TIPS FOR WRITING A GRANT APPLICATION

Completing a grant application requires a great deal of time, knowledge and resources. The following tips will help you create a strong, competitive grant submission:

1. **Read the application form and follow the instructions carefully.**
   Be sure to do what the application form asks you to do in the correct format. This includes using the provided headings and following any required formatting. Reviewers can become frustrated when they have to search an application for certain criteria. Clearly present the items required to evaluate your application in the expected order.

2. **Read guidelines thoroughly and pay attention to specific granting objectives and criteria.**
   Grant guidelines can change yearly, so stay on top of all required criteria when pulling your application together. Contact your grants officer with any questions—tap into their program knowledge to alleviate guess work and avoid issues that may arise at the last minute.

3. **Write clearly and concisely.**
   Long sentences, complex phraseology and jargon do not convey scholarship. Applicants who take this approach may be penalized for their lack of ability to clearly communicate their projects with some organizations choosing to not review their application at all. Make good use of the number of pages you are allowed without going over the page limit.

4. **Don't trust your computer spell checker.**
   Check suggested spellings in a dictionary, proof reading is very important.

5. **Be succinct.**
   From October to February, adjudication committee members read about 100 pages of application material daily so only include necessary information in your application.

6. **Avoid ambiguity.**
   If your objectives are too vague or general, or are not clearly stated, reviewers will have no way of accurately assessing your progress.

7. **Package your application material well.**
   It is critical that you format your application so it is easy to read. Choose a dark, clear typeface and use headings to show logical progression. Include reasonable margins and break up the text into paragraphs; don't be afraid of white space; and use sub-headings that align with program requirements to help reviewers navigate within your proposal. Above all, make sure to follow funding agency guidelines for formatting.

8. **Be transparent.**
   It is in your best interest to explain any interruptions or delays in your research progress (e.g. medical reasons, parental leave, etc.). It is also important to provide a truthful list of the funding you hold. Reviewers have wide-reaching networks and many sit on multiple review panels. If a funding organization discovers that you overlooked or withheld information, this could terminate your application and may negatively impact your ability to receive funding in the future.

9. **Have your application critically reviewed by experts in your field.**
   While this recommendation is especially important for new researchers and first-time

applicants, all applicants benefit from having someone with a history of grant writing success review their application to ensure they have considered all aspects of their research.

10. Spend time on your application.
Reviewers can tell when an application is pulled together at the last minute, and poorly prepared applications are often turned down. Be sure to start your application well in advance of the deadline and refer to the submission timeline provided by us.

Resources:

- Government of Canada: Selecting the Appropriate Federal Granting Agency.
- Non-profit writing guide.
- Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada Resource Videos
- Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Grants and Awards Guide
- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Resource Centre
- The Lab: U.S. Office of Research Integrity interactive movie on research integrity which showcases a simulation of research misconduct in which a noted lab loses funding, creating bad publicity for a university and eventually causing the withdrawal of a multi-million-dollar endowment. Viewers can undo the damage by assuming the roles of a graduate student, a post doctorate, a principal investigator and a research integrity officer and make decisions to prevent misconduct from occurring.
- CIHR Guidebook for New Principal Investigators