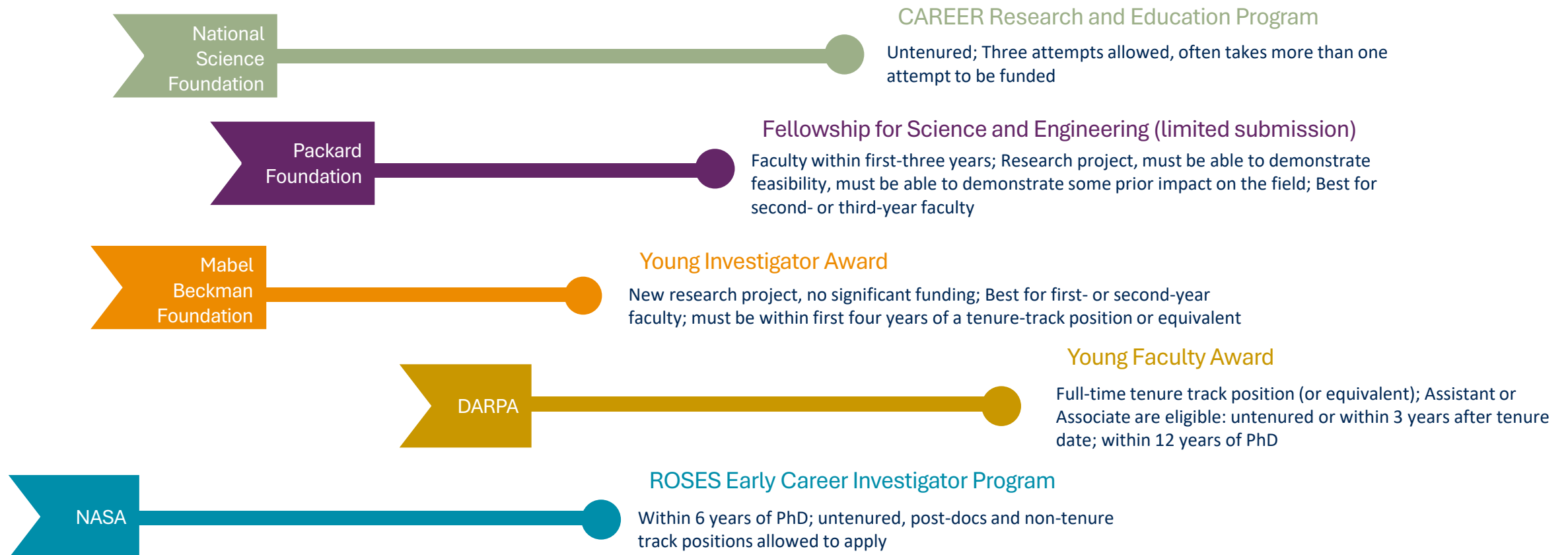
Is the timing right? Is there enough time to prepare an application?
Have you served as a grant reviewer?



Strategic Planning: Funding Landscape

CHOOSE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES BASED ON YOUR CAREER STAGE

Not all early career funding opportunities have the same expectations



Strategic Planning: Funding Landscape

CHOOSE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES BASED ON YOUR CAREER STAGE

Some funding opportunities are better suited to certain career stages and years of experience

Download our Early Career Resources Flyer



UC DAVIS OFFICE OF RESEARCH		PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES	
Selected early career (EC) federal funding opportunities			
Reach out to PDS at pds@ucdavis.edu for assistance with these, or other opportunities (not listed), that you're interested in applying to. Additional funding opportunities for EC faculty are offered by private foundations. For information on those, reach out to the Foundation and Corporate Engagement (FCE) office at fce@ucdavis.edu .			
Agency	Program	Work supported	Eligibility
National Science Foundation (NSF)	NSF Faculty Early Career Development Program (CAREER)	Designed to launch academic careers by supporting both research and education; NSF supports basic science across all non-medical areas	Tenure-track but pre-tenure, 3 attempts
	EARLY-Concept Grants for Exploratory Research (EAGER)	Supports exploratory work in its early stages on untested, but potentially transformative, research ideas. This work may be considered especially "high risk-high payoff"	Open to all career stages; useful to early career researchers
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)	AFRI Foundational and Applied Science	Fundamental and applied work in priority areas important to agriculture (see RFP for list of areas)	Applicants must be in the first 5 years of career-track position
Department of Energy (DOE)	DOE Early Career	For EC researchers doing basic physical sciences research the physical sciences (see RFP for list of program offices)	Untenured and within 10 years of Ph.D.
	Career Development (K awards)	For EC investigators to enhance skills development and provide time for research and training activities in the biomedical, behavioral, or clinical sciences	Must not have been previously awarded an R01 or P-grant
	Katz ESI Research Project Grant (R series)	Supports innovative projects in areas of science that represent a change in research direction for early-stage	Within 10 years of PhD; no prior NIH

Strategic Planning: 5-year Plan

MAKE A FIVE-YEAR PLAN

Select activities based on your own readiness and needs. Select opportunities based on applicability for each stage.



6 months Immediate

Purchase equipment
for laboratory

Apply for on-campus
pilot funding

Collect preliminary data



Year 1 Take Action

Complete pilot project

Participate in Grant
Writing Workshop

Apply for NSF CAREER
Award



Year 3 Plan Ahead

Apply for workshop grant

Offer to serve on agency
review panels

Apply for Packard
Foundation fellowship



Year 5+ Forecast

Apply for
instrumentation grants

Apply for standard
research grants

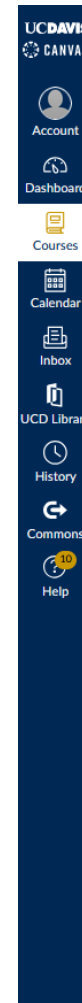
Take sabbatical leave

Strategic Planning Action Items

Check out the Grantsmanship Learning Lab: Developing Your Grantsmanship Strategy

- Take the “Grant Readiness: Self Assessment”
- Turn this self assessment into a SWOT analysis
- Make a 5-year plan and a 1-year plan
- Attend our workshops

<https://canvas.ucdavis.edu/courses/940470>



- Home
- About the Grantsmanship Learning Lab
- Modules
- Additional Proposal Development Resources
- Contact Us
- SensusAccess

Multi-Year Planning

Now that you've identified your most important goals and the fundable activities you'll need to achieve them, your next step is to create a rough sketch of your multi-year grant writing & research plan. Refer back to [Examples 1 and 2](#) for ideas on how to structure this section. Add more years if you need them.

Pro tip!
Be sure to revisit this multi-year plan once or twice a year to adjust things as your circumstances change.

Year 1	
Proposals:	
Activities:	
Outcomes:	
Year 2	
Proposals:	
Activities:	
Outcomes:	
Year 3	
Proposals:	
Activities:	
Outcomes:	
Year 4	
Proposals:	
Activities:	
Outcomes:	

the threats associated with your project at this stage? What resources (e.g. colleagues, [campus offices](#)) can you utilize to help you improve weaker areas?

Strategic Planning Action Items

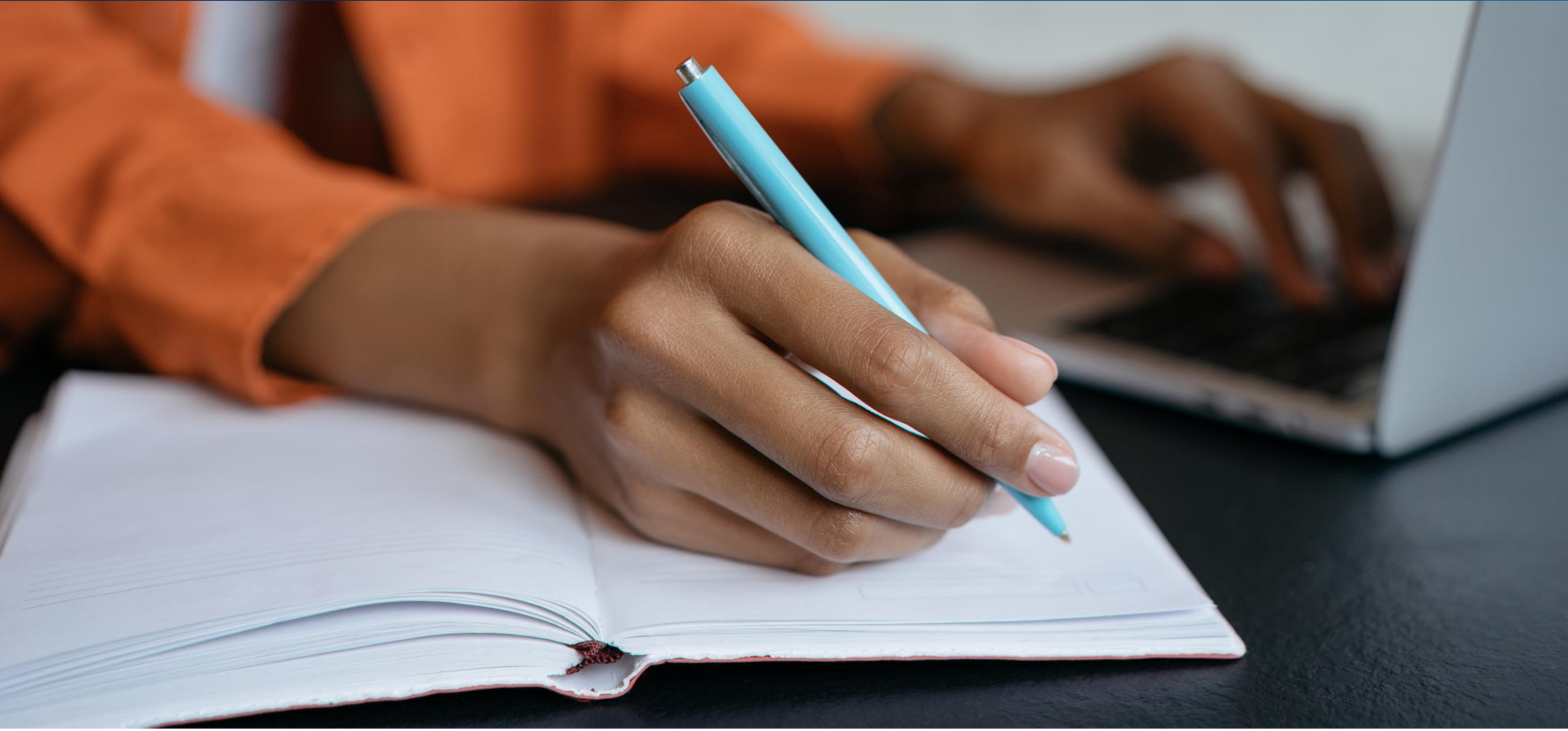
Check out our (recorded and new) workshops

The screenshot shows a navigation bar with the following items: Home, Early Career Resources >, Proposal Templates & Tools >, Grantsmanship Learning > (highlighted in yellow), Getting Help, News, and Events >. Below the navigation bar, the page title 'Workshop Materials & Recordings' is visible. A dropdown menu is open under 'Grantsmanship Learning', listing: Canvas Learning Labs, Workshop Materials & Recordings (circled in red), and Articles on Grant Writing and Academia (circled in red). A breadcrumb trail below the page title reads: Home > Grantsmanship Learning > Workshop Materials & Recordings.

Career Development

- [A Primer for Prepping for Tenure Review](#) (Inside Higher Education, 2024)
- [An early career researcher's guide to impact](#) (Times Higher Education, 2025)
- [An NSF CAREER Checklist](#) (Scholar Foundations, 2024)
- [Do you need a collaborator?](#) (Scholar Foundations, 2024)
- [Dos and do-overs: reflections on life as an early career researcher](#) (Times Higher Education, 2023)
- [Doing science on the cheap](#) (Science for Everyone, 2025)
- [Essential Tips for First-Time Grant Writers](#) (Grant Writing Academy, 2025)
- [Good daily work habits for early career researchers](#) (Times Higher Education, 2023)
- [How To Become a Better Principal Investigator](#) (Cayuse Blog)
- [How to demonstrate the real-world impact of your research](#) (Nature, 2024)
- [How to train early-career scientists to weather failure](#) (Nature, 2023)
- [I won three competitive grants in a row. Here's how I learnt what to do](#) (Nature, 2025)
- [It can be different: managing time, tasks and well-being in academia](#) (Times Higher Education, 2023)
- [Lessons learned from writing my first grant proposal](#) (Medium, 2019)

#2 Make a Writing Plan

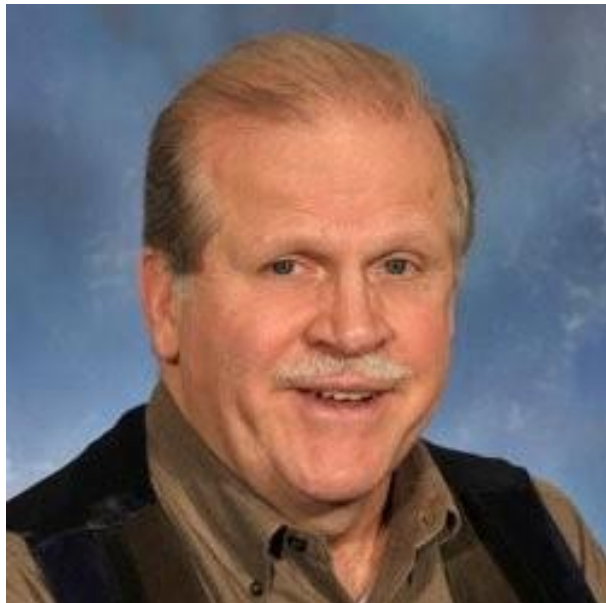


Make a Writing Plan



Make a Writing Plan

Make your pitch clearly



“Seasoned grant reviewers will admit to making up their minds on the very first page of the proposal, and rarely change their posture as they read the rest of the document.”

Robert Porter, University of Tennessee

Develop Your Pitch

One-pager structure

Paragraph 1

Lay out the problem: background and significance

Who cares?

Paragraph 2

State your theme and solution, list your objectives

Here's how

Paragraph 3

Create a vision: outcomes and impact

So what?

From One-Pager to Full Proposal

One-Pager

Project Description

Lay out the Problem

- Background
- Significance



State the Theme and your Solution

- Hypothesis
- Objectives



Create a vision

- Outcomes
- Impact



Develop good writing

- Draft a one-pager
- Set a schedule
- *Join our Power Hours!*

Grant Writing Power Hour

Join us for designated writing time to help you achieve your research funding goals in a supportive environment and alongside members of our proposal development team.



Never submit anything without review

- Create a peer-review group among your colleagues
- Ask a senior colleague to review your proposal
- Reach out to PDS (pds@ucdavis.edu)

Home

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Developing Your Pitch Overview

Whenever faculty reach out to us about preparing a proposal for a particular funding opportunity, they almost always get the same suggestion on where to start: *Take some time to write a One-pager.* So, why do we always recommend spending time writing a document that isn't part of the official proposal requirements? This seemingly simplistic document is actually some of the hardest work that you'll be doing towards framing your proposal.

In only a few paragraphs, your One-pager should **1) Lay out the problem** - Why your research is needed, **2) State your solution** and how you're going to achieve it, and **3) Create a vision** for how your research will transform your field and impact society. That is a lot to achieve in a short document, but the hard work you put into this step will pay off in myriad other ways. *So take some time to write a One-Pager!*



Objective

- Learn how to frame your research ideas in the form of a pitch - the importance of Project, Person, and Place
- Write a concise yet comprehensive 1-page document (or specific aims page) that describes your research program
- Begin building your project description from your One-pager

In This Section

The following pages are designed to be read in order, but jump around if you are looking for something specific.

- [Writing for Reviewers](#)
- [Action Item: Project, Person, Place](#)
- [Heilmeyer's Catechism](#)
- [Intro to One-pagers](#)
- [Action Item: Drafting Your One-Pager](#)
- [Action Item: After the One-Pager](#)
- [Next Steps: After Developing Your Pitch](#)

Pro tip!

Write your One-pager first. Then, simply expand it and fill in details to write the rest of the research plan. Instructions on how to do this are later in this module!

Writing Plan Action Items

General Proposal Templates and Resources

Home • Proposal Templates & Tools and Resources

- Proposal Templates by Funding Agency >
- General Proposal Templates and Resources**
- Other Funding Opportunities >
- Budget and Research Admin Resources
- Limited Submission Competition Resources

General Proposal Resources

- [Budget Justification Template](#)
- [Intellectual Property Plan Template](#)
- [Logic Model \(Education Grants\) Template](#)
- **One-Pager Templates**
 - [Generic One-Pager Template](#)
 - [Hypothesis-Driven One-Pager Template](#)
 - [Need-Driven One-Pager Template](#)
 - [Education-Plan One-Pager Template](#)
- [Sample Community Partner Biosketch Template](#)
- [Sample Data Management Plans](#)
- [SPO Budget Templates](#)
- [Talking to Program Officers](#)
- [Technology to Market & Commercialization Plan Template](#)

Additional Resources

When Is My Grant Due?

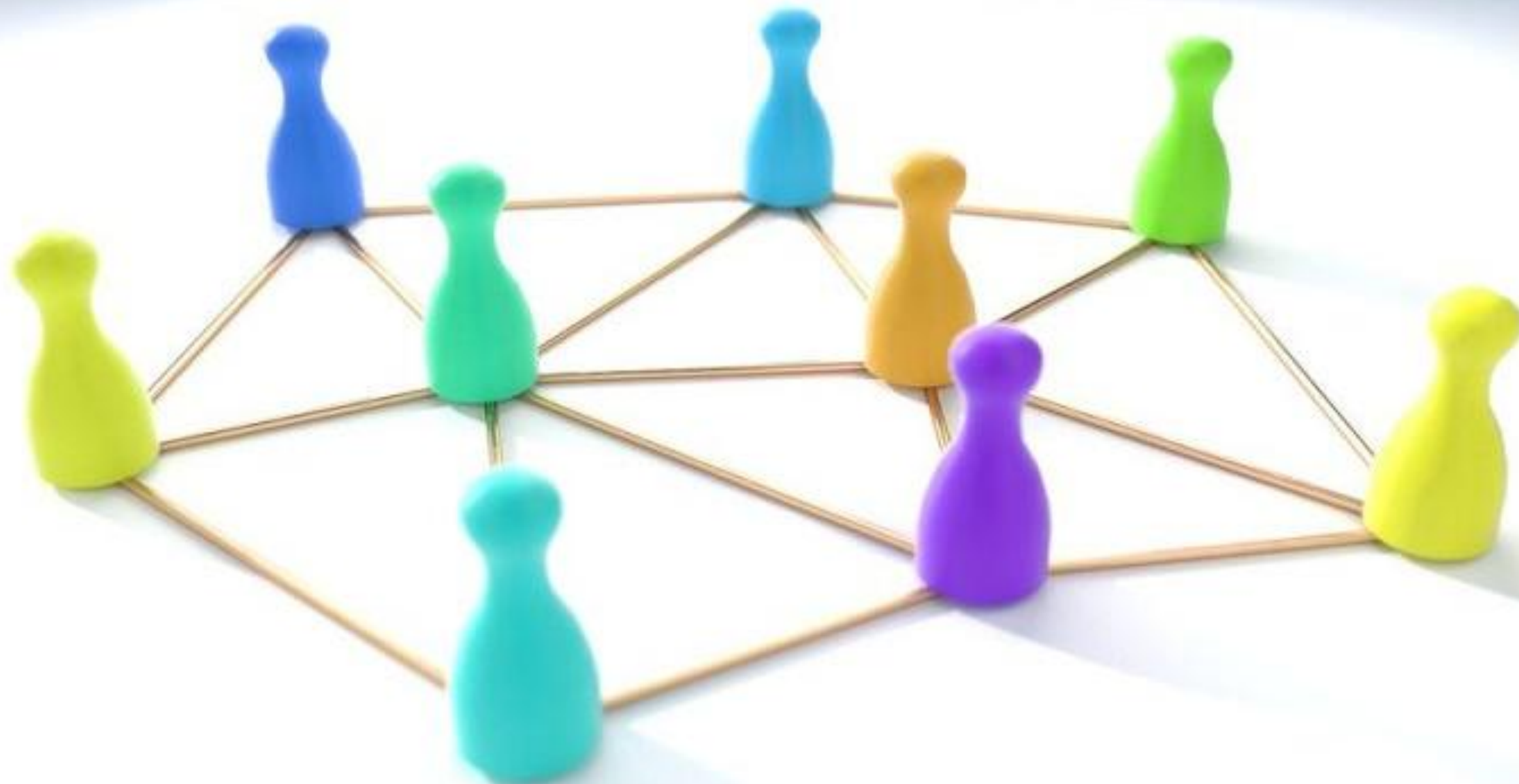
PDS has developed a calendar with broad deadlines for many larger funding opportunities in order to help you plan your proposal development.

UC Davis Grantwriter's Workbook

If you are just getting started with grantsmanship, the Proposal Development Services team has developed a workbook to help!

- Proposal Templates By Funding Agency
- General Proposal Templates And Resources
- Other Funding Opportunities
- Budget And Research Admin Resources
- Limited Submission Competition Resources
- Diversity Resources (DEI)

#3 Make Connections



Talk to Program Officers

DOs

- Have specific questions before you initiate contact
- Share your One-pager
- Ask specific questions about content, format, scope, and fit
- Clarify whether there are unwritten guidelines
- Take notes

DON'Ts

- Ask questions that can be answered on your own
- Ask open-ended questions like “What kind of proposals do you fund?”



Talk to Program Officers

UC DAVIS CANVAS

Grantsmanship Learning Lab > Pages > Preparing to contact your Program Officer

Home

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Help

Preparing to contact your Program Officer

You've now gotten feedback on those one-pagers, and met with Cai to create a full and polished draft of your project summary. You're feeling ready to begin further development on your idea... but where do you begin? Below are some things **to do** and some things **NOT to do** when contacting your PO. On the next page, there is a sample email to set you up as well.

Good things to do 👍

- **First thing's first: do your homework.** Read the grant solicitation and do a search on the website. If you don't find the answer, you'll at least be able to demonstrate that you've done your due diligence.
 - This is especially important given how often agencies revise priorities, guidelines, and staff.
- **Be specific about what you want.** Program staff have a lot of demands on their time especially close to a deadline. The more "to the point" you are about what you need from them (obviously while being polite and respectful), the more they will appreciate your respect for their time.
 - Apply the same principle to any written summary of your research. Keep them concise & clear.
- **When in doubt, ask!** If you've done your homework, asked around campus, and still don't have an answer, it doesn't matter how small your question is: reach out and ask a Program Officer. The extramural funding landscape is too competitive to let little uncertainties slide.
- **Be nice about "No".** The amount of authority and autonomy a Program Officer has to make decisions can vary a great deal by agency and program, but they are always going to be restricted by at least some rules. Because they probably didn't set those rules themselves, be courteous when they are enforcing them, even if you're disappointed.
- **Don't assume "No" means "Never"**
 - Most research proposals are funded on resubmission (this is true of all disciplines, including arts and humanities), so after you've had time to process the sting of rejection set up a time to call and ask if they think it's possible to rework the proposal and move the "no" toward a "yes."

Things NOT to do 👎

- **Don't just call to say hi.** At least not in an official context. Not even if your department chair tells you to. At conferences or during other in-person visits, casual conversation is fine; otherwise, remember that their time is valuable (as is yours!) and call only when needed.
- **Don't cold call.** It's better to first send a short e-mail that summarizes your issue rather than calling out-of-the-blue.
 - If you would like feedback on your proposal or research idea, send a short email with a short research summary attached (see sample email below)
- **Don't nag.** The more complex your question or problem, the longer it's going to take to understand it, do research on it, and communicate the response to you. Allow one week to pass before sending a follow-up email.
- **Don't talk down.** Program Officers are not "the help." Many have advanced degrees in their field, some have faculty or research appointments at nearby institutions, and all know a great deal more about how to write successful proposals to the funding program than you do.

UC DAVIS CANVAS

Grantsmanship Learning Lab > Pages > Program Officer e-mail template

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Program Officer e-mail template

Before you proceed to the e-mail template for contacting your PO, be sure to read these important reminders!

Reminders when contacting your PO

- 1) The most important rule: **Your. Email. Short.**
 - You do not need to justify why you want to apply to the program in your email.
 - You do not need to explain why your proposal is a good fit in the email.
 - The purpose of the email is just to explain that
 - a) you are planning to apply and
 - b) you'd like to ask them some questions about your application.
 - That's it! Don't get into a pattern of communicating by email. Keep it short and get them on the phone - you'll have a more honest and fruitful discussion that way.
- 2) Include at least one specific topic you'd like their thoughts on, but no more than three.
 - In this example, it references methodological scope - you could be more specific on this, with up to one additional sentence to avoid getting too lengthy.
 - It's also good to say you are open to feedback on other topics as well - this is a friendly gesture, and indicates you respect their expertise and experience.
- 3) Separate the specific "call to action" (the thing you want from them) as a sentence in its own paragraph.
 - This draws their eye and makes sure they don't miss it. In this case, you're asking for a phone call to discuss on the project summary you've written.
- 4) If you're not sure what the preferred form of address is for the person you're contacting (Dr., Miss, etc.), using the full name (g., Gideon Varga) is a safely neutral approach for an initial email.
 - Reminder: Google is your friend! Don't be afraid to do a quick search once you learn the name of the Program Officer managing your program. If your PO has a Ph.D., that makes "form of address" one less question to answer.
 - You can also learn a little bit about that person's background - a quick mention of a shared location or research area might help break the ice during the first phone call.

Resources

- [Word version of the email template](#)

Article: [NSF 101: 5 tips on how to work with an NSF program officer](#)

E-mail Template

The following e-mail template is a suggested format from NSF. The PDS team also suggests that you include a one-pager with your e-mail!

Dear [Add Program Officer/Contact name],

I will be seeking funding from the [Add specific program name and solicitation number] program for my project, [Add project title]. I feel that my proposed research meets the requirements listed in the program solicitation; however, I would like to confirm that my project is a good fit for your program.

Connect with Agencies

Talk to Program Officers whenever possible

- Zoom
- Washington
- professional meetings

Ask to be on Review Panels

- At a Federal Agency
- For the Academic Senate or your college
- For the Limited Submissions Program



National Institutes
of Health



U.S. Department of Defense

Self-promotion

- Broadcast your good press

Use social media to your advantage

- Follow funding agencies, your dean, your colleagues, the chancellor
- “Like” posts, even if you aren’t posting yourself
- Post often, including about your students (with their permission)
- Use a variety of platforms to reach more people and groups



Become your best advocate

- Contact Program Officers
 - See Grantsmanship Learning Lab for best practices and templates
- Set up social media accounts
 - Connect with funding agencies and campus affiliates
- Share your wins
 - Contact your department chair and dean
 - UC Davis Office of Research Communications Team



Make Connections Action Items

Attend our events

- Grant Writing Power Hour sessions
- Grantsmanship workshops
- Campus Coffee Meet-ups



Keep up with updates and programming

- PDS has active LinkedIn and Bluesky profiles
- Sign up for our monthly newsletter

Most Importantly, *Don't be shy!*

We are here to support you throughout your research career here at UC Davis, and happy to meet you wherever you're at in your research funding journey!

Don't hesitate to email Proposal Development Services with any questions: pds@ucdavis.edu