



Office of Research Development and Education

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO
DENVER | ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

Proposal Development Tips:

- **Investigate** all possible funding resources.
- **Read and understand** sponsor application materials thoroughly. Based on this review, create a checklist of sponsor requirements to insure you submit a complete application. (See ORDE resource, [Sample Proposal Checklist](#); *please click cancel when prompted to log in.*)
- **Become acquainted** with sponsor funding patterns – what and who have they funded lately? (*For assistance in locating information, contact ORDE.*)
- **Contact** the agency; be prepared to discuss your proposed project with the program officer.
- **Identify** a good day and time for you and set it aside for your writing. Then stick to your schedule. Some investigators advocate for setting aside a day, others for setting aside an hour a day. Figure out what works best for you and then put your writing time on your calendar just like any other appointment.
- **Write** your draft proposal and set it aside for a period of time. Then go back to it and edit before giving it to outside readers for editing and comment. Leave plenty of time for input from others plus the inevitable multiple re-writes.
- **Utilize** both text and well-placed graphics. Some reviewers are more visual and breaking up your text with a diagram, gant chart, project timeline or other figure will serve to reinforce your message. Inclusion of a timeline also shows reviewers you have a clear vision of how your project will progress.
- **Carefully map out** your budget and budget justification for the proposed project. A well thought-out budget and justification serve to show both reviewers and agency personnel that you have a good plan and will be a good project manager (see Budgeting Information below.)
- **Read [Making the Right Moves: A Practical Guide for Scientific Management for Postdocs and New Faculty](#)** by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and the Burroughs Wellcome Fund. This resource provides practical advice for those seeking or just entering tenure-track faculty positions on good academic and research career moves. Topics addressed include understanding university structure, laboratory leadership, setting up a lab, time management, project management, getting funded, getting published, understanding technology transfer, collaborations, teaching and course design.
- **Review** the "[Proposal Writing Short Course](#)" by The Foundation Center.
- **Watch** the [informative videos](#) from a March, 2010 NIH workshop designed for those making the transition from postdoctoral to independent researcher status. Topics include "How to Have a Life", "Negotiating a Start-Up Package", "Networking and Collaborations", "Applying for and Getting a Grant", "Balancing Research/Teaching/Family/Other Commitments". Many of these video segments are applicable to the aspiring postdoc, new and established faculty members.