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Tips for Success

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A Top 10 List for Improving (but not necessarily guaranteeing) Success...



Top choice to give this talk



253rd choice to give this talk

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Worldviews

How we see NIFA



How YOU see NIFA



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#10... Submit ON TIME

- How far in advance should you submit your proposal?
 - a. One Week
 - b. One Day
 - c. One Hour
 - d. One Minute
 - e. One Second

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Naval Observatory Master Clock

Grants.gov Master Clock



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#9... Have a Colleague Review Your Proposal

- Leave time before submitting your proposal to solicit feedback.
- Alternatively, ask successful colleagues for a copy of their funded proposal.

★ TIP: Be sure to express your gratitude for their time, energy, and input.

- Review abstracts from funded projects:
<http://cris.nifa.usda.gov/>



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#8... Write a Meaningful and Engaging Project Summary

- Summary should include goals and objectives
- Highlight what's innovative about your project
- Describe outputs and outcomes

★ TIP: Recall that most panelists will not read your entire proposal – get them interested with your Project Summary

N.B. – Cutting and pasting the first two paragraphs of your Introduction generally is not successful.

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#7... Write the Proposal for the Reviewers

- Put yourself in the shoes of a reviewer who will read between 15 and 20 proposals.
 - Capture their attention
 - Get to the point = Be succinct
 - “What will be different as a result of your project?”
 - Describe how you will evaluate the impact or success of your project

★ TIP: Include resources for evaluation

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#7A... If a Letter of Intent is Required

- Be certain that you address priorities listed in the Program Description
- Describe the salient points of the project
- Include key objectives and define all necessary functions (research, education, and/or extension)
- Identify potential outcomes or outputs from the project
- Follow formatting guidelines (e.g., submit in .PDF)

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#7B... Responding to Reviewer Comments

- Take advantage of the extra page to address reviewer's comments
- Identify places in the proposal where reviewer comments are addressed
 - On page 9 we address...
- If you disagree with reviewers, be careful
 - ★ TIP: It doesn't pay to refer to reviewers as idiots, intellectual lightweights, etc.

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#6... Define Roles for Each Team Member

- Who will be responsible for project activities?
- If the project involves extension activities:
 - Who are the stakeholders?
 - What roles will they play in project development and implementation?
- Who will take responsibility for project evaluation?

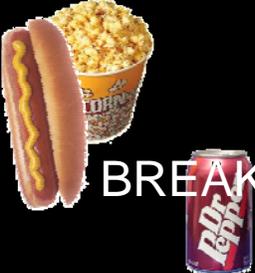
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- Wait! Who's behind the wheel?

INTERMISSION



BREAK'S OVER

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Five



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#5... Develop a Comprehensive Project Outline

- Outline should reflect:
 - Goals and objectives
 - Critical project functions
 - Roles for project participants (we just covered this)

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#5A... Critical Project Functions

- Research – new knowledge needed
- Education – preparation of the next generation of professionals
- Extension – putting knowledge into action “on the ground”
 - “Who are the stakeholders and how are they involved in the project development or implementation?”

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#5B... Develop a Timeline for Completing the Proposal (on Time)

- When is the deadline for submission?
- How much time will your Office of Contracts and Grants need to review and submit the project?
- How much time will a colleague need for review?

★ TIP: Start early! Don't delay!!! Remember #10!

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#5C... Tip: A Test of Project Leadership

- Before writing a single word for the proposal, have team members develop two (or three) PowerPoint slides that describe:
 - What activities (and responsibilities) they will undertake
 - How they connect to other components of the project
 - What resources they will require to succeed
- Use these slides to develop the proposal outline

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Fore!

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#4... Goals and Objectives

- What's the point of funding this project?
 - A clear Goal Statement should define the project
"What will be different after completing this project?"
- Supporting Objectives
 - Project functions/activities (research, education, and/or extension) should be defined through supporting objectives

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#3



A cartoon illustration showing three pigs and a wolf. One pig is carrying a basket of produce, another is holding a small object, and the third is pointing towards a well. A wolf is sitting on the edge of the well, looking up at the pigs. The scene is set in a rural landscape with trees and a fence.

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#3... Assemble an Effective Team and Develop the Proposal Together

- Include ALL expertise necessary to complete the project
- Don't start writing until all team members are identified
- Share the responsibility of writing but edit into a single voice

★ TIP: Don't refer to "My project", "My idea", ...



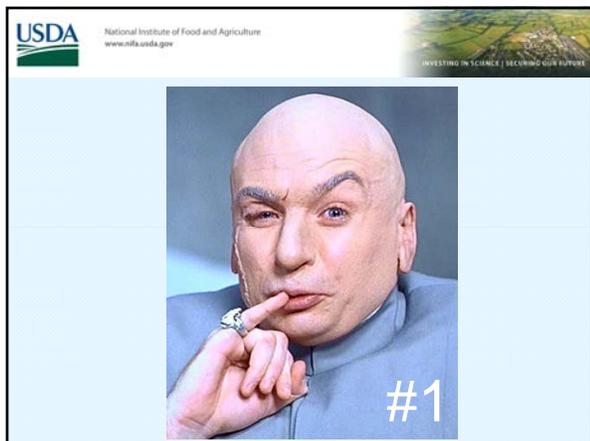
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#2... Serve on a Panel

- Contact the NPL or Panel Manager and volunteer to serve
 - Add your name to the Reviewer Database:
Send an email to:
newreviewer@nifa.usda.gov

★ N.B. – You may not serve on a panel in the same year that you submit to the program.



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#1... READ THE RFA!!!

- The RFA is more than just the Program Description
 - Eligibility
 - Funding levels
 - DEADLINES (Letters of Intent, Full Proposals)
 - Review criteria
 - Project requirements

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Your Project:



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Summary

1. Read the RFA!
2. Serve on a panel
3. Assemble an effective team and develop the proposal together
4. Write a clear goal statement
5. Develop a comprehensive project outline
6. Define roles for each team member
7. Write the proposal for the reviewers
8. Write a meaningful and engaging project summary
9. Have a colleague review your proposal
10. Submit ON TIME!
