Office of Sponsored Programs
Northeastern Illinois University
5500 N. St. Louis Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60625-4699

Louise Illian, Director
Jon Teuber, Associate Director
Jean Egerman, Coordinator of Grants and Contract Resources
Vesna Misoska, Office Support Specialist

August-September 2009

Inside this Issue

RESOURCES

Grantwriting Tips

courtesy of: http://lone-eagles.com/granthelp.htm

Writing grant proposals to get money to make your project happen is becoming more and more common. Here are tips and resources for writing your grant.

1. **Find out which funding agencies have given grants in your region** similar to your planned proposal. Talk to those who got funded and ask for advice and, if possible, copies of their successful grants.

2. **Read the current guidelines** for those funding agencies. If an agency says they won't fund equipment, don't ask them for equipment (unless it's a necessary component of the part of the grant they said they'd fund) For example: A programmatic grant could ask for $50,000 in support equipment, but would not be considered if they called themselves a technology project. Semantics do matter a great deal!

If they say they'll fund up to $15,000, don't ask them for $50,000. Funding agencies often shift their focus, and timing can be very important. Watch for timing-sensitive opportunities. Do your homework! Grant reviewers appreciate those who paid attention to their RFP's

3. **Collect samples of successful grant proposals to use as boilerplate models.** Many funding agencies will send you, on request, proposals from past funded projects, or at least will give you the addresses of past grant recipients, so you can ask them directly for copies of successful proposals. The more good proposals you read, the more you'll understand how clear writing and following guidelines leads to funding.

4. **Use the same terms in your proposal that the funding agency used** to describe what they want to fund. Buzz phrases push important buttons. If they tell you what to tell them: listen, and be convincing as to how your project dovetails with their posted guidelines. If an RFP says they don't fund technology grants, don't use the word technology. Find other words to express your project, ideally taken directly from the RFP guidelines.

5. **Get to know individuals who have worked with the funding agencies to which you're applying.** Talk to agency personnel as much as is politely possible. Typically, little suggestions and hints you'll pick up, even from a phone conversation, will make major

differences in the final form and focus of your proposal. The more personal contacts you make, the better for you. Funding agencies appreciate those who take the time to gather all the facts, and they might even recognize your name when your proposal comes up for review.

6. Less is More! Reviewing stacks of proposals is a difficult job. Grant reviewers quickly learn to scan text, particularly proposal abstracts, in an attempt to get a quick overview of exactly what you expect to do, with whom, when, how, and toward what measurable outcome. If you are short and to the point, and you've answered the key questions, your grant will be viewed as comprehensible and fundable. If you bog down the reviewer with too much ambling detail they'll have a hard time understanding your proposal and it is likely to end up in the "NO" pile. Good proposals are easy to understand.

7. A catchy name, like "Reach for the Sky" which is also descriptive of the project, can make a big difference. First impressions and a memorable theme and name are important! Remember they will want to promote your project proudly as one of their great projects.

8. Good writing should be easy to read, understand, and should present your ideas in an exciting, yet specific manner. The abstract of your proposal is the single most important paragraph of your proposal. You should know exactly what you're planning to do with their money, and express it in elegant simplicity. If the grant reviewer has a good idea of the direction of your proposal from reading the abstract, it creates an important first impression that you do indeed know what you want to accomplish, with whom, how and at what cost.

In reading an exciting, well-written proposal, one idea follows naturally to the next. One disjointed or boring sentence can kill the mounting enthusiasm of a tired grant reader. Maintain a tempo of easy to understand sentences that build on one another in a crescendo fashion.

9. Show in your proposal that you're aware of who has done similar projects, and that you've partnered with appropriate entities to assure your project will have enough support to make it through to completion.

10. Sustainability is a big issue. Too many grant projects disappear after the funding is gone. How can you assure ongoing benefits once the funding runs out is one of the biggest questions in the mind of the grant reviewer.

11. Measurable outcomes. Once the grant is over, indicate exactly what was produced, how it will be disseminated and exactly how many people will have benefited? How do you intend to measure tangible outcomes to prove the projected benefit actually occurred?

12. In the passion of writing a grant it is easy to get too ambitious. A major red flag for grant reviewers is the indication you've planned to accomplish more than your budget makes realistically attainable. It is better to limit your proposal to less, more assuredly attainable goals, than to promise more than you can deliver. Most projects find they badly underestimated funding for staff and particularly technology support. Be realistic and conservative.

13. Tie yourself to a major regional, or national, issue and position your proposal as a model to be replicated once you've proved your idea works. Make it clear you're not just benefiting ten people in Two-Dot, Montana, but that you're solving a problem shared by all rural schools and are creating a replicable national model. A specific strategy for broadly sharing your solution should be part of your proposal plan.

14. Choose your partners wisely. The more partners you have to deal with, the harder it is to keep everyone happy, particularly where control of large sums of money is the issue. If you plan to be working with your grant partners for years, you'd better know who you can trust and work with. Many projects end up with internal in-fighting that takes the fun out of getting funded. Money changes friendships. Tread cautiously.

Consider whom you may have to work with if you get funded and whether you should include them

for a share of the funding to avoid future resistance to your project. Grant reviewers look closely to see who is flying solo, and who works well with the others. The better partners you have, the safer their money is when invested in your project.

15. Even if your first grant-writing effort doesn't get funded, the planning and writing process still allows you to resubmit your idea elsewhere. Often project partners get so committed to a good idea, even if funding isn't won, that the means for moving forward on a project can still be a possibility. Boilerplate paragraphs from old grants are typically recycled. Seasoned grantwriters are skilled recyclers, reusing paragraphs from successful grants.

16. Make it fun! If you get funded, you'd better enjoy working hard to make your dream happen. Be careful what you ask for, because you just might get it! Once a grant ends, what will you have built for the future? Will you be right back where you started having to write another grant? Plan accordingly.

17. Many web sites exist to support grant-writers, even specifically educational technology grant-writers. Knowing this, find them and use them! Search the Web for "educational technology grants" and/or "grant-writing."

18. Evaluations are the means by which you prove your success at the end of the grant period and are often the key to winning your next grant. Be tangible and realistic in what you set out to achieve and how you'll know if you've achieved it.

Funding Opportunities

National Endowment for the Humanities:

Collaborative Research Grants **Synopsis**: Collaborative Research Grants support original research undertaken by a team of two or more scholars or research coordinated by an individual scholar that, because of its scope or complexity, requires additional staff and resources beyond the individual's salary. Eligible projects include: research that significantly adds to knowledge and understanding in the humanities; conferences on topics of major importance in the humanities that will benefit ongoing research; archaeological projects that include the interpretation and communication of results (projects may encompass excavation, materials analysis, laboratory work, field reports, and preparation of interpretive monographs); and research that uses the knowledge, methods, and perspectives of the humanities to enhance understanding of science, technology, medicine, and the social sciences. These grants support full-time or part-time activities for periods of one to three years. Support is available for various combinations of scholars, consultants, and research assistants; project-related travel; field work; applications of information technology; and technical support and services. All grantees are expected to communicate the results of their work to the appropriate scholarly and public audiences.
Deadline: October 29, 2009
CFDA: 45.161
Website:
http://www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/Collaborative.html

National Endowment for the Humanities: Scholarly Editions and Translations

synopsis: Scholarly Editions and Translations grants support the preparation of editions and translations of pre-existing texts and documents that are currently inaccessible or available in inadequate editions. Projects must be undertaken by a team of at least one editor or translator and one other staff member. Grants typically support editions and translations of significant literary, philosophical, and historical materials, but other types of work, such as musical notation, are also eligible. Applicants should demonstrate familiarity with the best practices recommended by the Association for Documentary Editing or the Modern Language Association Committee on Scholarly Editions. Translation projects should also explain the approach adopted for the particular work to be translated. Editions and translations produced with NEH support contain scholarly and critical apparatus appropriate to the subject matter and format of the edition. This usually means introductions and annotations

that provide essential information about the form, transmission, and historical and intellectual context of the texts and documents involved. Proposals for editions of foreign language materials in the original language are eligible for funding, as well as proposals for editions of translated materials.
Deadline: Oct 29, 2009
Website:
http://www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/editions.html

National Endowment for the Humanities: Enduring Questions: **synopsis:** The Enduring Questions grant program supports a faculty member's development of a new course that will foster intellectual community through the study of an enduring question. This course will encourage undergraduate students and a teacher to grapple with a fundamental question addressed by the humanities, and to join together in a deep and sustained program of reading in order to encounter influential thinkers over the centuries and into the present day.

What is an enduring question? The following list is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive but serves to illustrate.

- What is the good life?
- What is happiness?
- What is friendship?
- What is beauty?
- Is there a human nature, and, if so, what is it?
- What is the relationship between humans and the natural world?
- How do science and ethics relate to one another?
- Is there such a thing as right and wrong? Good and evil?
- What is good government?

Enduring questions are, to an overarching degree, pre-disciplinary. They are questions to which no discipline or field or profession can lay an exclusive claim. In many cases they predate the formation of the academic disciplines themselves. Enduring questions can be tackled by reflective individuals regardless of their chosen vocations, areas of expertise, or personal backgrounds. They are questions that have more than one plausible or compelling answer. They have long held interest for young people, and they allow for a special, intense dialogue across generations. The Enduring Questions grant program will promote such dialogue in today's undergraduate environment. An Enduring Questions grant supports the development of a new undergraduate humanities course that must be taught at least twice during the grant period. The grant supports the work of a faculty member in designing, preparing, and assessing the course. It may also be used for ancillary activities that enhance faculty-student intellectual community, such as visits to museums and artistic or cultural events. An Enduring Questions course may be taught by faculty members from any department or discipline in the humanities or by faculty outside the humanities (e.g., astronomy, economics, law, mathematics, psychology), as long as humanities are central to the course.
Website:
http://www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/EnduringQuestions.html
Deadline: September 15, 2009

Funding Opportunities from Last Issue

National Science Foundation: Research Initiation Grants to Broaden Participation in Biology (RIG BP) **Synopsis:** With the goal of broadening participation to all biologists including members from groups under-represented in biology, the Directorate for Biological Sciences (BIO) at NSF continues to offer Research Initiation Grants (RIG). Currently, African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders are under-represented in biology. These grants are intended to increase the diversity of researchers who apply for and receive BIO funding to initiate research programs early in their careers.

By providing these funding opportunities, BIO intends to further broaden participation of biological researchers who share NSF's commitment to diversity in the following ways:

- Expand the population of role models who will interact with an increasingly diverse student population, the workforce of the future
- Increase the number of scientists at minority serving

institutions actively and competitively engaged in research as independent investigators, thereby creating new research opportunities for students from under-represented groups

- Fund biological research projects that use innovative ways to attract and retain members of under-represented groups to careers in biology. Awards are for 24 months and are limited to $175,000 total costs (direct plus indirect) with up to an additional $25,000 for equipment maximum total award amount of $200,000). Principal Investigators must be U.S. citizens or lawfully admitted U.S. permanent residents at the time of application; visa-holders are not eligible.

Deadline: January 11, 2010 Second Monday in January, Annually Thereafter

Website:
http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=10676

National Science Foundation: Sedimentary Geology and Paleobiology

Synopsis: Sedimentary Geology and Paleobiology supports studies of: (1) the changing aspects of life, ecology, environments, and biogeography in past geologic time based on fossil plants, animals, and microbes; (2) all aspects of the Earth's sedimentary carapace — insights into geological processes recorded in its historical records and rich organic and inorganic resources locked in rock sequences; (3) the science of dating and measuring the time sequence of events and rates of geological processes of the Earth's past sedimentary and biological (fossil) record; (4) the geologic record of the production, transportation, and deposition of physical and chemical sediments; and (5) understanding the complexities of Earth's deep time (pre-Holocene) climate systems. The Sedimentary Geology and Paleobiology Program especially encourages integrative studies at the national and international levels that seek to link sub-disciplines, such as geochronology, paleocology, paleoclimatology, paleo-geography, and paleoenvironments.

Website:
http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2009/nsf09560/nsf09560.htm

Deadline(s): January 16, 2010

Irwin Andrew Porter Foundation

Synopsis: The Irwin Andrew Porter Foundation funds innovative projects that foster connections between communities, individuals, the environment and the world at large. The foundation funds a broad range of focus areas and is most interested in projects that require and/or inspire those directly benefiting from the project to give back to their communities both during the project and into the future. Grants Range from $500 to $30,000 annually. The Irwin Andrew Porter Foundation accepts proposals for single year, multi-year and matching grants. Applications are accepted from November 1 to June 1.

Spencer Foundation:

Synopsis: The Spencer Foundation provides funding for research projects that study education in the United States and overseas. Under a new initiative, the foundation will fund research projects in philosophy as it relates to educational policy and practice. Applicants are encouraged to view educational policy broadly, including issues that directly relate to K-12 schools and higher education institutions, as well as issues that influence children's growth and development in the family and in society.

Website:
www.spencer.org/programs/grants/pgmg.htm

Deadline: Accepted anytime

National Science Foundation: Education and Human Resources CAREER Awards:

Synopsis: The Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) Program is a Foundation-wide activity that offers the National Science Foundation's most prestigious awards in support of junior faculty who exemplify the role of teacher-scholars through outstanding research, excellent education and the integration of education and research within the context of the mission of their organizations. Such activities should build a firm foundation for a lifetime of leadership in integrating education and research. NSF encourages submission of CAREER proposals from junior faculty members at all CAREER-eligible organizations and especially

encourages women, members of underrepresented minority groups, and persons with disabilities to apply.
PECASE: Each year NSF selects nominees for the Presidential Early Career Awards for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE) from among the most meritorious new CAREER awardees. Selection for this award is based on two important criteria: 1) innovative research at the frontiers of science and technology that is relevant to the mission of the sponsoring organization or agency, and 2) community service demonstrated through scientific leadership, education or community outreach. These awards foster innovative developments in science and technology, increase awareness of careers in science and engineering, give recognition to the scientific missions of the participating agencies, enhance connections between fundamental research and national goals, and highlight the importance of science and technology for the Nation's future. Individuals cannot apply for PECASE. These awards are initiated by the participating federal agencies. At NSF, up to twenty nominees for this award are selected each year from among the PECASE-eligible CAREER awardees who are most likely to become the leaders of academic research and education in the twenty-first century.
Website:
http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=5262
Deadline: Accepted anytime