FUNDING TIPS

1) Funding Agency:
   a. Make sure the question and area of study match the funding mechanism and funding agency. Do this by talking/emailing the funding agency and program officers.

2) Timing:
   a. Identify the submission deadlines, required submission forms and page limitations, budget allowances and restrictions, and required signatures.
   b. Start working on the grant proposal well in advance of the due date. This planning provides plenty of time to hone the specific aims, to receive and incorporate feedback, review and refine.
   c. Do not submit the grant proposal if it is not ready. Note, if there is a weakness that will be noted as a criticism on a particular component of the proposal, the proposal is not ready for submission. Address all potential concerns prior to submission.

3) Writing:
   a. Advice on Specific Aims (4 paragraphs)
      i. Write, re-write, and re-rewrite.
   b. Advice on Proposal Presentation
      i. Write clearly and concisely.
      ii. Write in a way that tells a cohesive and compelling story.
      iii. Organize and format the application for ease of reading. Use logical headings, include figures (which are easier to digest than words and make the figures large enough to be seen easily) and leave some whitespace.
      iv. Lack of clarity in writing often leads to comments that appear irrelevant or ill-informed. Keep in mind that excellent science can be lost in a poorly written proposal.
   c. Stressing the significance, impact, innovation, approach, research team and environment.
      i. Emphasize key points. Remember the reviewer is reading multiple grants. Ask – is this proposal interesting or boring?
      ii. Emphasize the significance and innovation of the work. It is very important to tell a story of why the question is so important. Don’t leave the reviewer wondering ‘so what’ when they finish reading the background and significance.
      iii. Stress why the research team or members are uniquely suited to do the proposed work.
      iv. Choose and justify each outcome measures wisely.
v. Be realistic of what experimentation is possible within the proposed time period. Do not be ambitious. Develop an appropriate timeline.

4) Peer review:
   a. Send the proposal to peers for review. Have reviewers from diverse backgrounds read and provide feedback on the proposal. Give the reviewers plenty of time.
   b. Have someone outside the research area read the proposal for clarity – the final reviewers may not be in the area.
   c. Proof read. Have someone else proof read the proposal for spelling and grammatical errors.
   d. When resubmitting never dismiss a reviewer comment, address all comments raised.
   e. Do not take the feedback personally. Separate one’s determination of self-worth from feedback. In fact, use the feedback to improve the proposal and make it better for the next submission.

5) Be tenacious.
   a. Submit, revise, resubmit, repeat

References


https://www.uab.edu/medicine/cfar/images/Specific_Aims_Examples.pdf


http://tinyurl.com/7lluvez