CLAYTON STATE UNIVERSITY
GRANT DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT PRIMER

This primer is a condensed guide to assist you with the grant writing and management process. Its purpose is to provide a quick reference to best practices and consultation offered by the office of Sponsored Research and Programs, in alignment with the Business and Operations Policies and Procedure Manual, of steps that take an investigator from interest to *proposal writing,* through the *approval process*, *management,* and *closeout*. The guidelines are based on best practices in the area of sponsored research and grant writing as outlined by the National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA), the National Science Foundation (NSF), and the Clayton State University Grants and contracts webpage https://www.clayton.edu/grant-contract-programs/index.

Overview of Clayton State University (CSU) office of Sponsored Research and Programs/Grants Administration Process

Major Functions
The office of Sponsored Research and Programs serves as the first point of contact and support for proposal reviews, grants administration and award. Accordingly, the office works with Academic Affairs, Business and Operations, and other units on matters related to grants and sponsored programs. The office provides:

1. Background information on the University and the community
2. Interpretation of policy and compliance
3. Acquisition of endorsements
4. Technical assistance and proposal submission and uploading

BEFORE YOU WRITE

Developing Ideas for a Proposal

When developing an idea for a proposal, it is important to determine if it aligns with institutional characteristics, strategic plan goals, and that it has been vetted with your department chair, dean, or immediate supervisor. If efforts are unique and a need has been established, it may be worthwhile to pursue Federal assistance.

Finding Funding

A successful grant proposal is one that is well-prepared, thoughtfully planned, and concisely packaged. Thoughtful planning begins with identification of funding agencies. There are several types of funding agencies:

1. Government (Federal, State, City/Municipal) examples:
    a. U.S. Department of Education (federal)
    b. University System of Georgia Affordable Learning Textbook (state)
2. Non-Government- (Foundations/Private corporations). [OBJ]
    a. Walmart Foundation
    b. Chick-Fil-A Foundation

Solicitations from private corporations must receive prior approval from University Advancement to confirm pre-existing targeted grant supports. There are also…

3. Foundation/Private corporations—a type of non-government grant as identified in number 2 above.
4. University System of Georgia Grants—the Affordable Learning Textbook (state) grant is a type of system sponsored grant *as identified in number 1 above*.
5. Clayton State University Internal Grants—certain grant funding can also be sponsored by the institution from the Office of the Provost.

WRITING THE PROPOSAL

Following Funding Agency Guidelines

Whether submitting a hardcopy of your proposal or a digital (e-grant) version, always follow the funder's instructions:

1. Read the guidelines three times: one time to understand the general instructions, a second time to focus on the technical formatting requirements, and a third time to note the narrative content requirements.
2. Highlight all technical and content requirements.
3. Call the funder (or ask Sponsored Research and Programs for assistance) to clarify and conflicting instructions.
4. Write in chronological order (the same order that the funder asks for the information in its guidelines).

Gathering Background Information

The first thing you will need to do in writing your proposal is to gather the documentation for it. You will require background documentation in three areas: concept, program, and expenses (Expenses will be addressed in the section on developing a budget).

1. Concept—it is important that you have a good sense of how the project fits with the philosophy and mission of the agency.
2. Program—Developing a program is at the heart of proposal development. Here is a check list of the program information typically required:

    a. Cover Materials—a cover letter, pre-narrative forms, abstract or executive summary, and table of contents
    b. Organization History and Capability—History of the organization; major accomplishments relevant to the proposed grant-funded project; current programs and activities relevant to the proposed grant-funded project; target population demographics that mirror the types of populations the funder wants to support in its current funding cycle; collaborations with local, regional, and statewide nonprofit and for-profit –partners
    c. Statement of Need—The problem within the community in critical need of grant funding; how you identified the problem; how the problem looks from national, regional, and local perspectives; the current national and local research that proves the existence of the problem; and the gloom doom, drama, and trauma that justifies the need for grant funds.
    d. Program Design—one concise statement expressing the purpose of the program; goals that shadow the funder's specific funding-goals; SMART or outcome objectives written in quantifiable terms: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic, and **T**ime-bound commitments to show the steps to achieving the goals; process objectives; impact objectives expressed in terms of their benefits to end recipients; the time frame for starting and ending all proposed activities; integration of the evaluation plan into the overall program design or plan of operation; a dissemination plan; and a sustainability plan.
    e. Evaluation and Dissemination—If the funder requires you to submit a separate evaluation section with your application, make sure to address the following:

        i. The methods you will use to evaluate the progress of your objectives, and
        ii. How you plan to share or disseminate your findings with others.

            • Evaluation plan—An especially important part of a project is a well-designed plan for evaluation. All funding agencies stress the importance of a proper assessment of project goals and objectives. Evaluation can be formative (process) and/or summative (product).

A formative evaluation aims to determine if the project is on track for the planned outcomes. Results of a formative evaluation are immediately implemented to achieve the overall planned project goals. A summative evaluation measures program attainments, including the outcome of the project and the achievement of goals.

- Organizational background/history or organization capability—The emphasis in this section should be on the institutional facilities and resources that are beneficial to the success of the project. Facilities and resources such as media rooms, libraries, special service units, research apparatus, laboratories, conference rooms, media equipment, computer technology, collaborations, and partnership(s) may be described in such a proposal.
- Sustainability statement—A sustainability plan will demonstrate your efforts to secure funding beyond the end of the grant period.
- Budget—The budget section of the proposal should reflect the total cost of the proposed project and include a detailed itemization of all costs allocated to the project. This section should be prepared carefully, as mistakes could lead to: (a) a poor score from reviewers and (b) an unacceptable liability to the University, resulting in non-acceptance of a funding award. The budget justification (which usually does not exceed three pages) should explain and justify each cost item, any unusual situations or inclusions, and the proposed institutional cost sharing if any. Each major budget item must be clearly justified or explained. Make note of the application guidelines, which costs are allowable by the granting agency. Ascertain whether a budget requires approval by the SRP (cost sharing) and Vice President for Academic Affairs (release time and extra compensation). For specific CSU information considering budget preparation, see information on fringe benefits and indirect costs.

DEVELOPING A BUDGET

1. Developing a Budget—Your budget is connected directly to your project's goals, objectives, and implementation activities. Dollars are linked to activities and their resulting costs. Here are additional points:

   a. Make sure the budget includes expenditures that are allowable by the funding agency.
   b. Use the Budget Worksheet found at http://www.clayton.edu/Grant-Contract-Programs/Links for the internal pre-proposal.

c. Cost-Sharing: Determine whether the funding agency requires cost-sharing
d. Direct Costs
    i. Personnel/Salary Compensation (hourly and flat rate)—The personnel portion of the budget summary and budget detail narrative is where you indicate the costs of project staff and fringe benefits that will be paid from the grant funds and from your other resources.
    ii. Fringe Benefits—Fringe benefits are calculated at a percentage of total salaries and include medical and FICA match for each salaried position. In total, fringe benefits are calculated at a rate between 40 and 41 percent. The budget office will assist by providing current rates.
    iii. Travel—Your travel explanation in the budget detail narrative needs to include the number of trips planned and the number of persons for each trip as well as the conference or training program name, location, purpose, and cost. Be sure to include the cost of lodging, meals, transportation to the events, and ground travel.
    iv. Equipment—The equipment line item of the budget summary and budget detail narrative is where you ask for grant monies to purchase a major piece of equipment, such as a printer, or other critically needed operational equipment. Do your homework before requesting grant monies to cover big-ticket equipment.
    v. Construction—When you write a grant that is exclusively seeking funds for construction (or building funds), it may not be necessary to develop a budget summary and a budget detail narrative. You can simply insert a copy of the bid, which is the written document submitted to you by the construction company that lists all the costs involved in the project.
    vi. Supplies—The materials and supplies needed for the daily implementation of the project go on the supplies line of the budget summary and in the budget detail narrative.
    vii. Contractual—The contractual line of the budget summary and budget detail narrative is where you list the money needed to hire anyone for the project who is not a member of the staff.
    viii. Other—You may need to include another section in your budget summary and in the budget detail narrative if you have items that do not fit into any of the other categories, such as honorariums or stipends for speakers, flat-rate salaries, rents, printing, security services, testing fees, etc.
e. Indirect Costs—Indirect costs, often called overhead or facility and administrative (F&A) costs, cover service and products essential to the overall institution that are consumed to some small degree by the project. Examples of project consumables include existing window and door energy-efficiency-related maintenance and repairs, utilities, office space for the facilities staff, and custodial costs. Here are additional points on indirect costs:

    i. They vary depending on funding agency, and not all funding agencies allow indirect costs.

    ii. Our currently negotiated F&A rate is 40% for on campus projects and 21% for off campus projects.

  f. Matching Funds—Be clear on how the funder defines matching funds. Identify if the match can be an *in-kind contribution*, also referred to as *soft cash*, or if you are required to identify actual cash, called a *hard match*. Either way, the matching funds must be connected to grant-funded activities and related expenses.

2. Projecting Multiyear Costs—When planning to construct a building or purchase specific items of equipment, engineers or vendors can usually give bids that are close to the actual cost of the construction or equipment you will need. However, when you are seeking funding for personnel or line items with prices that fluctuate, take care to account for inflation when preparing your budget. In a multiyear request, *in some cases*, it may be necessary to increase your line items by at least 3 percent annually.

SUBMITTING THE PROPOSAL: THE INTERNAL PROCESS

Proposal Routing (Approval)

Process—All proposals that seek sponsored funding on behalf of the university must be reviewed and approved through the Sponsored Research and Programs Administration (SRP) using the procedures found on the Grant and Contract Programs <u>Grant Application Submittal Process</u> webpage. All forms required for submitting a proposal, due dates, and required signatures are linked on this webpage.

Required Signatures

The Final Proposal Review Sheet requires the following signatures: Investigator/Project Director/Principal Investigator, Department Chair, Dean, Senior Budget Analyst, Provost, and VP for Business and Operations. If a proposal is seeking funding from a corporate entity or foundation additional signatures will be secured from Advancement Services. These documents are to be submitted to the Office of Sponsored Research and Programs for approval support.

The overall process is summarized in figure 1 below.

| 14 DAYS | Proposals must be submitted for initial review 14 days prior to the deadline. Initial Review provides the Dean, Accounting, and the OSR an opportunity to provide a comprehensive review and assist with developing appropriate proposals and budgets. |
| 7 DAYS | Proposals must be submitted for approval through ServiceNow 7 days prior to the deadline to ensure the Dean, Department Chair/Director, Provost, Senior Accounting Analyst, and Chief Business Officer have an opportunity to approve the document through the routing process. |

Sub-Award Proposals

When a sub-award is granted by an external institution / organization, the CSU faculty or staff member shall develop an internal proposal detailing the planned activities and budget and shall route this proposal through the established Institutional Proposal Submission Procedures. Once Institutional approval has been secured, the PI will then proceed with execution of the sub-award contracts.

Unofficial Proposals

There is no such thing! Any proposal not submitted through the standard process will be subject to forfeiture. The investigator should ensure that every effort is made to follow the stated guidelines.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

1. The institutional review board process varies by funding agency.
2. When an employee of any type (faculty or staff, full time or part time, permanent or temporary), or a Community Standards research at an institution that has its own IRB, approval is necessary both from the IRB at the site of the study and from the Clayton State University IRB. For an in-depth process outline go to https://www.clayton.edu/about/docs/academic-affairs/IRB-policy-and-procedures_v20190118-revised-11-19.pdf

WINNING THE AWARD

Award Notification, Review and Acceptance
An award to CSU from a sponsoring agency serves as a legal document obligating the University to a contractual commitment. Awards may be a letter or check issued by an authorized agent of the sponsor, a grant Notification of Award (NOA), or may consist of a complete contractual document. In some cases, acceptance by the grantee (and then by the agency) is required before the award is in force, in other cases no formal acceptance is required.

When required, the University's authorized institutional official, the Vice President for Business and Operations, is responsible for signing these documents and thereby legally binding the University to the terms and conditions of the grant or contractual document.

Post-Award Conference
PI's can opt to participate in a Post-Award Conference. The focus of the conference is to interpret the terms and conditions of the funded research or project (the award). The session will be conducted in Business and Operations at a time mutually convenient for the Principal Investigator, Budget Administrator, and Sponsored Research and Programs Administrator. The extent of the agenda will depend on the type of award, and will provide the following information:

1. Guidelines for assignment of project number
2. Fiscal accountability and compliance
3. Required technical reporting including contractually required reporting schedules
4. Procurement requirements, regulations, and procedures, as needed

Assignment of Project Number (PeopleSoft)
Once the sponsored agreement has been executed by both the University and the sponsor, the office of Sponsored Research and Programs will transmit copies of the agreement and the proposal with an approved budget to the Senior Budget Analyst and request that a project number be established for the project. In order, to facilitate the assignment of a project number, the following documents must be included:

1. Proposal
2. All grant/contract procedures
3. Specific terms and conditions, if applicable
4. The fully executed award/contract
5. The final negotiated and approved budget
6. Sponsored Research and Programs transmittal form

Upon review and approval of the documents, a project number will be assigned, and the PI/PD will be notified via email by the Senior Budget Analyst

MANAGING THE GRANT

Budget Amendment Form
The completed original budget form should be forwarded to the office of Sponsored Research and Programs for further processing. Standard university business procedures are used to document accountability for the grant.

Changes in Grant/Budget Period
The awarding agency delegates authority to the university to commit and expend funds for allowable costs in support of the project, up to the amount specified in the award letter. The grant/budget period is the period between the effective date and the expiration date of the grant. The effective date of a grant or other agreement will not change unless the change is justified by exceptional circumstances. The expiration date may be changed due to approval of a request for (1) No-Cost Extension or (2) Supplemental Cost Extension.

Financial Management—Financial Management is critically important, therefore, the investigator:
1. Must review all expenditure requests to ensure allowable purchases at a reasonable cost allocable to the project's objectives. All expenditure requests, including operational expenses, travel, and consultant contracts on sponsored projects will be forwarded to Accounts Payable for approval.
2. Is expected to run a ledger report for monthly and cumulative expenditures and encumbrances on a state fiscal year basis (July 1-June 30).
3. Is responsible for managing the budget and expending it in accordance with sponsor and university regulations on allowable, allocable, and attributable expenses related to the project, as indicated in the approved budget.
4. Must be familiar with and comply with both the sponsor's guidelines and the university guidelines for fiscal management of sponsored programs. General guidelines for expending sponsored program funds are as follows:

   a. Costs must be allocable, bearing a direct relationship to the activities of the program, not to the general needs of the department or university.
   b. Costs must be reasonable, reflecting conscientious and prudent financial decision-making.

    c. Costs must be consistently treated, consistent with the normal cost standards of the university and not exceeding normal limits of similar charges that are not grant-supported.

    d. Costs must adhere to sponsor-stated restrictions, recognizing and respecting any restrictions on use of funds stipulated by the sponsor.

Monitoring the Project

As the award routes through the internal compliance area, following the post award conference between the Sponsored Research and Programs (SRP) administrator, investigator, and Senior Budget Analyst, a file will be created by the senior budget analyst to include all pertinent information regarding the type and amount of participant support provided for in the award agreement. The project will then be entered into the PeopleSoft database by the Budget Office. If questions or concerns arise, the Grants and Contracts Accountant and/or Budget Office will notify the Investigator/Project Director for further evaluation and/or corrective action. When the project is complete, or all funds have been expended appropriately, the Grants and Contracts Accountant will notify the Investigator/Project Director, and then proceed to close the project.

Cost Transfers

Cost Transfers under grants that represent corrections of clerical or bookkeeping errors should be completed within 90 days of when the error was detected. The transfers must be supported fully by documentation that clarifies how the error occurred and certifies that the current charge is correct by an authorized organizational official of Clayton State University. A statement that the transfer was done "to correct an error" will not be satisfactory. Transfers of costs from one project to another solely to cover cost overruns are not allowable. The Budget Office must maintain detailed documentation of cost transfers.

Renewal and Continuation Applications

Since Renewal and Continuation Application processes may require making changes in terms of institutional commitments, personnel and/or funding agency requirements, these application processes are handled the same as a new application would be handled.

GRANT CLOSE OUT

Closeout of a grant or other agreement is the process by which the sponsoring agency determines that all applicable administrative actions and required work of the agreement have been completed by the University and the sponsoring agency. The date of completion is the date on which all work under grants and other agreements is completed or the date on the award document, or any supplement or amendment thereto, on which sponsorship ends. Each grant

shall be closed out as promptly as is feasible after expiration or termination. Finishing a grant project is just as important as starting one. In many cases, the way in which close out procedures are handled, such as timely submission of final reports and the quality of these reports, can have a direct impact on chances for future funding. As the ending date approaches, the SRP, Contracts and Grants and the Principal Investigator (PI) ensure that all agency-specific and university requirements have been met and all necessary records are in the file for each project. There are several areas of management that need particular attention at the close of a sponsored project:

1. Budget: Make sure final budget revisions are on file; you must notify the staff and other appropriate personnel that the grant account number has now expired and should not be used after the grant period has ended.
2. Personnel: Separation paperwork must be completed for all staff. This process is completed by properly completing and processing the Personnel Action Forms (PAF) and routing through the appropriate signatory process including supervisor, department head, dean, vice president for external affairs and vice president for academic affairs.
3. Purchasing Activities: All requisitions, request for travel and other financial-based requests should be forwarded to the Procurement office thirty days before the grant date ends. All encumbrances should be cleared from the account.
4. Grant Files: All files should be reviewed for grant documents, personnel records, purchase orders and requisitions, and bud- get records. Also, make sure final reports have been submitted to the funding agency, and that copies are retained in the grant file.
5. Storage: Finally, the PI is required to arrange for the storage of grant files via the Capital Asset Management/Property Control office and inform the SRP office where the records are stored. (See 4.1.3 University Records Retention Policy)

More in-depth information on grant writing can be found in the following links. For assistance in the development of your proposal, contact Ceimone Strickland at Chendersonstrick@clayton.edu and Felicia Jester at Feliciajester@clayton.edu