Grant Support and External Funding

The purpose of this information is to assist all library personnel involved in external funding initiatives to better understand the process at Cornell University and to enhance the success rate of submissions. CUL encourages all library staff to investigate and pursue outside sources of income in the form of grants, gifts, contracts and cooperative agreements that support its mission. The guidelines, procedures, and resources listed below will facilitate the preparation of proposals. By following these procedures you will insure that the best possible proposal is submitted, that the impact of your proposal on the Library is clearly understood, and that the proposal meets current library and university policies.

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Section I. Overview

General Principles

In an era of shrinking budgets and flat revenue streams, grants and other external funding can provide libraries with an important means to accomplish a variety of tasks and projects. Before deciding to seek funding however, it is best to keep in mind some basic principles. The core question with every grant is: Will what you accomplish with the external funding be worth your time and effort, given the added work load and the added cost to the Library and the University? While grants can provide important budgetary relief, they are also time consuming, require extensive oversight, impact the unit submitting the proposal, and may have wide but unforeseen impacts on the library system and the university. The process outlined here will help potential grant seekers assess these impacts, make informed decisions, and write proposals based on measurable criteria.
Keys to Successful Proposals

Successful proposals, on the whole, are those which contain these key components. They:

- Identify a discrete task or project whose successful completion is of importance at a local, regional, national, or international level.
- Make a clear case why the submitting institution and project director are qualified to accomplish the defined task.
- Clearly define goals and objectives.
- Provide a clear and defensible budget.
- Clearly match the specific criteria and goals of the particular funding organization or donor’s interests.

Fundable Proposals

Identifying a discrete task or project is essential. Few granting agencies will fund such things as ongoing library projects, salaries of continuing staff, general operating expenses. These are seen as budgetary and management issues to be solved by the academic institution itself. Rather, the sorts of projects which are most likely to meet with a favorable response from granting agencies are those which identify an important, unique, discrete and doable undertaking with measurable benefits to a defined constituency which are unlikely to be accomplished with current budgetary allocations.

Projects should have a defined scope, a clearly stated budget, and a manageable time frame. Projects involving cooperation with other institutions tend to be given priority by some funders, and most federal and state proposal guidelines and applications give specific instructions on collaborative requirements.

Cornell Policy

Proposals for external funding are institutional commitments. As such, all proposals submitted by Cornell must be endorsed by appropriate offices prior to submission. University policy requires that the University Librarian must approve proposal submissions from the Library. The University Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) and the Cornell Alumni Affairs and Development Office are key offices with signature authority for the university, depending on the nature of the proposal and the type of funding agency. OSP’s Proposal Preparation and Submission document <http://www.osp.cornell.edu/ProposalPrep/default.html> is a good place to start to learn about Cornell’s policies.

All awards entail facilities and administrative costs (also referred to as overhead or indirect costs). To recover these costs, all awards are subject to facilities and administrative cost recovery charges which must be taken into account when formulating proposal budgets. On sponsored awards (OSP), facilities and administrative cost recovery charges are set through negotiations between the university and the US government. For restricted gifts, a 10% indirect cost recovery is charged to the award. If a funding
source restricts or disallows facilities and administrative costs the university library usually comply with these restrictions. At the same time, on sponsored awards paying the full federal F&A rate, two percent (2%) of the actual recovered facilities and administration (F&A) amount will be returned to the principal investigator’s department to help defray federal unallowable direct costs.

All seekers of external funding should also understand the concepts of “cost sharing” and related budgetary issues. The best place to read about these concepts and their implications to your proposal can be found in OSP’s Guide to Budgeting and Costing of Sponsored Projects (https://www.osp.cornell.edu/ProposalPrep/Costing-guide.html).

Finally, Cornell policy limits who may serve as Principal Investigators or Project Directors on sponsored programs. Library staff with the titles of Librarian or Associate Librarian are eligible to do so on “projects related to an individual's official duties and which will enhance the mission of the libraries.” Other library staff must seek the prior approval of the Senior Vice Provost for Research through the PI Form 5 application <http://www.research.cornell.edu/VPR/Policies/PI_eligibility_app.html>. (See http://www.research.cornell.edu/VPR/Policies/PI-policy.html).

** Cornell Library Policy **

All external funding proposals require the approval of the University Librarian. Library policy also requires that proposal submissions be approved by the heads of the library units and departments affected by the proposal, by the appropriate Associate University Librarian(s), and that the budget be approved by the Library Finance and Budget Office.

** Section II. Getting Started **

If you have an idea suitable for outside funding, discuss it with your supervisor before proceeding further. This will help you define the scope of what must be done, assess its impact on library functions, and enlist the necessary support to start the proposal process.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- **The Larger Need:** What problem or issue will this address? Why is it important? Who will benefit from the work done? Why now?
- **Overview:** What do you want to do to solve this problem? When and how will you do it? What are the expected results? How will you evaluate success?
- **Your Strengths:** Why is your department, the Library or Cornell University qualified to undertake the project? What resources, background, similar projects make you uniquely qualified to succeed? Who specifically will implement the project? What qualifications and experience do they have? What other units of the Library will be involved in the project?
- **Cost, Time, Space, and Personnel:** What is the estimated cost of this project? What is the
estimated time involved? Will additional space be needed? Equipment? Supplies? What staff effort will be needed? What is the Library’s responsibility in terms of cost share? What non-library cost share is expected?

When you can articulate the answers to these questions, you are ready for the next step, assessing the impact your proposal will have on the Library.

**Section III. Impact**

Your proposal will affect you directly, as project director, and may also impact your staff and other department resources and have ramifications that go well beyond your particular unit or department. The following is a check list intended to assist you in thinking about these issues.

- What is the likely percentage of effort (FTE %) this project will have on your currently assigned duties? In other words, how much time will you spend administering this grant and can you truly afford the time to do it right given the current extent of your regular duties?
- What percentage of effort will be required of other staff? Have employees been advised of the added work load? Will current employees need to be entirely reassigned and retrained? Who will train them in their new duties?
- Will new employees need to be hired? Hiring new staff is expensive and time-consuming: have you figured these into your proposal budget and schedule? What happens to these employees when the grant cycle comes to a close?
- Is there sufficient office space available for these new personnel? What other physical space needs, shelving, storage, work spaces, other, will you need to complete your project?
- Will new equipment, computers, telephones, Internet connections, book trucks, etc., need to be purchased or reassigned to implement your proposal?
- What are the ongoing costs after the grant funding has ended, e.g., digital storage, collection maintenance.

The more wide-ranging the impact of your proposal on the library system is, the more lead-time you will need prior to the submission date. Your AUL and the Library Grants Coordinator should be apprised of your intention to submit a proposal as soon as you decide to proceed but not later than six weeks prior to submission. They can assess whether your proposal might conflict with other library projects, adversely affect other possible proposal submissions or hamper important library initiatives of which you may not be aware. Also, they may be able to provide assistance through their own contacts with sponsors. Your proposal may require the support of other units or departments and you will have to determine if they can absorb the added effort at the time your proposal would need it. In some cases, you may be advised to withhold submitting your proposal until a more appropriate time.
Section IV. Identifying Potential Sponsors

Some sponsors explain the kind of proposals they intend to fund and provide specific proposal guidelines for you to use. Other sponsors evaluate suggestions for proposals that are presented to them and then request formal proposals based on the suggestions that are most appealing. This page provides pointers according to the sponsor type that might assist you in finding the most appropriate sponsor for your project.

Foundations

There are several thousand foundations in the United States but identifying the right foundation for your project can be difficult. There may be foundations with an interest in your field but their emphasis may not be on library materials, service, access or functions. Conversely, a foundation which may have no particular interest in the project field may be interested in project methodology or other related issues. Clearly your proposal should be articulated in terms likely to match the orientation, preferences and guidelines of a particular foundation.

Cornell’s Foundation Relations website has grant seeking tips to help identify realistic prospects. It also maintains a list of private, independent foundations that are active with Cornell and/or for which Foundation Relations receives frequent requests for information. Those foundations in the tier 1 category may not be contacted without the prior approval of the Assistant Vice President, Corporate & Foundation Relations. Those in the tier 2 category may be contacted without prior approval but the Assistant Vice President, Corporate & Foundation Relations should be notified. In many cases, contact with a private foundation is made through a personal contact (Cornell alumni, personal friend, professional associate, etc.) known to Foundation Relations staff or others in the Library or University so it is a good idea to discuss your approach and strategy with that Office.

The Foundation Directory Online, available through the Library, is an excellent source of information about foundations and foundation grants.

Corporations

Some corporations have offices dedicated to philanthropic giving. Corporate donors, like foundations, have specific areas of interest where they invest their dollars or special equipment. But, unlike foundations, corporate giving often has a public relations emphasis, so a key issue may be how a project benefits the image or enhances the public perception of the corporation. Therefore, a proposal should be couched in terms that speak to the corporation’s self-image and objectives.

As with foundations, the University Alumni Affairs and Development Office maintains a list of restricted corporate donors and these corporations may be contacted only after approval is given and your initial contact for corporate giving should be the Assistant Vice President, Corporate & Foundation Relations.
The Foundation Directory Online, available through the Library, provides access to corporate grant-maker records by searching across the corporate information of sponsoring companies.

**Government and Quasi-Government Agency Funding**

Almost without exception, these agencies solicit proposals via widely publicized Requests for Proposals (RFPs) or Broad Agency Announcements (BAAs). This is how the National Science Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities and most other state and federal agencies make their funding opportunities known to the public. Government guidelines and applications can be lengthy documents with detailed criteria and guidelines. Proposal submissions must be substantiated, well-documented, and free of hyperbole. Preparation for these proposals is usually time-consuming, and generally involves numerous staff. Cost share requirements are usually clearly stated according to the agency and the type of proposal.

Grants.gov <http://www.grants.gov/index.jsp> is a comprehensive Web site that contains information about finding and applying for all federal grant programs. The grant writing and submission process for major federal funding can be rigorous and time consuming, so it is best to contact the CUL Grants Coordinator early in the proposal process, especially if this is one’s initial effort. CUL has been quite successful in securing funding from federal and state agencies and previous proposals may be used as possible models.

**Individual Donors**

The Library hopes to expand its ability to attract funding from individual donors. Traditionally, individual givers have contributed substantially to CUL through gifts-in-kind, endowments for the acquisition of library materials, support for the construction and renovation of space, and gifts to support specific programmatic endeavors.

The Library encourages staff throughout the system to think creatively about possible constituents or contacts they may have who could help accomplish library goals. The process by which donations from individuals are secured is generally not as formal, but clearly must take into account the interests of the individual, the appropriate timing of a request, and the best amount to request. All require considerable expertise and often a personal relationship with the prospective donor.

Selectively working to build a relationship with constituents may lead to support for special projects and programs. The Director of Library AA&D can provide access to the University alumni clearance system (which requires clearance for approaches to approximately 12,000 alumni and friends), and significant help with donor cultivation and solicitation strategies, acknowledgment letters to donors (insures that they receive the appropriate University acknowledgments from the President on down), arrange for appropriate gift credit, as well as help in the processing of receipts and/or provide billing arrangements, etc. It is critical that you consult the Director of Library AA&D before contacting any individual donor.
Section V. Preparing and Submitting a Proposal

STEP 1: Formulate a Proposal

A successful proposal will generally contain the following key ingredients:

- It is a discrete task or project which is important at a local, regional, national, or international level.
- It makes a clear case why the submitting institution, project director, and relevant staff are qualified to accomplish the defined task.
- It clearly defines goals and objectives.
- It is cost effective, providing a clear and defensible budget.
- It matches the specific criteria and goals of a particular funding agency or the interests of the donor.

STEP 2: Involve Your Supervisors

When you have come up with an idea for an attractive proposal or an important funding opportunity that seems to further the goals and objectives of your unit and the Library, obtain the support and approval of your supervisor/AUL. They can help you analyze options and requirements and help ensure that the correct procedures are followed and that necessary approvals are obtained. If their approval is forthcoming, notify the CUL Grants Coordinator of your intention to work on a proposal.

STEP 3: Prepare a Proposal Summary

After a proposal for external funding has been formulated, draft a proposal summary taking the following factors into consideration:

- The Larger Need: What is the problem or issue the funding of your proposal will address? Why is it important? Who will benefit? Why now?
- Project Overview: How does your proposal address the problem you identified? What will you do? When and how will you do it? What are the expected results? How will success be evaluated?
- Strengths You Bring: Why is your department, the Library and/or the University the place to accomplish this? What resources, experience, education and training make you qualified to succeed? Who else will be involved? What qualifications and experience do they bring?
- Cost, Time and Personnel: What is the estimated cost of this project? What is the estimated time involved for completion? To what extent must the Library share the costs of the project?
- Likely Impact and Necessary Collaboration: How much of your time will be required? How about other staff in your department? Will new staff, space, or equipment be needed? Will other departments be affected?
STEP 4: Identify/Approach a Sponsor

See Section IV, Identifying Potential Sponsors

STEP 5: Write the Proposal

When writing the proposal, follow the sponsor’s guidelines carefully and precisely. Failure to do so is one of the most common reasons proposals are rejected. The guidelines will provide the basic elements necessary to fit the project to the needs and goals of the specific sponsor.

Enlist experienced and knowledgeable staff to review the proposal. The Library Grants Officer is available for consultation and assistance.

For proposals submitted through the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP), discussions with the appropriate Grants and Contracts Officer at OSP should begin early in the process. OSP should know of your intent to submit and have access to the submission guidelines. OSP “encourages investigators and their staff to consult with the GCO at any time during proposal and budget development. If you are responding to a proposal solicitation where binding terms and conditions are specified as part of the grant application we strongly urge you to consult with your GCO as early in the process as possible.”

Work with the Library Finance and Budget Office (FBO) to make sure the budget is in order. The FBO will assign someone to assist you with budget preparation, review, and submission to OSP. The director of FBO receives and approves final grant budgets before they are submitted. OSP also must sign off on the budget and insure that cost sharing and matching funds information is in order before submitted the proposal to the funding agency.

If the proposal will impact units or departments other than your own, contact and get the approval of the heads of the affected units.

STEP 6: Submit the Proposal

At least two weeks prior to the submission deadline, submit a copy of the proposal and budget and the Form 10 to the CUL Grants Coordinator and to the Director of Library Finance and Budget Office.

Following this final library review, forward the final proposal and the Form 10 to the appropriate Grants and Contracts Officer at OSP who will review the proposal and submit the proposal to the sponsor.

IMPORTANT: OSP will conduct a full review of the proposal to identify potential administrative, compliance and policy issues if it is submitted five business days in advance of the sponsor’s deadline. If the proposal is submitted three-four business days in advance of the deadline, only a limited review for conformance with sponsor’s guideline/requirements and with applicable federal and or state regulations
and Cornell policies will be performed. If the proposal is submitted two business days or less prior to the
sponsor's deadline, there will be an “institutional review” only to confirm compliance with federal
regulations and Cornell required protocols. Proposals submitted two days or less in advance of the
submission deadline must be approved by Associate University Librarian for Administrative Services via a
signed Institutional Review Only Proposal Submission Agreement Form 10 Addendum which assigns full
responsibility for any financial risks associated with budget shortfalls or terms and conditions
incompatible with Cornell policy and practices. In most cases, the Library will not authorize the
submission of proposals without the full institutional review by OSP.

For additional information, you may want to consult OSP’s Guide to Proposal Preparation and Submission
<http://www.osp.cornell.edu/ProposalPrep/Prop-guide.html>.

**STEP 7: Grant Award Management**

The time between proposal submission and award depends on the funding agency. Sometimes the
funding agency will have questions about the proposal, and may offer an award below that requested. It
is up the investigator to discuss these queries and to negotiate an award amount appropriate to an
acceptable form of the project. The award decision may be directed to the investigator directly by the
sponsor, with formal notification through the Development Office or OSP depending on the type of
submission. In most cases, these are the official Cornell University offices which manage funding awards
as they have the legal and financial authority to accept external funding awards. These offices provide
the legal and financial authority for post award management. In the event a proposal is not funded,
please notify CUL Grants Coordinator. Good luck!

**Section VI. Forms, Contacts, and Organizational Profile**

**Forms:**

Use this form for all proposals:

- Form 10

- **Form 10 addendum** - Institutional Review Only Proposal Submission Agreement (for proposals
  submitted to OSP for review less than two (2) days before the sponsor required submission date)

**Contacts:**

- **Office of Sponsored Programs Grants and Contracts Officer:**
  - [http://www.osp.cornell.edu/Contacts/whoismygco.html](http://www.osp.cornell.edu/Contacts/whoismygco.html), osp-help@cornell.edu, 5-5014

- **CUL Grant Coordinators:**
  - Mary Ochs, Mann Library, mao4@cornell.edu, 5-2285
Susette Newberry, Olin Library, sn18@cornell.edu, 5-3927

- **Director, Library Finance and Budget Office:**
  - Ken Putnam, 230 Olin Library, k.putnam@cornell.edu, 5-9097

- **Associate University Librarian for Administrative Services**
  - Ezra Delaney, 201 Olin Library, ezra.delaney@cornell.edu, 4-5257

**Organizational Profile: Cornell University Library (2015)**

One of the leading academic research libraries in the United States, Cornell University Library promotes a culture of broad inquiry with its world-class holdings, expert staff, and cutting-edge services. The Library’s collections encompass centuries-old rare manuscripts as well as comprehensive electronic and print resources supporting the full range of scholarly endeavor. Connections with partner institutions around the world widen access to specialized material, facilitate international research and learning opportunities, and fuel the pace of innovation. The Library’s commitment to the production, dissemination, and preservation of knowledge drives it to the forefront of digital scholarship and open-access advocacy. Librarians’ expertise in innovative tools and technology equips students to succeed in a digital society, and enhances all facets of teaching and learning at Cornell.

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