Finding Funding and Interpreting the RFP

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Funding Research: Important Terms

RFP/RFA  
NOFA/NOFO  
FOA  
PROSPECTING

GRANTMAKER  
SPONSOR  
FUNDING GUIDELINES  
CRM
Proposal Terminology

- RFP (Request for Proposals)
- RFA (Request for Application)
- FOA - Funding Opportunity Announcement
- NOFO/NOFA - Notice of Funding Opportunity/Announcement
- Solicited Proposal - A public announcement, often called and RFP asking for written proposals for funding of a priority
- Unsolicited proposal - The grantmaker funds past or current applicants only.
- LOI - Letter of Intent or Letter of Inquiry
- Grant Application
- Funder Portal - the online grant submission location for some funders
- Grant Guidelines - The rules you have to follow if you want to be funded
- CRM - search engine - in this case, to find grantmakers
How to Find Grants That Match Your Project

- **Prospect Database:** Grants.gov, Pivot, etc.

- **Cohort Analysis:** national, regional, or local nonprofits

- **Peers**
Prospect Databases

ProQuest Pivot

• A searchable database of funding opportunities available to UT Martin faculty and staff at https://pivot.proquest.com/.

Federal Funding Websites

• National Science Foundation, www.nsf.gov
• U.S. Department of Justice, www.justice.gov
• National Endowment for the Humanities, www.neh.gov
PIVOT - Create Your Account

• If you haven’t tried Pivot, create your account today by visiting https://pivot.proquest.com/register

• Select “Use Email Address/Create Password” and use your university email address

• Select “University of Tennessee, Martin” from the Affiliated Members list

• Once you have set up your account, claim your Pivot profile to be discoverable to potential collaborators
• Once you have set up your account, claim your Pivot profile to be discoverable to potential collaborators and to share potential funding opportunities with other researchers.

• Once you log in to your Pivot account, click on your name to display the options

• Click Update your profile

• Click the Edit buttons to modify information in a specific section of your profile

• Be sure to hit Save once you are finished editing

• Changes will be immediately viewable in Pivot
PIVOT - Create Your Account

- Search by Text
- Search by Sponsor
- Walkthrough for learning searches: Searching For Funding Opportunities
- Instructions for managing funding opportunities: Viewing and Managing Funding Opportunities
- Check out the Pivot Youtube channel: https://www.youtube.com/user/ProQuestPivot
Finding Grants

- Six steps (borrowed from GrantStation)
  - Research: Finding potential grants
  - Eliminate: Cutting down the prospects
  - Review: Do the few prospects fit your mission, your timeline?
  - Question: Google the funder, check **Guidestar**
  - Contact: Email the funder to ensure they are accepting proposals
  - Final review
# Research, Evaluate, and Prioritize Opportunities

## Gather Prospect Information
- Funder type and mission
- Relevant grantmaking history
- Key Contacts, Staff and Trustee names and profiles
- Funding process (e.g., eligibility, timing, amounts, requirements)
- Indicators of competitiveness
- Opportunities for connection and communication

***Keep notes in a list, spreadsheet, or database for further analysis.***

## Evaluate Prospect Alignment

### Government:
- Does the program align with the goals of your project?
- Does the program support activities you plan to pursue in your project?
- Is there evidence of support to projects similar to yours?

### Foundation:
- Are your mission and the funder’s mission well aligned?
- What is the long-term potential of the relationship?
- How challenging will it be to develop a relationship with the funder?

## Prioritize Prospects

**Pursue prospects with:**
- Good mission alignment
- Good potential ROI

**Do not pursue if:**
- Mission alignment is not good.
- ROI is not good.

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**Prioritize prospects based on alignment, potential benefit, ease of pursuit, and timeline urgency**
What is an RFP?

• An RFP is a document that is used to create a formal request for proposal. It is usually created by the person who will be issuing the RFP.

• The purpose of an RFP is to provide necessary information in order for someone to respond with a proposal that meets all of the requirements set out in the document.

• Sections include:
  • Purpose
  • Scope
  • Requirements
  • Timeline
  • Budget
  • Roles and responsibilities
  • Qualifications and Experience Requirements
Reading Proposal Guidelines: RFP

- Read the RFP, instructions THOROUGHLY several times through making notes
- Highlight frequently used phrases
- Create one-page summary of RFP
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Rural Business-Cooperative Service
[Docket #: RBS-21-BUSINESS-0039]
Notice of Solicitation of Applications for the Rural Innovation Stronger Economy (RISE) Grant Program for Fiscal Year 2022
AGENCY: Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA.
ACTION: Notice of solicitation of applications.

SUMMARY: The Rural Business-Cooperative Service (Agency), an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), invites applications under the Rural Innovation Stronger Economy (RISE) program for fiscal year (FY) 2022, subject to the availability of funding. This notice is being issued in order to allow applicants sufficient time to leverage financing, prepare and submit their applications, and give the Agency time to process applications within FY 2022. Selected applicants will use Agency grant funds to provide financial assistance in support of innovation centers and job accelerator programs.

B. Federal Award Information
   Type of Award: Competitive Grant.
   Fiscal Year Funds: FY 2022.
   Available Funds: Anyone interested in submitting an application for funding under this Program is encouraged to consult the Rural Development Notices of Solicitation of Applications website at https://www.rd.usda.gov/newsroom/notices-solicitation-applications-rosas for the amount of available funds appropriated in FY 2022.
   Minimum Award: $500,000.
   Maximum Award: $2,000,000.
   Due Date for Applications: April 19, 2022.
   Due Date for Concept Proposals: February 18, 2022.
   Anticipated Award Date: September 15, 2022.
   Performance Period: September 15, 2022, through December 31, 2026.
   Type of Assistance Instrument: Initial Solicitation Announcement.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching
   Your matching funds requirement is 20 percent of the eligible project costs of any activity carried out using RISE grant funds. Matching funds must be available throughout the grant term and applied individually to each RISE activity. Grant funds may only be used for up to 60 percent of an eligible RISE activity. Additional information on matching funds is found at 7 CFR 4284.1114. When you calculate your matching funds requirement, please round up or down to whole dollars as appropriate. To calculate your matching funds requirement, multiply your total eligible project costs of each eligible RISE activity by 0.2. The amount of matching funds required for your RISE activities is then added together to attain the total amount of non-Federal matching funds required for your project. Applications that only provide matching funds equal to 20 percent of the grant amount will be deemed ineligible due to an insufficient matching funds amount.

6. Funding Restrictions
   (a) Project funds, including grant and matching funds, cannot be used for ineligible grant purposes as stated in 7 CFR 4284.1114. 2 CFR part 200, subpart E, “Cost Principles,” and the most current Federal Acquisition Regulation (for-profits) or successor regulations.
   (b) In addition, your application will not be considered for funding if it does any of the following:
      (i) Focuses assistance on only one business;
      (ii) Requests less than the minimum grant amount or more than the maximum grant amount;
      (iii) The project budget includes administrative costs in excess of 10 percent of the grant amount; or
      (iv) Grant funds will be passed through to a member of the partnership in the form of lease payments or other activities with a conflict of interest or appearance thereof.
Proposal Guidelines: What to Look For in an RFP

- **Deadlines:** Do you have enough time to apply? Are you grant ready? Can you get signatures?
- **Reason:** Focus interest or purpose - Is there alignment with your interest?
- **Eligibility:** Organizational eligibility, level of expertise (new faculty, doctorate, undergraduate, etc.)
- **Amounts:** Ceiling to floor; What is the funding amount relative to your org’s budget? Limitations?
- **Match:** Do you have cost matching requirements? Can you use in-kind?
- **Other:** Project performance period dates, Partnerships/Collaborations required, etc.
Technical Proposal Requirements

• Eligibility
• Type of research (research, clinical, etc.)
• Formatting/page limits requirements
• Certifications
• Signatures needed
• Attachments
• Performance Period Dates
• Technical Assistance: Will there be a webinar? Can you call the program officer?
• Deadline
• Required Letters of Commitment/MOU
• Bios/CVs (page limits?)
Funding Timeline

• Don’t wait until the deadline is announced
• Funder Deadlines/Cycles may vary
  • Annual
  • Quarterly
  • Biannual
• Start planning up to a year in advance
  • Look at recent funded proposals
  • Ask a program officer outside funding window
  • Call a peer who was awarded
Questions?

Contact the ORSP!
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