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Applying for External Funding

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The University of Texas at Tyler

https://www.uttyler.edu/research/

Good afternoon,
My name is Kay Jenkins and I'm a grants and contracts specialist with the Office of Research, Scholarship, and Sponsored Programs on the main campus. Our office provides expert guidance and support across the funding life cycle including identifying sources of funding, assisting with proposal development, negotiating sponsored project awards, setting up and monitoring budgets and expenditures, and helping investigators comply with federal, state, and university regulations and policies.

My co-presenter is Susan Rossman, Executive Director of Development in the University Advancement Office. The Advancement Office development team works with other teams in the office to maximize philanthropic contributions to the university. The team has formed good relationships with foundations and corporations and seeks funding from them to support the interests of the university and its faculty and students. The development team serves both the main campus and Health Science Center campus.

There are four main tools for acquiring external funding. They include gifts, contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements. In general, a gift is a charitable donation freely given by a funder with few, if any, terms and conditions attached to it like reports, deliverables, or milestones. A contract is used by a sponsor to purchase materials or services in exchange for compensation. A cooperative agreement is used by the federal government when the government wants substantial involvement in the project. In this workshop we are focusing on developing and submitting proposals for grants and cooperative agreements. But most of the suggestions and strategies suggested for developing a grant proposal can also be applied for developing a proposal requesting a gift from a sponsor.

Grants and cooperative agreements typically:
- Are offered through a competitive application process
- Have restrictions on how the funds must be used
- Have a clear start and end date during which the project must be performed, and the funds spent
- Require technical and financial reporting
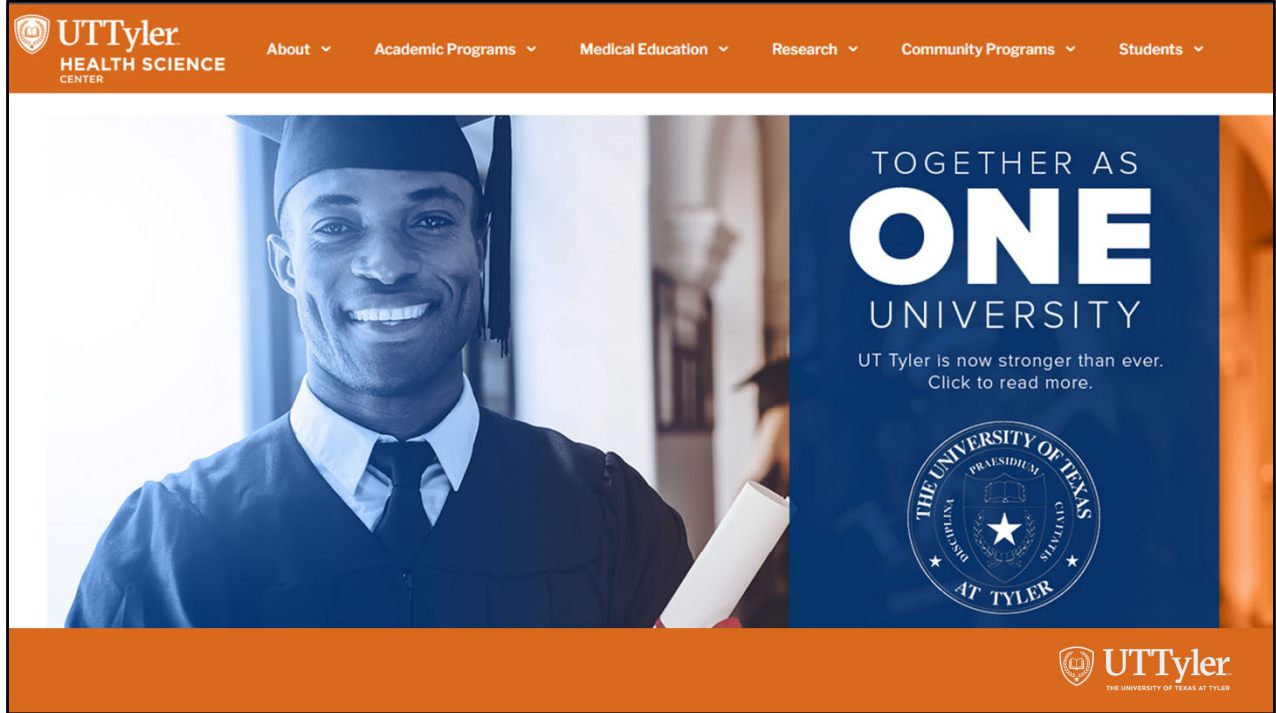
The main campus and the Health Science Center campus are administratively one university. However, when it comes to federal grants and funding, the two campuses are still considered independent institutions of higher education. Each campus still has its own unique entity identifier (UEI) which can complicate things when we submit proposals for external funding. If you work for the Health Science Center campus, then your proposal for federal funds will be submitted by the Office of Research, Scholarship, and Sponsored Programs on that campus and the award will be received on that campus. If you work for the main campus, you will work with the Office of Research, Scholarship, and Sponsored Program on the main campus to submit your proposal and manage your award.

Grant Lifecycle

PRE- AWARD AWARD Manage Award Closeout Award

Find Funding Prepare Proposal Submit Proposal Negotiate and Set Up Award POST- AWARD

Adapted from: Society of Research Administrators International Level Up Module 1: Relationships, Roles, and Responsibilities in Research Administration.

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The grant lifecycle is made up of three phases:
1. Pre-award phase involves finding a funding, preparing a proposal, and submitting it to the sponsor.
2. Award phase begins when the sponsor issues a notice of intent to award, and the awarded institution and sponsor negotiate the project budget and terms and conditions of the award. Other documents and assurances may be required before the award can be set up.
3. Post-award phase starts after the award is set up and involves managing the award in accordance with sponsor's terms and conditions along with any applicable federal, state, local and institutional rules and regulations. After the project period is completed the sponsor and award recipient closeout the award in accordance with the terms and conditions of the award. Final technical and financial reports are verified and submitted.

The award phase may be conducted by pre-award or post-award staff or both depending on the institution.

"Grants support critical recovery initiatives, innovative research, and many other programs."

https://www.usa.gov/grants

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Why are institutions and organizations interested in acquiring external funding? We can apply this quote to any type of external funding.
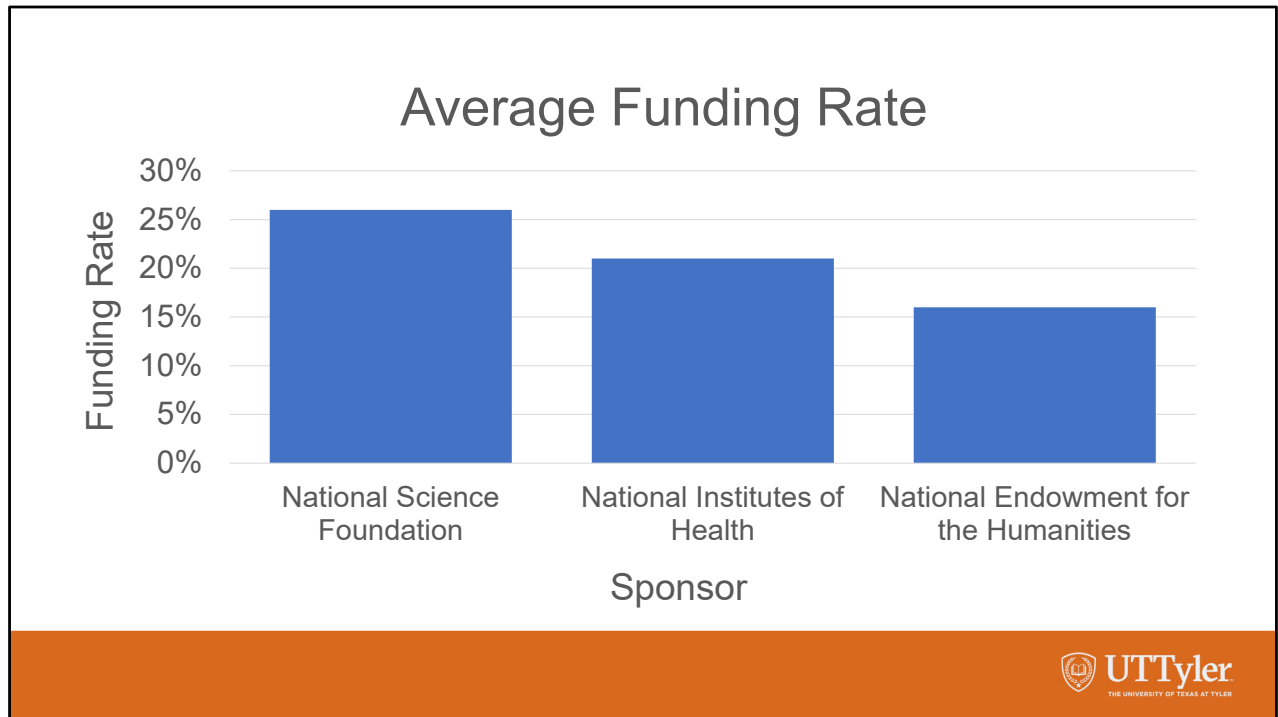
Grantsmanship

Whether applying for a grant through a competitive proposal process or seeking private gifts for your project, grantsmanship is involved. What is meant by grantsmanship. The Grantsmanship Center describes it as "a philosophy, a code of ethics, and a set of skills that, when practiced together, can produce a positive change." Some key characteristics of grantsmanship include:

- Keeping your organization's mission and/or the project's overall goal in mind
- Staying up to date on relevant research and best practices
- Knowing the target population and encouraging their input
- Committing to planning and engaging others because it's essential to making a real difference
- Building partnerships
- Viewing funders as partners, allies, advisors, and advocates
- Proactively searching for funders
- Refusing to misrepresent or fabricate information, disparage other organizations, or compromise a program or project to win a grant.

The Grantsmanship Center: https://www.tgci.com/.

Why is grantsmanship important – grant seeking environment is hypercompetitive. Similarly, the grant seeking environment for foundation and corporate funding is also hypercompetitive.

Developing a Funding Proposal
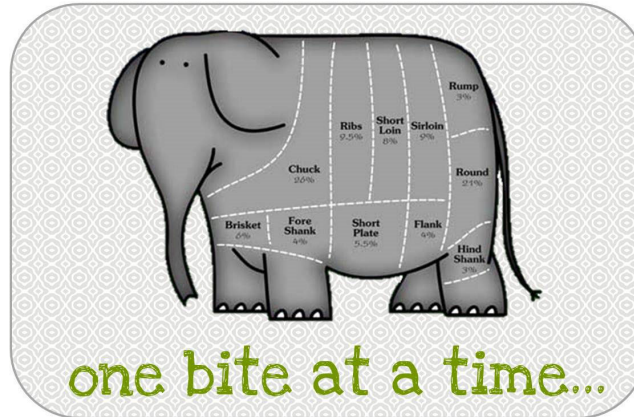
A good funding proposal provides a logical argument to persuade a potential sponsor to fund your research idea or program. Developing a proposal that is ready to submit to a sponsor is a process best accomplished one step at a time.

One of the ways to be ready for a funding opportunity when it becomes available or if you want to seek a gift from a private donor, is to develop a research project or program plan before you find an opportunity announcement.

Funding Opportunity Databases

- Grants.gov
- Texas eGrants
- Candid
- Pivot
- The Grantsmanship Center
    - https://www.tgci.com/funding-sources
    - https://www.tgci.com/funding-sources/texas
    - https://www.tgci.com/funding-sources/TX/top
    - https://www.tgci.com/funding-sources/tx/corporate

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Some people prefer to have a funding opportunity in mind when they develop a proposal so that they can target the funding priorities in their proposal. However, it is important to keep your organization's mission or the overall goal of your project in mind when searching funding opportunities so that you don't compromise your project just to get funds. There are many funding databases available, some are free to use such as Grants.gov while others require a subscription. Many funding agencies also have a funding database that you can search. These databases allow you to use filters to narrow your search results and you can save searches and share search results with colleagues.

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https://pivot.proquest.com/funding_main
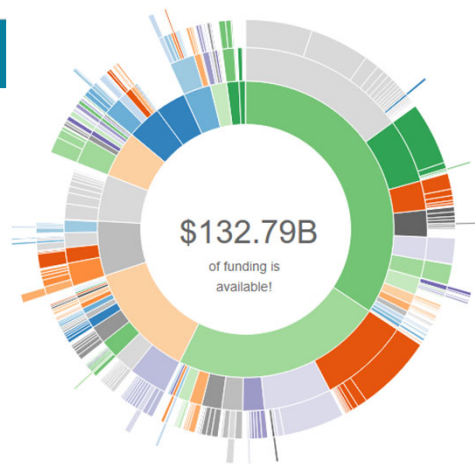
All faculty, staff, and students have access to Pivot, an online database of global funding sources including government and private funding organizations. You can create an account using your uttyler or patriot email accounts. Pivot has many of the features I just mentioned that the free databases offer such as filters to narrow your search results and you can save and share your searches. But Pivot also has many additional features that the free databases don't offer such as allowing you to build a profile so that potential collaborators can find you and so that Pivot can suggest funding opportunities that include your keywords. You can also have Pivot send you weekly emails based on your saved search with any updates. You can also track specific funding opportunities so that you receive any updates about the opportunities as the deadline approaches.

Before writing a proposal, the proposed program or project must be well planned. There are logical steps that you can follow to develop a persuasive, reviewer-friendly proposal describing your project idea. One of the best ways to find out if a funding organization is interested in your project idea is to develop a one-to-two-page concept paper. Preparing a concept paper is similar to preparing the proposal. In fact, it can serve as the framework for your funding proposal.

https://www.grantcentral.com/workbooks/   https://www.tgci.com/

Three books that I like to use are Karsh and Fox's The Only Grant-Writing Book You'll Ever Need, The Grant Application Writer's Workbook, and The Grantsmanship Center's Program Planning Proposal Writing and. The first and third books focus on nonprofits as applicants, but the strategies they recommend will work just as well for academic research projects or academic programs. The book in the middle is written for applicants seeking federal grants and the vendor offers versions for writing proposals for NIH, NSF, NIFA, and other federal agency awards.

Adapted from: The Grantsmanship Center: https://www.tgci.com/.
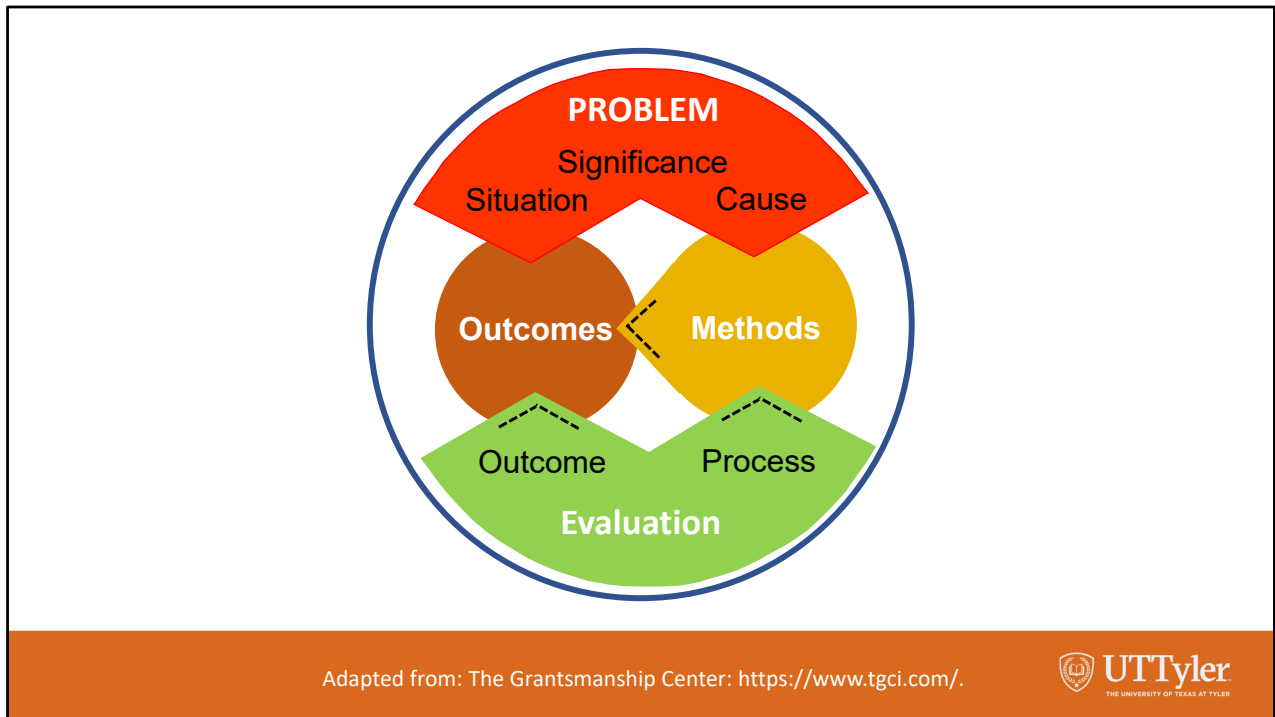
This graphic showing the Grantsmanship Center Model for program planning illustrates the circular logical argument that a good proposal must contain. A successful proposal must accurately identify the problem you would like to address. And the results of your evaluation need to show that you have addressed the problem.

If you have a funding opportunity in mind, the problem you identify must be important to the funding organization. The problem you identify needs to be substantiated with a description of the current situation, the significance of the problem, and the causes of the problem.

The Grantsmanship Center: https://www.tgci.com/.

PROBLEM

Situation   Significance   Cause

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Although this picture is worth a thousand words, in funding proposals we must use words to describe the problem we are trying to address. The title of the news article tells us that India is experiencing an alarming rate of hunger. But will we persuade a sponsor to fund our project with just this statement? Without the photo backing it up, the statement could be just an opinion.

In order to ensure that a grant proposal is addressing a problem that is of interest to funders, three factors must be addressed.
What is the situation motivating you to act?
What is the significance of the problem? How are the people or things affected by the problem?
What are the causes of the problem?

For research projects – think of the problem as the gap in knowledge that needs to be filled. What is the status of the field now? What is the significance of filling that gap in knowledge or thought of another way, what will happen or continue to occur if that gap is not filled? If a cause is applicable and you plan to address that cause, then include it.

Concept Paper

- Five paragraphs that provide an overview of the problem, followed by the outcomes, approach, the "payoff" for the funder, and significance of your proposed project
- Starts broad and provides detail as it progresses

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One of the best ways to take a few bites at writing a funding proposal is to develop a concept paper. Once you have identified and described the problem, you're ready to build the concept paper, because it starts with an overview of the problem. Please note that I will use the term "outcomes" instead of the terms, "goals" or "objectives" because outcomes helps me focus on presenting the expected results of the project or research, not the methods that will be used to get the results.

Concept Paper

- Think of it as an escalator pitch
- Share it with colleagues and program officer for feedback
- Use it as an outline for your proposal

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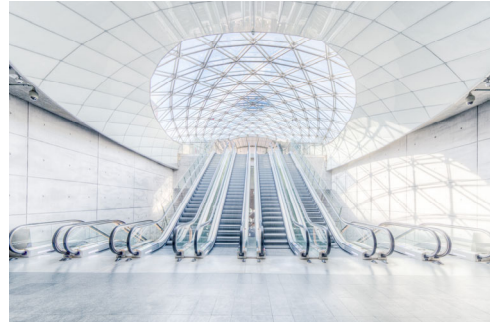
Not only is the concept paper an excellent way to get feedback before you devote a lot of time to preparing a proposal, but it also becomes the framework for your proposal. I like to recommend using the five paragraphs of a concept paper as the overview or introduction to a final proposal. It should get the reader's attention and make them excited to read the details in the rest of your proposal. This is an approach recommended in The Grant Application Writer's Workbook

Some experts disagree with this approach and describe it as providing a mini proposal within a proposal and thus is an unnecessary use of valuable space. Regardless, preparing the concept paper is extremely valuable for providing the foundation for your proposal.

Concept Paper – Paragraph 1

- Identify your field
- Identify and describe the problem (situation, significance, and causes) or identify the gap(s) in knowledge
- Describe current state of the problem or knowledge
- Need statement – describe what is needed to address the problem
- Consequences of not meeting that need

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Adapted from: Grantsmanship: Program Planning & Proposal Writing
(https://www.tgci.com/)

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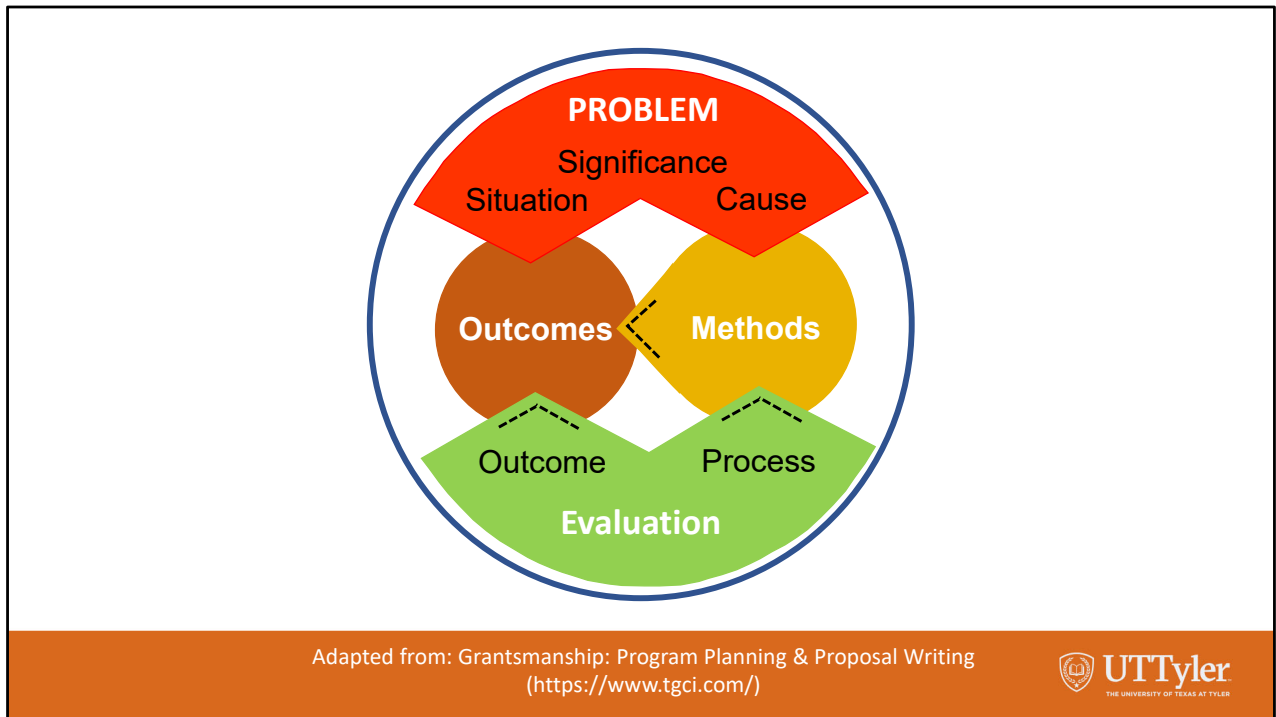
The next step in making a logical argument in your proposal is to identify the outcome(s) that you want to achieve.

Outcomes

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Outcomes can be classified as long-term or short-term and they describe the expected change your project will produce. The change should occur in either your field of research or your target population depending on the type of proposal you are writing.

Outcomes don't describe how you will address the problem or what products or services you will provide.

Examples of outcomes:

- Improved air quality

- Decreased traffic congestion

- Decreased hunger rate

- Quicker response time by the fire department

- Increased accuracy of drug targeting

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Outcomes are often called other things like goals and objectives and if those terms are needed to meet the funding opportunity announcement requirements, then use those terms. I like to use the word outcomes because it reminds me that these are the results that need to be achieved and are not the tasks or methods that are needed to get there.

Ideally, these outcomes should be expanded using the SMART strategy. For example, how much improvement in air quality is expected and by when? How will it be measured?

Concept Paper – Paragraph 2

- Overall project outcome – also called objective or goal – but should represent the change in the problem that you expect to achieve
- Central hypothesis (if applicable)
- Rationale for expecting this outcome (your prior work, work by others)
- Your qualifications that make the project feasible

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Concept Paper – Paragraph 3

- Outputs are the products or services that you will develop to achieve the stated outcome
- You can identify the outputs and support each one with a sentence describing the approach you will use to create the output
- Or you can describe tasks and state the output that will result from each task
- Summary sentence that describes how accomplishing the outputs will achieve the project outcome

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Concept Paper – Paragraph 4

- How will the project advance your field of research?
- How will your project address the goals and objectives of the sponsor's strategic plan?
- How will you program address the priorities of the sponsor?
- What are the broader impacts?

What's in it for the sponsor?

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This paragraph is the payoff paragraph – it quickly tells reviewers what the sponsor can expect from funding the project or research. If you are limited to a one-page concept paper, white paper, pre-application, letter of inquiry, then you can stop after this paragraph.

Make sure this paragraph circles back to the problem that you intend to address.

Concept Paper – Paragraph 5

- Go into more detail about problem, gap in knowledge, and the need to fill the gap
- Describe how the project is innovative
- Describe the significance of the project

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If you have room to add a fifth paragraph, you can support the statements you made in the first paragraph about the significance of the problem by providing more detail and citations. You can provide more detail about significance of the project and how it is an advancement on similar or previous work.

Concept Paper – Now What?

Develop a concept paper

Seek feedback from colleagues

Revise concept paper

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Getting feedback from your colleagues is a lot easier when they only need to read a one or two-page outline of your proposed research or project. This is the time to seek that feedback and revise the concept paper as needed.

Basic Components of Proposals

- Title
- Project Abstract/Summary
- Project Narrative
- Budget
- Budget Justification
- Biographical Sketches
- Organizational Background (Facilities and Other Resources)
- Other

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If you decide to proceed with developing a full proposal, contact the appropriate office for support. Our goal is to ensure that your proposal has the required components and complies with the sponsor's funding opportunity requirements, as well as with federal, state, and university rules and policies. We want to make sure your proposal is reviewed and not returned without review because of a technicality.

We have checklists, proposal templates, boiler plate text and other resources to help you with your proposal. If given enough time, we can review your proposal for spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors and content.

Congruency Review

- Financial Conflict of Interest
- Export Control
- Intellectual Property
- Cost Share Requirements or Requests
- Waivers of Indirect Cost Requirements
- Human Subjects Research
- Animal Research
- Hazardous Materials
- Responsible Conduct of Research Training
- Sponsor-Specific Requirements

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All proposals whether submitted to private or government organizations must be reviewed by one of the two offices before being submitted. Federal grants can only be submitted by Office of Research, Scholarship, and Sponsored Programs. All proposals must be reviewed for congruency with applicable regulations, rules, and policies by the Research Compliance Office, Dr. Anna Kurdowska. You will be asked to complete a proposal approval form if you work on the main campus. The form must also be signed by your department chair and dean. On the Health Science Center campus, you will be asked to complete a notice of intent to apply and a conflict-of-interest form. At the time of award or just before it, other reviews may be required. The Office of Research, Scholarship, and Sponsored Programs will then route the forms and your project narrative for internal review or notification and required approvals. These internal reviews take time to complete, and it is best to submit your forms at least five days before the time proposals are due.

Research Administration Platform

UT Tyler has purchased and is in the process of implementing Cayuse which is a research administration platform for preparing, submitting, and routing most proposals and award documents and managing awards. Instead of filling out forms and emailing them for signatures, you'll enter your information on the proposal form in the sponsored project module and depending on your answers to the questions in the form, the form will be routed for approvals to the right people.

All proposal information will be entered into Cayuse and most proposals will be submitted through Cayuse as they are on the main campus now. You can get more information about how Cayuse will be used in our upcoming workshop on October 26 th.

Office of University Advancement

The [Office of University Advancement](#) can assist you in discovering requests for proposals, developing proposals, and providing proposal guidance.

Please contact Susan Rossman, Executive Director of Development: srossman@uttyler.edu or 903-566-7047 for more information.

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Office of Research, Scholarship, and Sponsored Programs

The Office of Research, Scholarship, and Sponsored Programs (ORSSP) can assist you in finding funding, developing and reviewing research proposals and provide you with checklists and templates. If your proposal is awarded, our post-award staff will assist you in managing it.

- ORSSP main campus: 903-565-5858 and research@uttyler.edu
- ORSSP HSC campus: 903-877-7392 and grants@uthct.edu

https://www.uttyler.edu/research/

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The Office of Research, Scholarship, and Sponsored Programs has offices on both campuses.

Office of Research, Scholarship, and Sponsored Programs

https://www.uttyler.edu/research/proposal-development/

Several resources can be found on the ORSSP website:
https://www.uttyler.edu/research/proposal-development/

You can find information about upcoming workshops on our faculty-development-workshops webpage as well as recordings and pdf files of previous workshop presentations.