

Proposal Writing

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MSU Entomology

Persuasion.....

- Proposals are a special type of scholarly writing
- The purpose of a proposal is to persuade an audience that you:
 - Have a good idea
 - Should give you \$\$

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Research/Grant Proposals

Why?

- Form: Very Different than a manuscript!
- Purpose: Suggesting Requesting Funds
- Audience: Reviewers from varying backgrounds
- Format: Includes an Executive Summary, Introduction, Rationale, Methods, Budget, Letters of Support
- Where to begin?

Proposals

- Start with your research **idea**....this is the core of your proposal
Why is it interesting?
Who/what will it affect?
What are its potential **impacts**?
- Find a compatible funding opportunity.....
Desired outputs and outcomes compatible with above questions
Basic vs. Applied
Discipline centric vs. Multi or interdisciplinary
- Acquire, read and reread Request for Proposals...RFP (RFA)

RFPs...RFAs

Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative

FY 2010 Request for Applications

APPLICATION DEADLINE: February 9, 2010

 U.S. Department of Agriculture
National Institute of Food and Agriculture

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Grant Proposal Sources

- Federal Government (e.g. USDA NIFA, NSF, NIH)
- Foundations (e.g. Kellogg, Gates Foundation)
- Industry (e.g. commodity groups, agricultural companies)
- University internal funding programs (e.g. GREEN)
- COS (Community of Science) a metasite that searches 1000's of potential funding agencies

<http://fundingopps.cos.com/>

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Rationale
- Methods
- Budget and Justification

Executive Summary

- First Impression
- Typically limited to 500 words or less...
- It must communicate your idea, why it perfectly meshes with the desired outcomes of the RFA, and that your research is a wise investment
- Write this last!

Introduction

- Present your IDEA
- OBJECTIVES and specific HYPOTHESES
- Background literature
- Preliminary data
- Why your idea needs to be tested/
implemented

Rationale

- Where you “Sell” your idea
- Relate your idea back to the desired priorities, objectives, and outcomes of the RFP or RFA!!
- Clearly indicate how your work will **impact** the funding agency’s target audience
- Whenever possible use the terminology found in the RFA

Methods

- Similar to a methods section in a manuscript
- Provide adequate detail to convince the reader that you are qualified
- Provide how you expect to analyze data
- Describe expected pitfalls and how they will be overcome

Budget

- Where you ask for \$\$
- Provide ESSENTIAL information but not too much detail
- Provide the budget in a table format
- Justify your budget in a budget justification explain personnel, travel, materials, equipment and other costs

Budget

Project Title: Evaluating the Importance of Visual Cues for Fruit Pest Attraction to Pheromone Dispensers and Attract and Kill Devices
 Project Principal Investigator: Matthew J. Grieshop

Project GREEN Funding Requested					
Budget Item	FY-10	FY-11	FY-12	Matching Funds Received*	Matching Funds Pending*
Personnel Wages	\$8,470	\$8,986			
A1. Research associates & post-docs					
A2. Technical/Administrative Support					
A3. Other (please list)					
A4. Fringe Benefits** (Must be charged as direct costs.)	\$4,100	\$4,309			
B. Graduate students - including associated fringes***					
C. Undergraduate students****	\$9,000	\$9,270			\$5,459
Total Personnel Costs A+B+C	\$21,570	\$22,565			\$5,459
D. Nonexpendable equipment (Attach explanation)					
E. Materials, Supplies & Publications	\$8,000	\$4,000			\$3,500
F. Travel	\$3,000	\$3,000			\$1,540
G. Other Direct Costs (Attach explanation, list of items and individual costs.)					
TOTAL D+E+F+G	\$11,000	\$7,000			\$5,040
	\$32,560	\$29,565			\$10,499

Budget

Budget Narrative:

Personnel Wages and Fringe (\$44,135)

Funds are requested to partially offset post doctorate labor costs (\$17,456) and fringe (\$8,409) to manage the technical aspects of the project, and to hire undergraduate labor (\$18,270) to assist in the maintenance of field trials and the preliminary evaluation of video data. We expect the project to involve at least 900 hrs of undergraduate labor per year at \$10/hr (3% wage increase in year 2).

* *Matching Funds:* An additional \$5,459 for undergraduate labor support will be available from a sister project pending with the Michigan apple committee.

Materials, Supplies and publications (\$12,000)

A total of \$8,000 is requested to assist in the purchase of field video recording equipment including: DVR's, Cameras, hard drives, cables, lenses, deep cycle batteries, digital timers, solar panels, field enclosures. An additional \$3000 is requested to assist in the purchase of custom loaded pheromone lures (estimated at \$2000), hardware for visual model and trap creation and insect collecting supplies. \$1000 is requested to support page costs.

* *Matching Funds:* An additional \$3,500 of materials and supplies support will be available from a sister project pending with the Michigan Apple Committee

Travel (\$3,710)

Travel expenses for this project will be significant with each field trip costing approximately \$100 (200 miles RT x \$0.50/mile). The requested \$6,000 (over two years) will pay for approximately 60 field trips.

* *Matching Funds:* An additional \$1,540 of travel support will be available from a sister project pending with the Michigan Apple Committee

Appendices

- **Letters of support:** solicit these from collaborators not listed as PIs or politically important figures
 - Farmers, scientists, business owners, commodity group leaders
- Additional figures, materials as allowed by the RFP

Proposal Timeline

- **October 10:** Choose topic
- **October 22:** Proposal Presentations & Written Proposals Due

ENT 479 Proposal Elements

- **Title Page**
 - project title
 - project team
 - executive summary (500 words or less)
 - key words
- **Introduction**
- **Rationale**
- **Proposed Methods/Activities**
- **Literature Review**

ENT 479 Proposal Elements

- **Title Page**
- **Introduction**
 - Project goal
 - Past work
 - Project objectives/hypotheses
- **Rationale**
- **Proposed Methods/Activities**
- **Literature Review**

ENT 479 Proposal Elements

- **Title Page**
- **Introduction**
- **Rationale**
 - How will the project address issues of sustainability surrounding the target food system/s?
- **Proposed Methods/Activities**
- **Literature Review**

ENT 479 Proposal Elements

- **Title Page**
- **Introduction**
- **Rationale**
- **Proposed Methods/Activities**
 - activities
 - expected outputs
 - project member roles and role of cooperating organization
 - pitfalls
 - timeline
- **Literature Review**

- **DO:** Follow page limits and formatting requirements EXACTLY!!
- **DO:** Use concise declarative sentences
- **DO:** Use phrases and language from the RFA whenever possible, especially in the rationale
- **DO:** Exactly follow the format provided in the RFA and use the provided headings and subheadings whenever possible
- **DO:** Use figures and tables where appropriate
- **DO:** Solicit reviewers from both inside and outside your home discipline
- **DO:** Learn as much as possible about the review process and probable source of reviewers (Disciplines? Farmers? Foundation CEOs?)
- **AVOID:** Abbreviations and jargon whenever possible
- **AVOID:** Filling up every last square inch of paper
- **AVOID:** “Overbudgeting”

- Which of these statements is a well written objective?

“To test organically and conventionally managed soils to see if organic matter is higher in the latter.”

“To determine whether there is a difference in soil characteristics between conventionally and organically managed soils.”