

# Solicitations: A Guide for Applying

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# Goals

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Enable PIs to respond successfully to a funding opportunity

Focus on what to look for in the Solicitation

Provide tips that lead to the submission of your grant proposal

# What is a funding opportunity?

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A publicly available document by which a Sponsor makes known its intentions to award discretionary grants or cooperative agreements, usually as a result of competition for funds.

# Types of Funding

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Request for Applications (RFA)

Program Announcement (PA)

Request for Proposals (RFP)

Program Solicitation

Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)

Broad Agency Announcement (BAA)

Grant Proposal Guidelines

# Funding Sources

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Federal

State

Local Gov't

Industry

Foundations

Other Universities



# Identifying Funding Opportunities

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What you're really trying to do is...

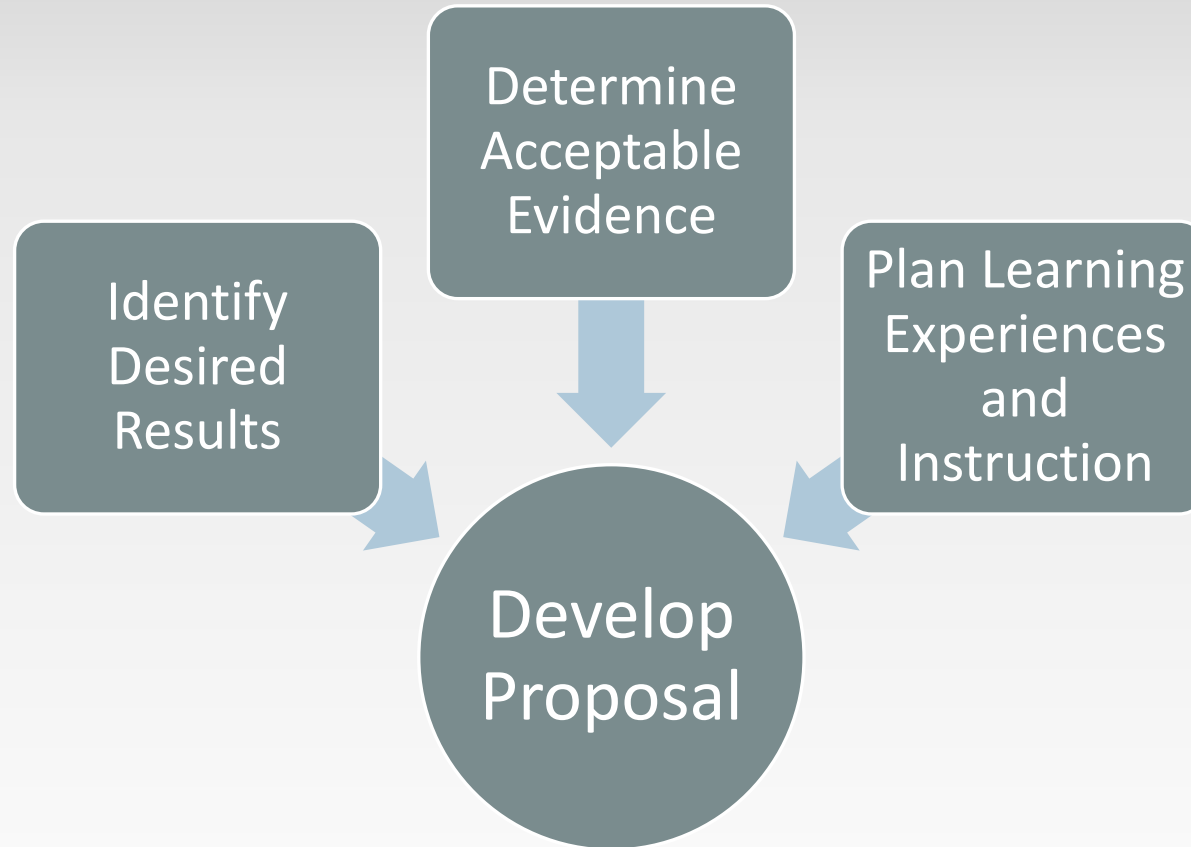
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SELL your good idea to a funding agency based on a critical need within their MISSION



# Strategy

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# Exercise: The Elevator Pitch

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Construct a **2 minute summary** of your planned research project and be prepared to present it to this audience

## You may include in your elevator pitch:

The general problem/question/critical need or gap that you are addressing

The significance of the question that you are addressing

Your planned study (your rationale/hypothesis/specific aims)

Your approach/innovation

Your qualifications for this project

The impact of your work



**ELEVATOR  
PITCH**

# Develop a Plan:

Things to think of when developing your proposal



- What data do I need for my research?
- What will it take to get it – lab space, students, etc.
- Where will I get seed money?
- What mentors/partners will help me with this?

- What grants have I received?
- What are my major project goals?
- What strategic collaborations should I have?

- What impact has my research made?
- What/how much have I published and where?
- What am I known for?

# Start Early

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Ask questions and know your literature

Apply for institutional grants

Read and follow the guidelines

Reach out to the agency or foundation

Register with agency for any upcoming webinars

Contact SPARC so that we can begin the internal process

# Engage with a proposal concept

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Remember your research interest may not fit the sponsors proposal requirements, so be flexible

Participate in some of SPARC's committees so that you have an opportunity to vet your idea among peers

Reach out to program officer listed to see if they have some tips on how to shape your proposal in ways that will result in a more positive review

# Things to consider

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University Policies and Procedures

Sponsoring Agency General Policies and Guidelines

Is the institution eligible?

Is the PI/PD eligible?

Is there a limit to the # of proposals that can be submitted?

What is the period of performance?

How is the application to be submitted?

When is the application due, date & time?

Is there mandatory cost sharing?

Are there Letters or documents required from other offices? (Dean, Chair, Provost)

Is a Letter of Intent &/or Preliminary Proposal required? If so, who submits?

Who officially signs for the proposal?

# NSF Funding Opportunity Review

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## Build & Broaden 3.0: Enhancing Social, Behavioral & Economic Science Research & Capacity at MSIs

- When are the proposals due?
- How many awards?
- Who may serve as principal investigator (PI)?
- Is a letter of intent required?
- What platform can the proposal be submitted?
- Where can you find full guidelines on salary requirements?



# Foundation Funding Opportunity Review

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## Greater Texas Foundation ([www.greatertexasfoundation.org](http://www.greatertexasfoundation.org))

- What do you need to do?
  - Concept Stage
    - Who do you send an email to if interested?
    - What do you need to submit?
  - Proposal Stage
    - Can anyone submit a proposal? Only invited proposals are accepted and reviewed. If invited to submit a proposal, you will receive instructions regarding next steps.

**Note:**

The foundation will consider only one application within a twelve-month period. Check out our [FAQs](#) prepared especially for prospective grantees.



# Ready, set, go...

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## WRITING PROPOSAL

Write to the goals and interests of the organization/agency

Follow the guidelines and structure provided

Provide only what is asked  
Create a project timeline

## SUBMITTING PROPOSAL

Make sure the application goes through the proper internal approvals prior to submission (NoI)

Submit early, ALWAYS

Coordinate with SPARC



# Not successful...

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## Review Feedback

- Agencies rarely fund on the first submission
- Feedback improves the draft
- Carefully read the review summary and comments

## Revise and Resubmit

- Schedule a meeting with SPARC to discuss next steps, such as reworking the proposal and coordinating a call with the cognizant PO

**RESUBMIT!**



# Best Practices

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## Do your homework

- Match the funding agencies mission
- Read the solicitation and previously funded proposals
- Write to the goals and objectives of the grant not to the idea you think they will fund
- Have your elevator pitch handy

## Start early

- Literature review to identify gaps
- Gather baseline data
- Identify the team and communicate frequently with SPARC
- Focus on one or two areas and have a hook (elevator pitch)

## Write to the review criteria

Do not get discouraged! Getting started early, learning from declined proposals, and networking with colleagues at peer institutions and conferences will help you stay on track to reach your goal.

**Good ideas → Grant writing → Enhanced scholarship and professional development → Funding**



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