CAREER Grants webinar

Sponsored by CADRE - the DR K-12 network for NSF

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CAREER Program Overview

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Overview

- Tips for preparing a CAREER proposal
- Cautions for preparing a CAREER proposal
- Proposal writing including budget development
- Proposal submission
Research or Development Topic

• Think of the research idea first, the proposal will come from the project idea
• Distinguishing characteristics in tension in a research and development project:
  – Focused vs. Extended
  – Novel vs. Grounded
  – Feasible vs. Challenging
  – Near-Term Results vs. Long-Term Prospects
Project Planning

• Work within your own planning style, but PLAN BEFORE YOU WRITE!
• Start from your research idea or question and where you want to be at the end, then fill in the middle
  – What do we already know on this topic? What has already been developed and tested?
  – What resources are (or could be with funding) at your disposal – people, facilities, equipment, supplies?
  – What are your goals for the project when you are done?
More Project Planning

• Draft a month-by-month timetable
  – Be realistic about your time and that of others to devote to the project
  – Are the most important activities receiving the bulk of the time?
  – Maintain some flexibility
  – Remember factors that are out of your control (e.g., scheduling of major meetings)
Decide if this is a CAREER project

- Is there a part of this that you can do?
  - As the sole PI and senior personnel?
  - Do you have the requisite expertise?

- Do you have a reasonable 5-year plan?
  - What if the first year does not go the way you imagined/hypothesized?

- Will you have interim products?
  - What are your papers after each year?
Even More Project Planning

• How much will this cost?
• Major cost considerations:
  – Personnel including PI, graduate students, post docs, undergraduate students, consultants
  – Materials and supplies – get realistic quotes from vendors
  – Travel – including personnel travel to do the work (e.g., meeting with others) and for dissemination (e.g., presenting at conferences)
  – Indirect Costs
Grant Proposal Guide (GPG)

• Generic guidance for preparation of proposals for all programs
• Criteria for reviewing proposals
• Describes the award process, procedures for requesting continued support, and administrative details
• Program solicitations take precedence over GPG for specific requirements
• For CAREER, you must respond to both the CAREER solicitation and the program solicitation
Proposal Writing

• Audience is KEY!
  – Writing to reviewers and program officers
  – Audience is in your broad domain, but may not be in your subspecialty
  – Focus on what you are going to do
  – Make sure the most important things receive the most space
Sections of the Project Description

• Your research topic and its significance
• Review of the literature - foundations
• Project design for research and education efforts, specifically including
  – What you are going to do
  – Who you are going to meet with
  – When you are going to do the work
  – Motivation for why these are the right things to do
• Dissemination
• Specifically address integration of Research and Education!
Evaluation

- The Merit Review Elements require you to have a mechanism to assess success for both Intellectual Merit and Broader Impact
- Sound evaluation will HELP your project become better
- Evaluation should focus on how the project is working, why the project is working that way, and identify places to make it better
- Evaluation should also be responsive to the project’s needs
- Use an advisory committee well
  - Integrate this group into your evaluation plan so that they can provide feedback at key points in your work plan
Budget

- Contact the Sponsored Research Office early and often
- Remember Indirect Costs
- Budget and project description should match
  - PI and senior personnel time should reflect the effort on the project
    - Limited to 2 months across ALL NSF awards
    - Justification required for more than 2 months
  - Graduate students and undergraduate students
  - Post docs require a Post-doc mentoring plan
  - Remember to budget for fringe benefits
  - New rules on direct costs for clerical support
Budget continued

• Non-personnel Budget costs
  – Equipment is only for equipment that costs more than $5000
  – Travel must be itemized per trip, can include local costs
  – Participant support – “stipends or subsistence allowances, travel allowances, and registration fees paid to or on behalf of participants or trainees (but not employees) in connection with NSF-sponsored conferences or training projects.”
    • The number of participants to be supported must be entered in the parentheses on the proposal budget.
    • Indirect costs (F&A) are not allowed on participant support costs.
  – Other direct costs
    • Materials and Supplies
    • Publication Costs
    • Consultant Services
    • Subawards
A Good Proposal

A good proposal is based upon a sound idea, is well expressed, clearly describes the approaches to be used to pursue the idea, evaluates the findings, and disseminates the results.
Proposal Submission

• All proposals are ultimately submitted by your SRO
• If at all possible, use FastLane system ([http://www.fastlane.nsf.gov](http://www.fastlane.nsf.gov))
• DO NOT wait until the last minute (see two bullets above)
• All notifications will be available to you via FastLane
CADRE is the DR K-12 network for NSF.

Visit our website cadrek12.org for a recording of this webinar and a copy of these slides.
Spotlight on Early Career in STEM Education R&D

Features:

- a Brief on Early Career Researchers and Developers in the DR K–12 Program: Needs, Supports, and Recommendations
- a Virtual poster hall of DR K-12 CAREER projects
- a Podcast on mentoring: a mentor/mentee discuss what worked well
- a Sample postdoctoral mentoring plan
- Information on the CADRE Fellows program

Stay tuned for more Spotlight features, including several short videos on mentoring discussing tips, challenges and strategies.