CAREER Program Informational 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 projects 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)

- DO NOT wait until the last minute (see two bullets above)

- All notifications will be available to you via FastLane

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for NSF.

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cadrek12.org
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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*
- Links to early career opportunities
- List of active CAREER projects with DR K-12 funding
- A virtual poster hall of DR K-12 CAREER projects (2014)
- Information on the CADRE Fellows program
- Link to the CADRE spotlight on mentoring

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