

The Office of Sponsored Programs and Research: Writing Proposals – Where to Start?

If you have an idea for funding, but not a funding source, you can...

- Complete the SPAR Funding Opportunity Interest Survey, available via [a Kuali Build form](#) here; it will join a reference library of other faculty project ideas that SPAR can consult when reviewing and sharing newly-posted funding opportunities
- Request a profile on [InfoEd SPIN](#), the aggregate funding database to which SCSU subscribes; you can search federal, state, private and international opportunities, review new or modified opportunities, create saved searches through which you will receive weekly updates, and share opportunities with colleagues
- Review the [internal funding opportunities](#) available through the Research and Scholarship Advisory Board, the Office of Faculty Development, and the Minority Recruitment and Retention Committee.

If you have selected a funding source for your project idea, you can...

- If you are sure the opportunity is an appropriate fit for your project, please complete an [Intent to Apply](#), which will be sent to SPAR for review
- Use the [Funding Opportunity Eligibility Checklist](#) to confirm this is the right opportunity for you, your project, and SCSU
- If you are unsure whether the funding opportunity is an appropriate fit or would simply like to learn more about it, please send an email to spar@southernct.edu with a general description of the funding opportunity, a link to the call for proposals, and your project idea

If you have never written a grant proposal, or have never submitted a grant proposal through Southern Connecticut State University before, you can....

- Be sure you have let SPAR know!
- Review the table on the following page of this document, which describes the proposal preparation tasks SPAR can assist with and which will be the purview of the PI and project team
- Review the [Quick Reference – Proposal Approval](#) document related to our proposal software Kuali Research; all grant proposals from Southern Connecticut State University to external sponsors must undergo administrative review and approval prior to submission. You and your administrators will receive an “Outlook Calendar Invite” to let everyone know when this process of electronic administrative review will take place
- Utilize this [Proposal Timeline Planning](#) tool, if desired, to determine how you are best able to pace yourself the preparation of different documents while coordinating with SPAR
- Send SPAR’s pre-award staff a “wish list” of possible costs needed to undertake the project; if you are not sure where to start, or what items you can ask for, you can also take a look at the [Budget Planning Questionnaire](#) – please note, budgets will ultimately depend on sponsor award caps and guidelines or regulations at the institutional, sponsor, or federal level.
- If you have any external partners (consultants or subawardees) in mind for the project, be sure that they are given as much advanced notice as possible
- For other general ideas, points for guidance, and suggestions about development of a proposal’s content, the external [Grant Training Center](#) [please note that this organization is **not affiliated** with SCSU; it is merely named here as a resource] has a variety of general writing tips and recommendations
- Read and mark up the sponsor proposal guidelines, and send SPAR any questions you might have; SPAR will send you a checklist of required items but it is very important that you are also familiar with the sponsor’s expectations, including those for content, formatting, and post-award requirements. General, non-opportunity specific guidelines for a few major sponsors are here:
 - The National Science Foundation’s [Proposal and Award Policies & Procedures Guide](#)
 - The National Institutes of Health’s [Application Form Instructions](#)

The SPAR Pre-Award staff can assist with tasks such as...	The Principal Investigator(s) will lead tasks such as...
<p><i>Project Narrative</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing non-expert review and copy-editing suggestions on successive drafts • Comparing drafted narrative with sponsor guidelines to check for completion • Reviewing for requirements related to formatting, spacing, margins, and font compliance • Seeking clarification from sponsor where requirements for technical content or proposal preparation are unclear <p><i>Project Budget and Justification</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing budget spreadsheet draft(s) using appropriate cost estimates and make edits in conversation with the PI • Drafting budget justification to align with any sponsor formatting and required content • Providing most current drafted budget for internal administrative review • Coordinating with collaborating institutions' sponsored programs offices, if relevant, to determine subaward budget cost caps and allocations • Applying and recovering allowed rates for indirect costs • Seeking clarification from sponsor where allowed or disallowed items are unclear <p><i>Supporting Documents</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtaining and/or maintaining accounts on sponsor portals used by institutions such as Grants.gov, eRA Commons, Research.gov, etc., along with necessary registrations such as SAM.gov • Preparing checklist of all required attachments and components based on sponsor call for proposals or other guidelines • Providing non-expert review and copy-editing suggestions on successive drafts for supporting technical or personal documents such as a data management plan or a biographical sketch • Drafting and formatting letters of support from partners or stakeholders, with PI input • Providing PI with a complete, up-to-date, and accurate preview of application prior to submission 	<p><i>Project Narrative</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing project narrative draft in terms of programmatic and/or scientific expert content • Seeking and incorporating input from colleagues, project team members, and collaborators • Providing final confirmation that proposal narrative is complete and compliant with sponsor guidelines, and that proposal has been planned and prepared following all applicable responsible conduct of research and research integrity requirements • Seeking clarification from sponsor where requirements for scientific content or programmatic design are unclear <p><i>Project Budget and Justification</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing SPAR with a list of suggested or requested items • Where specific equipment, materials, or professional services are requested, obtaining a current quote from the desired vendor • Adding final project-specific details to drafted budget justification at SPAR's direction • Providing final confirmation that the budget aligns with expectations and needed items for the project and that the spending plan is clear <p><i>Supporting Documents</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtaining and/or maintaining accounts on sponsor portals used by Principal Investigators (most often for foundations) • Drafting supporting technical or personal documents such as a data management plan or a biographical sketch • Alerting administrators at the earliest time possible about unusual or large requests in the proposal, such as large amounts of release time or purchase of major capital equipment • Requesting letters of support from partners or stakeholders, as allowed • Providing final confirmation that the prepared preview of the application is complete, up-to-date, and is the application that should move forward to the sponsor for consideration and review • Responding promptly to any just-in-time requests during the post-award stage