



'Let's get funded': Behavioral and social sciences proposals to NIH



Thomas E. Guadamuz, PhD

Department of Society and Health

Mahidol University Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities



Outline

1. Overview of NIH
2. Before proposal development
3. Proposal development and submission
4. After proposal submission
5. Tips and tricks
6. Questions and discussions



Before proposal development

- National Institutes of Health (27 ICs)
 - National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID)
 - National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)
 - National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)
 - Fogarty International Center (FIC)
- Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR)



OBSSR

- Research Support
 - “OBSSR supports behavioral and social sciences research at the NIH by coordinating and/or participating on funding opportunity announcements (FOAs) and by providing co-funding to NIH Institutes and Centers that support this research”
- Training
- Events



Before proposal development

- eRA Commons (<https://era.nih.gov/>)
- NIH eReporter (<https://projectreporter.nih.gov/>)
- Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs)
 - Program Announcement (PA)
 - PAR—PA with special receipt, referral and/or review
 - PAS—PA with **set-aside funds**
 - Request for Application (RFA)
 - Focus area with **set aside funds**, special review, single deadline
 - Request for Proposal (RFP)



Example NIH eReporter





Example FOA

(check for [foreign institution eligibility](#))



Before proposal development

- Webinars (various ICs and Offices)
- Talk to program officer
 - Email/Phone call
 - Names listed on FOAs
 - Names listed on NIH grant awards (eReporter)
 - Should have a specific aims page sent beforehand
 - Prepare questions/bullet points
 - Ask for paylines



Types of grant applications

- Small research grant program (R03)
- Exploratory/developmental research grant award (R21)
- (Clinical trial) Planning grant program (R34)
- Research project grant program (R01)



Types of grant applications

- Small grant program (R03)
 - 100,000 USD maximum
 - Up to 2 years
 - No preliminary data required
 - 6-page research plan
 - Secondary data analysis
 - New technology/methods



Types of grant applications

- Exploratory/developmental research grant award (R21)
 - 275,000 USD maximum
 - Up to 2 years
 - No preliminary data required
 - 6-page research plan
 - Exploratory, novel studies that break new ground
 - High-risk/high reward studies



Types of grant applications

- (Clinical trial) Planning grant program (R34)
 - 450,000 USD maximum
 - Up to 3 years
 - No preliminary data required
 - 12-page research plan
 - Establish research team
 - Finalization of protocol
 - Pilot studies or collection of feasibility data



Types of grant applications

- Research project grant program (R01)
 - 2,500,000 USD maximum (general R01s)
 - Up to 5 years
 - Preliminary data/pilot studies required
 - 12-page research plan
 - Flagship award at NIH
 - Renewal allowed
 - Supplement allowed



Research project grant program (R01)

- Allowable costs
 - Salary and fringe benefits
 - Equipment and supplies
 - Consultant costs
 - Alterations and renovations
 - Publications and miscellaneous costs
 - Contract services
 - Consortium costs
 - Facilities and Administrative costs (indirects)
 - Travel expenses



The application

- Project narrative (3 sentences)
- Project summary/abstract (30 lines)
- **Specific aims (1 page) (passionate, no citations)**
- **Research strategy (6-12 pages) (CF/theoretical lens)**
- References (unlimited)
- Human subjects (unlimited)
- Biographical sketches (5 pages per person)
- Facilities and resources/environment (unlimited)
- Letters of support/collaboration (unlimited)

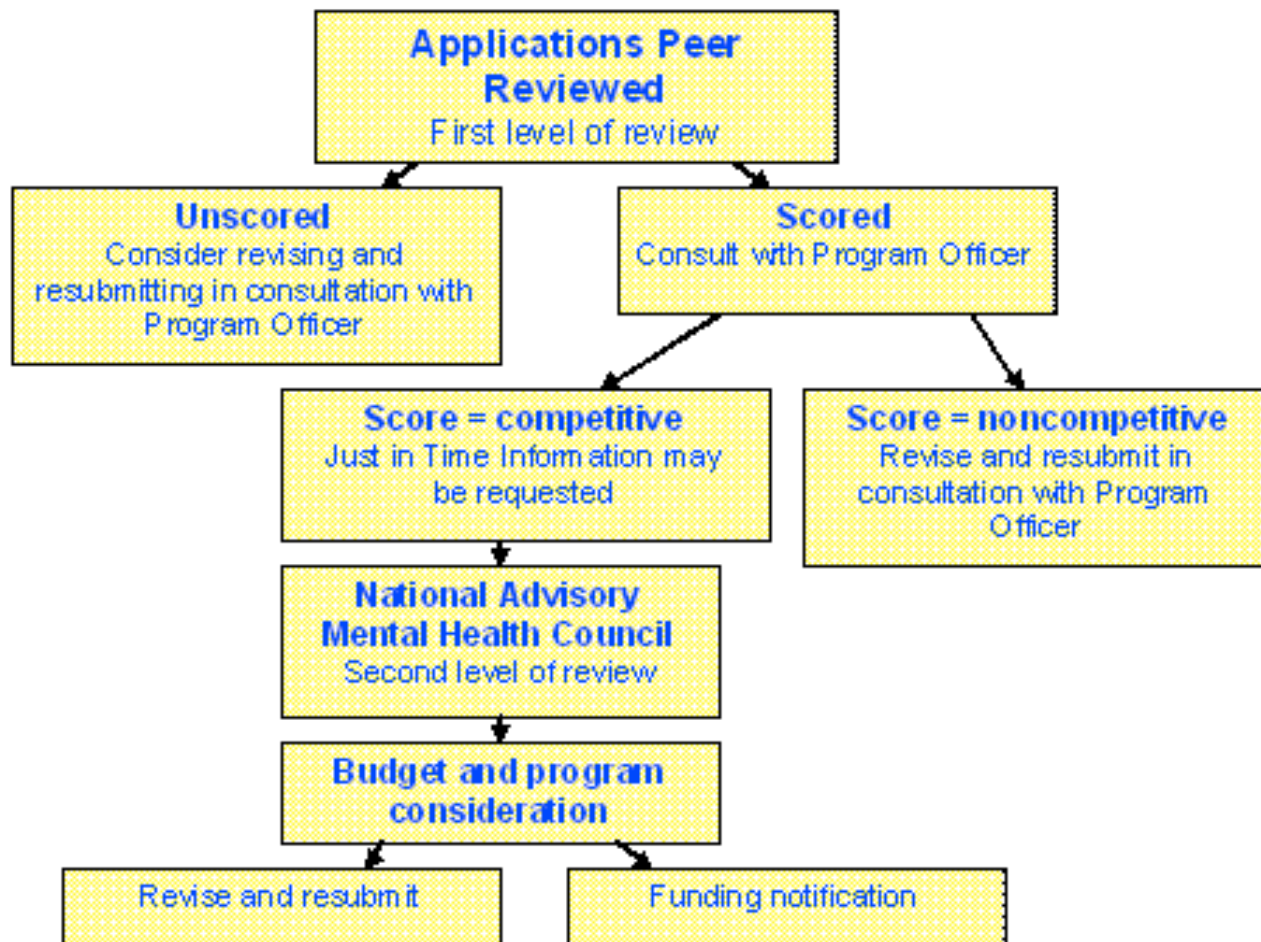


Proposal development

- TIME!!! (to read)
- TIME!!! (to write)
- TIME!!! (to read)
- TIME!!! (to rewrite)
- TIME!!! (to read)
- Others to read and give feedback
- Choose scientific review committee (recuse)
- Choose IC
- TG: 6 months to 1 year



Proposal development





After proposal submission

- eRA Commons
- Center for Scientific Review (SRO)
- Scientific Committee Review date
- Council Review data
- Scoring, “unscored” and resubmission
- Paylines
- Just-in-time
- Additional documents for Council/foreign clearance



Example of Published Paylines



Example of Published Paylines



Summary statement

- Scoring (5 areas)
 - Significance, Investigator, Innovation, Approach, Environment
- Summary of discussion by SR committee
- Score by section by reviewer
- Human subjects concerns



Example

Summary Statement



After proposal submission

- Bad scores or unscored ('Not Discussed'):
OK to be sad, but must be resilient!
- Summary statement (PO)
- Discuss with research team/strategize
- Discuss with program officer



Resubmission

- Introduction (one page), similar to article
- Only 1 time resubmission (A1)
- Unlimited submissions with same title
- Address ALL concerns (e.g., pilot data)
- Talk to program officer
- Applications are usually resubmitted before they are funded (RFA may be exceptions)



Tips and tricks

- Begin early
- Have collaborators/network of well-published investigators
- Seasoned NIH investigator as consultant/Co-I
- Read FOAs, register to receive automatic announcements (e.g., PAR, PAS, RFA)
- Use eReporter/look at other funded grants
- Don't be afraid to approach POs

Acknowledgments

- Mahidol University Research Division
- MU:SURF
- U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID)



National Institute of
Allergy and
Infectious Diseases