

Essential Dos and Don'ts in Grant Writing



RESEARCH
EDUCATION
TREATMENT
ADVOCACY

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Dos

- Start with a good example of the mechanism you are preparing—find someone who is receiving grant funding and take a look at what they did.
- Write about what you know.
- Understand that R01 is often a better choice for new (early) career awards than R21s, which do not have the expanded pay-line benefit in the R01 mechanism.
- Stay within individual strengths and topics of preference for all proposals.
- Focus on the mechanisms you are competitive for versus what you are eligible for.
- Start applying or competing for awards early in your career. This means go for any and all trainee awards that you qualify for and keep an eye on the clock for the limits on new (early) career awards.

Don'ts

- Make your proposal too complicated or broad.
- Fail to address a lack of expertise—get the right collaborator.
- Omit controversy—if there is one in the field, acknowledge it.
- Use methods that don't match your Aims. Be consistent throughout.
- Make your Aims contingent. (Aim 1 is to develop and validate a psychometric test, and Aim 2 is to use the test developed in Aim 1 to address your hypothesis.)

Aims Page Pointers

- The Aims page is where the vast amount of your effort should be exerted. This is where you develop your idea and lay out the roadmap for the rest of the grant request. In it, you will
 - set up the problem
 - lead your reader to your central hypothesis
 - lay out your Aims with broad strokes, describing how you will accomplish them and what you will learn even if your hypothesis is not correct.
- A specific Aims page is the key to the entire application. Repeat key phrases and structure established here throughout.
- Make sure the Aims match and test the hypotheses. (This also applies to the methods; make sure these match the proposed experiments.)
- Obtain feedback on your Aims and continually refine them.
- Keep requesting feedback along the way from people who will provide honest assessments of your proposal, and be sure to include those who don't know the field to make sure the language is clear.

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