



Preparing a **funding proposal**, be it for research, a new health program or a tender for services, is often a time consuming and frustrating task. Nonetheless, for those wishing to do research it is an essential one. In this issue of Research Bites we present information about the types of funding available, top do's and don'ts in preparing proposals and a selection of resources to assist you in your search. Readers should also note our Top 10 Tips and Tricks column.

### Types of Funding

#### Competitive Funding

- ◆ Government (NHMRC, ARC etc)
- ◆ NGOs (Cancer Council, Asthma Foundation etc)
- ◆ Professional bodies (College of GPs, Nurses etc)
- ◆ Other (Pharmaceutical, Universities)

#### Commissioned Research Funding

- ◆ National & state governments
- ◆ Private sector
- ◆ International agencies (WHO etc)

A good quality research proposal will demonstrate a clear link between your **research problem**, the **research methodology**, the **data** to be collected (how, when, where, what kind) and the **analysis** of your data (how, what).

### Assessment criteria

Vary according to the funding body, however most competitive funding schemes include the following core criteria:

**Significance and innovation:** original, important contribution to science

**Scientific quality:** hypotheses & objectives, strengths & weaknesses of design, methods & analysis appropriate to aims

**Feasibility:** likelihood that the project will be completed, is doable

**Track record:** recent track record relevant to opportunity

**Budget:** is the requested budget reasonable

### Some reasons for rejection

- ◆ Objectives inadequately stated
- ◆ Deadline not met, guidelines not followed
- ◆ Unrealistic budget
- ◆ Project predictable, routine or repeats previous research
- ◆ Proposal not sufficiently clear or incomplete in describing the study
- ◆ Study appears beyond the capacity of the applicant to complete
- ◆ Unrealistic timeframe & workload
- ◆ Potential obstacles not discussed
- ◆ Poor presentation & writing, ambiguous and repetitious
- ◆ Partisan, biased position taken
- ◆ Poor rationale & background, lack of understanding of the field

### Top 10 Tips & Tricks

1. **Do your research.** What gets funded? What do proposals look like? What are the funding body's priorities? Who are the reviewers?
2. **Start early.** A funding proposal of the standard expected by major funding bodies can take months.
3. **Be strategic & focused.** Clarity and simplicity is the key to success. Be clear about what you are doing and why it is important.
4. **Always** follow the guidelines to the letter.
5. In the absence of **track record** get some or partner with those who do have it.
6. **Review, review, review.** Ask a colleague AND an informed layperson to review your proposal, get honest feedback.
7. Approach as an **opportunity** to compel the funding body to support your project to assist them with achieving their objectives.
8. **Write for the reviewers.** Assume the reviewer is an intelligent lay person familiar with your field in broad terms.
9. **Never underestimate the power of language.** Writing should be straightforward, clear and concise. Avoid slogans, jargon and polemic.
10. **Ask yourself:** Would you fund this? Why?

### A typical proposal includes...

- ◆ Information about investigators
  - Contact details
  - Track record (publications, grants & resume)
- ◆ Study proposal
  - Rationale & background
  - Hypotheses, aims, objectives
  - Design (sample, methods, measures)
  - Analysis & statistical issues
- ◆ Ethical implications
- ◆ Budget (incl. justification)

### Looking for Funding? Then try these websites...

- ☆ PHCRIS @ <http://www/phcris.org>
- ☆ SPIN @ <http://australia.infoed.org/spin/spinmain.asp>
- ☆ Grants Link @ <http://www.grantslink.gov.au/>
- ☆ Grant Search @ <http://www.grantsearch.com.au/>
- ☆ Tender Link @ <https://www.tenderlink.com/index.htm>



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