

SECTION 3:

GRANTS: PRE-AWARD

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section of the guide discusses the development and submission of grant proposals. The pre-award process includes developing an idea, locating a funding source, planning the project, creating a budget, writing and editing the proposal, securing internal approval, and submitting the final proposal to the funding agency.

For help with any of these steps, you may contact the Director of Sponsored Research or visit the website at www.jcu.edu/research/grants. “Procedures for Seeking Grant Funds for Research” at JCU may be found at the end of this section.

3.2 ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

The Principal Investigator (PI), the person who plans and implements the project, should be a full-time employee of John Carroll University. The PI is responsible for the following pre-award activities:

- ❖ Advance notification to the Office of Sponsored Research of any planned proposals.
- ❖ Preparation of the proposal including: development, writing, and adhering to agency requirements.
- ❖ Complying with all JCU policies and any sponsor’s requirements, including the disclosure of interests.
- ❖ Securing internal approval of the proposal from department chair (if applicable) and dean or supervisor and the Associate Academic Vice President.
- ❖ Copying and mailing the proposal according to agency guidelines. The Director of Sponsored Research may provide these services if given sufficient advance notification.

3.3 ROLE OF THE SPONSORED RESEARCH OFFICE

The Director can assist the PI during the pre-award process and should be notified of any planned proposals and deadlines.

Pre-Award Services

- ❖ Notification of funding opportunities.
- ❖ Assistance in locating funding sources.
- ❖ Provision of resources on grant proposal writing and agency information.
- ❖ Consultation and review of proposals prior to submission including design and preparation, editorial assistance, budgetary concerns, compliance issues, University information, and agency requirements.
- ❖ Assistance in obtaining internal approval and authorization signatures.
- ❖ Assistance in obtaining letters of recommendation from the University President or others.
- ❖ With advance notice, the Director will arrange for photocopying, packaging, and express mail service.

3.4 FINDING A FUNDING SOURCE

Once a project idea has been formulated, the next step is to target the most probable funding source. Proposals may be funded by private or public foundations, corporations, or government agencies at the local, state, or federal level. Funds may be available from other agencies such as special interest groups or professional organizations. The agency guidelines will tell you who may apply for a grant (particular grants may be restricted, for example, to post-doctoral scientists with less than three years of experience) and from which type of institution (such as a community service organization). Grants may be offered to collaborating institutions only, such as a combination of a public school district and a business.

Depending on the agency, awards may be given for items such as salaries, supplies, travel, and equipment. Operating expenses or the development, implementation, and evaluation of programs may be the focus of funding. Some agencies consider proposals from certain geographic regions; some fund only one-year projects; some exclude any requests for equipment. Careful consideration of the agency guidelines will increase the success of your proposal. Most agencies welcome telephone calls or correspondence on proposals prior to submission. The following resources can be used to locate possible funding sources.

3.4.1 The Sponsored Research Website

The Office of Sponsored Research website includes a page devoted to searching for potential funders:

http://www.jcu.edu/research/grants/pre_find.htm

3.4.2 SPIN.PLUS

SPIN.PLUS, an online search service, can locate grant opportunities using simple or advance searches. You can sign up for daily search results based on user defined parameters. The service can be accessed from any JCU network connected computer from www.jcu.edu/research/grants. Contact the Director at x4520 for assistance.

3.4.3 The Foundation Center

One of five regional offices of The Foundation Center, a nationally known clearinghouse for philanthropic information, is located in downtown Cleveland. Visit their website at www.fdncenter.org/cleveland, call them at 216-861-1934, or visit them downtown at the Hanna Building: 1422 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44115. Their librarians offer workshops and assistance in searching for in-depth coverage of funders.

3.4.4 Grasselli Library

The library has many resources of interest to grantseekers such as the following: *Demystifying Grant Seeking*; *How to Get Grants and Free Stuff*; *Winning Grant Proposals*; and the *Foundation Grants Index* on CD-ROM.

3.5 COMPLIANCE ISSUES

Funding agencies, especially governmental funding agencies, may require proof of compliance to certain regulations on behalf of both the primary investigator and the institution. Common institutional requirements include compliance with the federal policy for the protection of human subjects, equal opportunity for employment, and occupational health and safety. See **Section 7: Compliance Issues** in this guide for more information.

3.6 LETTER OF INTENT AND PRE-SUBMISSION APPROVAL

Once a funding source is identified, contact the agency for application forms, guidelines, and advice. Information from program officers can greatly increase the success of your proposal. Occasionally, agencies will require a letter of intent to submit a full proposal. The agency will then notify you if it is interested in seeing a complete proposal for the project. **Internal approval from JCU should be secured prior to submitting the letter of intent.**

3.7 SECURING INTERNAL APPROVAL

Before spending a great deal of time and effort developing a proposal, it is a good idea to discuss your project with the department chair (if applicable) and dean or supervisor, and the Office of Sponsored Research to see if the project is likely to be approved by the University.

The Internal Approval Form (included at the end of this Section) must be submitted with the final, complete version of the grant proposal and signed by the department chair (if applicable), dean or supervisor, and the Associate Academic Vice President before submittal to the funding agency.

The Disclosure of Interests for Sponsored Projects Form (also located at the end of this section) must be submitted with the Internal Approval Form.

Certain types of proposals may also need advice and/or approval from the Vice President of Advancement, the Academic Vice President, the President, the IRB, or the IACUC. Check with the Director for more information.

3.8 DEVELOPING THE PROPOSAL

The proposal should be clearly written following the guidelines provided by the targeted funding agency. You should pay particular attention to any eligibility requirements, the use of keywords, and any requests for formatting including page length. Visit the **Pre-Award site** on the Sponsored Research web for additional information.

The Grantseekers Toolbox, containing detailed information and hints on proposal development can also be found on the web at grants website:

www.jcu.edu/research/grants

3.9 PREPARING THE BUDGET

Care should be taken to develop a realistic, detailed budget, which will cover the cost of the project without being excessive. General budget guidelines may be found at **<http://www.jcu.edu/research/grants/t-elements-b.htm>**. For help with budget preparation, contact the Director. The Senior Accountant in the Controller's Office may also provide assistance. In planning for new employees, review for hiring policies and salary scale for JCU employees; contact the Director of Sponsored Research for information. If allowable, indirect costs (aka overhead and F&A rates) should be included in the proposal budget. Direct costs, indirect costs, and cost share allowances comprise the total budget for the project.

3.9.1 Direct Costs

Budget items for direct costs include salaries and wages, supplies, equipment, postage, photocopying, travel, computer use, services, and other specifically identifiable items. Include fringe benefits for all employees.

3.9.2 Indirect Costs (Overhead)

Indirect costs, aka facilities and administration (F&A) rates or overhead, cover those costs which cannot be directly charged to the project but which represent university related expenses. JCU charges 47.3% for indirect costs against salary and wages as negotiated with our cognizant federal

office (DHHS). The U.S. Office of Management and Budget defines indirect costs in Circular A-21:

Indirect costs are those costs of an institution which are not readily identifiable with a particular project or activity but nevertheless are necessary to the general operation of the institution and the conduct of its activities. The costs of operating and maintaining buildings, grounds, and equipment, depreciation, general and departmental administrative salaries and expenses and library costs are types of expenses usually considered as indirect costs.

3.9.3 Cost Sharing

Agencies appreciate, and frequently request, cost sharing by the University as an indicator of our support for the project. Frequently the cost share could be offered with in-kind items such as release time, secretarial assistance, fringe benefits, or indirect costs. However, indirect costs must be included in the agency budget if allowable by the agency. Cost shared items must be approved by the department chair (if applicable), the dean or supervisor, and the Associate Academic Vice President.

3.10 EVALUATING THE PROPOSAL

The Director can review draft versions of the proposal for editorial purposes, agency guidelines, compliance issues, or budgetary concerns. You may also use *GrantSAT*, a self-assessment tool for grant proposals developed for the U.S. Department of Energy, which will guide you through an evaluation of your proposal by the use of graded questions. *GrantSAT* is available on the website at www.jcu.edu/research/grants and has been posted with permission.

3.11 ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR THE PROPOSAL

Agencies frequently request additional material to be included with the grant proposal. Contact the Director for items such as a list of the Board of Directors, enrollment statistics, library holdings, compliance assurances or certifications, the annual report, the latest auditor's report, or a letter of support from the University President. In addition, some proposals may require approval from the IRB or IACUC before submission. See **Sections 8 and 9** in this guide for more information. Note that additional time will be required to complete IRB and IACUC reviews. See **Section 7: Compliance Issues** in this guide for more information on assurances and certifications.

3.12 COLLABORATIVE GRANTS

Occasionally, grant proposals are developed in cooperation with other universities, school districts, agencies, or companies. Some funding agencies require collaborative ventures in their proposal guidelines. The process for internal approval described in **Section 3.7** also applies to collaborative grants including grants where a JCU employee is not designated as the primary investigator.

If IRB or IACUC approval is necessary for the project, copies of approved applications from affiliated institutions should be submitted with the grant proposal and application to the JCU IRB or IACUC. See **Sections 8 and 9** in this guide for more information.

3.13 DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSION

The final draft of a grant proposal should be given to the Office of Sponsored Research along with the Internal Approval Form **two weeks before submission to the agency** to allow for possible revision, approval, copying, and mailing services.

Certain types of proposals may also need advice and/or approval from the Vice President of Advancement, the Academic Vice President, the President, the IRB, and the IACUC. Allow sufficient time for any additional approvals.

Please indicate the agency deadline on the Internal Approval Form and whether that deadline indicates a postmark date or a delivered-by date.

3.14 ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF GRANT PROPOSALS

Federal funding agencies in particular are moving to electronic research administration (eRA) to streamline the process and reduce paperwork. Some agencies now require submission of proposals and reports through their website or by email. JCU internal approval must be obtained whether the proposal is submitted on paper or electronically.

3.14.1 NSF FastLane

The National Science Foundation requires all grant proposals and reports to be submitted through their FastLane website. PI codes may be obtained from the Office of Sponsored Research. Final versions will be submitted by the Director or the Associate Academic Vice President. Procedures for internal approval remain the same. See the website at **www.fastlane.nsf.gov**.

3.14.2 NIH ERA

Information on status of electronic Research Administration at the National Institutes of Health may be found at the website: **era.nih.gov**.

3.15 CHECKLIST FOR GRANT PROPOSAL SUBMISSIONS

Before submitting the final version of the proposal to the Office of Sponsored Research, consider the following questions:

- ❖ Is the proposed research worthwhile?
- ❖ Is the narrative clear, well written, and brief?
- ❖ Does it attract the reader's attention and sell your idea?
- ❖ Is the budget realistic?

- ❖ Are you an eligible candidate, according to the agency's guidelines?
- ❖ Is John Carroll University an eligible institution, according to the agency's guidelines?
- ❖ Is the topic a good match to the agency?
- ❖ Have you followed the agency's guidelines for format, style, and other requirements?
- ❖ Is the completed Internal Approval Form attached?
- ❖ Has a Disclosure of Interests for Sponsored Projects form been filed with the Office of Sponsored Research?
- ❖ Have you allowed for sufficient time to obtain any necessary approvals such as those of the Institutional Review Board?

When you are satisfied with the quality of your proposal and it has been approved by the department chair and/or any other supervisor, please submit your application to the Office of Sponsored Research for review and approval. Advance notice is much appreciated.

The proposal may not be submitted to the funding agency until internal approval has been received. We cannot guarantee University acceptance of an award that has not received prior approval.

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APPENDICES FOR SECTION 3:

- ❖ **PROCEDURES FOR SEEKING GRANT FUNDS**
- ❖ **INTERNAL APPROVAL FORM FOR SPONSORED GRANT/CONTRACT PROPOSALS**
- ❖ **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS RELATED TO SPONSORED PROJECTS FORM**
- ❖ **POLICY ON CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS RELATED TO SPONSORED PROJECTS**