

## Guidance for Grantseekers #1

### Next Steps for an Unfunded Proposal

Receiving notice that a proposal has not been funded is never easy, but the reality is that most competitive grant proposals are submitted several times before they are funded. The key is to be persistent. Keep in mind the following options:

- **Contact the Office of Research Development (ORD).** Staff members are knowledgeable and can offer a fresh, objective perspective in reviewing criticisms and addressing weaknesses. We can help you navigate the entire grant-writing and submission process, including following up on unfunded proposals. We can also assist you in conducting alternative funding searches. Visit our webpage for information and contacts:  
<http://www.uri.edu/research/tro/offices/researchdev/index.html>
- **Gather all available information on the review of your proposal.** Some agencies automatically send review comments and recommendations, and some agencies require that you call or write to obtain copies of these items. Other agencies offer little feedback on the review of your proposal prompting you to look for alternative means of reassessment.
- **If given comments and recommendations, review them thoughtfully.** Even if the feedback is limited, study it objectively and ask yourself: What are they really saying? Was your proposal in line with goals of the program? Was the project clearly defined and fully developed? Were the comments and recommendations focused on the project itself or more on the proposal and the information it contained? Share the feedback with a colleague. Ask for their interpretations.
- **Get a second opinion.** The ORD can send your proposal and the reviews to the University's D.C.-based research consultants. They have subject area-savvy reviewers who can critique and offer feedback on every aspect of the proposal. The ORD can also solicit their advice on the potential for retooling the proposal for a different competition.
- **Consider contacting the agency directly for additional feedback.** Programs directors are charged with making sure program goals are clearly defined and informing investigators how proposals are evaluated. Many will respond to thoughtful questions and give supplemental feedback. In addition, expressing commitment to your project by asking for additional feedback can foster an agency contact that may prove invaluable when resubmitting a proposal.
- **Review proposals that received funding.** Many agencies post summaries and/or entire proposals of projects that have been awarded funding. Such research should

be completed when initially preparing your proposal, but it can also be helpful in reassessing your project as presented. Ask yourself: How does your project compare? Is there a common focus in those funded? Did other projects seem more important or fit the program better? Are the other projects presented more clearly or organized more effectively? Do others contain information you omitted?

- **Consider resubmitting the proposal if allowed by the agency.** Writing a competitive grant proposal is a process often requiring two or three rounds of grant writing before funding is awarded. Not all programs allow investigators to resubmit and will say so explicitly. If there is ever any doubt, contact the agency. When resubmitting, be sure to address all comments and recommendations when rewriting your proposal. Also, review the program RFP carefully for any changes made. Some may seem subtle, but even small changes can be significant and often should be addressed.

If you have any questions or would like more information on any of the topics listed above, contact the appropriate Research Development staff member for your college:

<http://www.uri.edu/research/tro/offices/researchdev/whocanhelp.html> or call (401) 874-5971.