Grant application editorial assistance is provided by two experienced consultants: Dr. Ralph Pollack (a grant writing consultant) and Louise DeCosta Wides (a writing consultant and editor). Their services are provided courtesy of the Office of the Vice Provost for Research and Dean of Graduate Studies.

Editorial help from Dr. Ralph Pollack or Ms. Wides improves the organization, clarity and competitiveness of research grant applications. Dr. Pollack generally assists faculty in the scientific disciplines and Ms. Wides provides proposal development assistance to those in the Social Sciences and Humanities.

What services are provided?
Advice at all levels of proposal preparation will be provided, from inception of the idea to submission of the proposal to revisions. Assistance in developing competitive external grant proposals is available to help applicants meet a funding agency’s proposal preparation requirements. Editorial help to improve the organization, clarity and competitiveness of grant applications is offered. Grant proposal narratives will be read, reviewed and edited for individual investigators, small groups of faculty and multidisciplinary groups. Help in formulating appropriate strategies for planning and developing proposals will also be provided.

Who provides this help?
Dr. Pollack, a faculty member in the Chemistry & Biochemistry Department at UMBC from 1970 – 2007 and Associate Vice President for Research from 2007-2012, has extensive experience in both writing and reviewing proposals. He has obtained funding for research, teaching, graduate student training, symposia, major equipment and travel from state, national, international and private agencies.
Ms. Wides, a graduate of Mt. Holyoke College and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, has had a 40-year career in translating complex ideas into clear, compelling English. She has worked with specialists in the fields of federal election law, air traffic control, and medical research. She has consulted on proposals, educational materials, strategic plans, white papers, and annual reports.

Who to Contact for a Consultation:
Please contact Anita Brown, abrown@american.edu, to schedule an appointment with Dr. Pollack or Ms. Wides.
The purpose of an audit is to assess an organization’s financial statement and internal structure. The most common audit in federal grants is the organization wide or single audit under OMB Circular A-133. A-133 audit consists of a financial audit and an evaluation of the grantee’s compliance with programmatic requirements as set forth in federal guidelines.

Currently, organization that expend $500,000 or more must undergo an A-133 audit. However, the minimum $500,000 threshold will soon increase to $750,000. This change is expected to be in effect as of December 26, 2014.

American University undergoes two audits, an A-133 audit and a SOX audit. The Sarbanes-Oxley Act or SOX is a legislation enacted in 2002 to strengthen standards of an organization’s internal control structure. Companies required to report financial information to the Securities and Exchange Commission are required to go through SOX audit. Although a SOX audit is not a requirement for AU, AU’s Audit Committee embraced a SOX program to demonstrate the University’s commitment to strong internal control practices, and accurate financial reporting.

Why should you care about Audit? All sponsored programs are subject to SOX audit, and federal projects are subject to A-133 audit, wherein the accuracy of financial expenditure reporting on these projects is tested. Deviation from accepted standards of compliance such as charging unallowable cost to a federal program may lead to findings. As a recipient of federal funds, the University has a fiduciary responsibility to tax payers that can only be maintained by understanding and following federal sponsors’ requirements and the relevant OMB circulars. To ensure financial compliance, questions such as the ones below should be reviewed throughout the life of a project:

- Does the proposed budget accurately reflect the expected expenditures?
- Are all expenditures allowable?
- Is cost transfer being used as a fund management tool, and to expend unobligated funds?
- Is sponsor salary cap (e.g. NIH) adhered to?
- Are time and effort certifications completed accurately?
- Is cost share commitment carefully tracked?

The following is a list that auditors may require as they review the financial statements:

- Year-end trial balance and financial statements.
- Schedule of Federal Awards including federal awarding agency, pass through agency.
- Grant agreements.
- Sub-Award agreements.
- Sub-Award monitoring policies and procedures.
- **Evidence of Cost Share tracking.**
- **Time and Effort certification.**
- Grant report including narrative and financial reports.
- List of Board of Directors for the fiscal year.
Audit Season Preview: A Note from GCA (Continued)

- Minutes of meetings of the Board of Directors and Committees, including summary of any board actions that affect the designated and undesignated fund balances.
- Lease agreements.
- Year-end payroll tax reports, Forms W-2, W-3, and 1099’s issued during the calendar year.
- Fiscal year budget.
- Detailed list of donations of goods and services, including the number of hours on donated services.
- Detail of legal fees paid, with the name and address of all attorneys used throughout the year.
- Detail of repairs and maintenance account.
- Bank statements.
- Paid bills.

While you may not experience the direct effects of all of the above audit testing, those of you with federal awards that include cost share, will be more likely to be involved in your pre-audit preparation. To that end, you need to make sure you have back-up justifications such as your cost share GL accounts for all your projects that have cost share listed in the sponsor approved budget. In preparation for the A-133 audit in the fall, the Controller's Office will have a group session with the recipients selected for audit testing. Auditors will review inception-to-date cost share detail on all federal awards that have ended in FY14.

Another key test focus in the upcoming A-133 audit will be effort reporting. The auditors will concentrate on the following:

- Does the effort reported adhere to sponsor agreement and federal guidelines?
- Was the reported effort appropriately allocated?
- Is there an unusually high salary cost transfer volume in your department?

In the next few weeks, GCA will review and analyze the results of the fiscal year end expenditures, including cost share and the last semester reporting of time and effort certification.

Contact Grants and Contract Accounting at gca@american.edu for additional guidance.
Research Matters

OSP SPOTLIGHT

Each month, OSP Monthly highlights a specific American University faculty/staff member for their contributions in providing cutting-edge research or a research related program that serves to create and advance knowledge, and enrich the resources of our educational community while answering and accelerating challenging issues we face today. This month, we are featuring Ed Maguire, Professor
Department of Justice, Law & Criminology

Q&A with Ed Maguire

Q: Tell us about what your research interests are: I am broadly trained in criminology and criminal justice, however my specific research interests focus on policing, violent crime, and gangs.

Q: In your own words, what is the main purpose/importance of your research?
Most people have firm opinions on what to do about crime, particularly violent crime associated with gangs and guns. Unfortunately, these opinions, while well-intentioned, often fly in the face of what we know from research evidence and theory in criminology. The reality is that many of the strategies that communities put in place to reduce crime don’t work, and some of them actually increase crime. In my work, I try to show how research and theory can help us make better decisions in crafting more effective criminal justice policies and practices. Specifically, I am interested in how we can enhance the capacity of police agencies and other institutions to control crime and violence using strategies that are both smarter and fairer.

Q: Currently, what type of research are you currently/primarily focused on? I am in the midst of several studies right now. My colleagues and I just finished a national study funded by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) on how police agencies in the U.S. investigate gun crime. We are now preparing several articles for publication from that project. I also have a grant from the COPS Office to study how U.S. police agencies handle protests. That project is taking us to eight police agencies around the country and will result in a book on protest policing. I am now working together with colleagues at AU’s Center for Latin American and Latino Studies to kick off an NIJ-funded study of transnational crime in the US and Latin America. I am also continuing to carry out a variety of research projects on policing, gangs, and violence in the Caribbean. Unfortunately the Caribbean region is struggling with serious gang violence issues right now, and I am hoping that our research can help these small nations think in a clearer way about the policy options available to them.

Q: What are some of the ways to learn and find out about the types of research you are doing? Please feel free to visit my website: www.edmaguire.net

Q: What inspired you to enter your field of research initially? As a kid, I had always planned to become a law enforcement practitioner. An influential professor in my undergraduate program at UMass Lowell encouraged me to go on for a PhD in criminal justice. I took his advice, though I struggled with the decision about whether to pursue a career in law enforcement or academia. I decided to pursue a career doing policy relevant research that helps law enforcement agencies. I love my work, so I think it was the right decision!

Q: How long have you been at American University? Five years.
Proposal Submission in the Internet Age

Have you ever wondered what happens after the signing official clicks the ‘submit’ button on an electronic proposal submission via Grants.gov?

Using Grants.gov's Adobe Forms vs. System-to-System Submission
Often, we are asked about the differences when proposal submission to federal agencies is effected using Grants.gov’s Adobe forms package vs. system-to-system (S2S) technology through an institutional eRA system. According to Ed Calimag of Grants.gov, while the process of submission and receipt at Grants.gov does vary somewhat, the materials that Grants.gov provides to agencies are the same regardless of how the submission is received by Grants.gov. Agency representatives concurred that there was no apparent difference within their agency to internal staff or reviewers as to the method of delivery of the submission to Grants.gov.

FastLane, NSPIRES and other Agency Direct Submission Portals
A second question confirmed that direct-submission portals are maintained by NSF (FastLane) and NASA (NSPIRES). Erin Nielsen and Paul Brundage confirmed that once the data received from Grants.gov are inserted into their respective agency systems, the result is that users – agency staff and reviewers – cannot discern a difference between applications submitted directly via FastLane or NSPIRES and those that were received via Grants.gov.

What do the Reviewers See?
Researchers, and the research administrators who support their endeavors, are understandably keen on ensuring that the reviewers of their proposals see exactly what was intended. In the ancient world of paper proposal submission, several paper copies had to be submitted to support the review process. This allowed researchers to be responsible for exactly what the reviewer would see. With the implementation of electronic proposal submission, the landscape has changed. Now researchers and research administrators complete electronic forms and upload documents – usually PDFs – into either Adobe forms packages or institutional eRA systems that support S2S proposal submission to Grants.gov. Through the magic that is the internet, all that information gets to Grants.gov and from there is picked up by the appropriate agency and ultimately delivered by them to their reviewers.

What do Agencies Get from Grants.gov?
Agencies can retrieve the attachments that were submitted along with PDF pages of any forms they included in the opportunity package and an XML file containing all the data in those form pages. The PDFs and XML file are optional – agencies can choose to collect one or the other or both along with the attachments. Across agencies, the pathway to reviewers varies considerably. NIH retrieves the XML file, which is used for validation purposes, to populate data automatically into the Commons, and to build PDF form pages and organize those along with the attachments into the final grant image posted on the Commons and made available to researchers, institutions, and reviewers. NSF retrieves the XML file, which is used for validation purposes and to populate data automatically into FastLane. The FastLane system provides the output that researchers, institutions, and NSF reviewers use.
Most other agencies retrieve and use the PDF pages created by Grants.gov, which they combine with any attachments for reviewers. Some agencies retrieve the XML file as well to support automatic population of key data into their backend management systems. Other than NIH and NSF, none of the participating agencies currently have a method to provide visibility for researchers into the final materials provided to their reviewers.

Agency Representatives are Listening

The good news is that the agency representatives learned the high value that researchers and institutions place on being able to verify what was received and what will be available to their reviewers. Proposal submission in the age of the Internet is scary for researchers and research administrators for many reasons, not the least because they no longer can be certain that the reviewers will see exactly what the researcher intends.

Unfortunately, as some of the agency representatives pointed out, the cost to develop systems and processes to support that is prohibitive for many agencies – especially those with smaller research portfolios or where research is not a primary focus of their agency mission. Therefore, it was heartening to learn that the USDA/National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) team, who are active members of the Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) and intimately involved in electronic submission discussions, is planning on spending the next several months exploring the possibility of partnering with NIH for processing submissions – leveraging the functionality of the Commons to support the NIFA research mission. While the outcome of this investigation cannot be predicted, the fact that the folks at NIFA are seeking opportunities to improve the experience for their applicants is welcome news and hopefully other agencies will consider similar partnerships or other options that can help ensure that the best research ideas get funded.
UPCOMING INFORMATION SESSIONS & TRAINING SCHEDULE

National Science Foundation Research Traineeship Program (NRT) Webinar Now Available

The NSF Research Traineeship (NRT) program is designed to encourage the development of bold, new, potentially transformative, and scalable models for STEM graduate training that ensure that graduate students develop the skills, knowledge, and competencies needed to pursue a range of STEM careers. The NRT program initially has one priority research theme - Data-Enabled Science and Engineering (DESE); in addition, proposals are encouraged on any other crosscutting, interdisciplinary theme. In either case, proposals should identify the alignment of project research themes with national research priorities and the need for innovative approaches to train graduate students in those areas. NRT projects should develop evidence-based, sustainable approaches and practices that substantially improve STEM graduate education for NRT trainees and for STEM graduate students broadly at an institution. NRT emphasizes the development of competencies for both research and research-related careers. Strategic collaborations with the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), government agencies, museums, and academic partners that enhance research quality and impacts and that facilitate development of technical and transferrable professional skills are encouraged. Creation of sustainable programmatic capacity at institutions is an expected outcome. Proposals accordingly are expected to describe how institutions will support the continuation and institutional-level scaling of effective training elements after award closure.

Recently, the NSF Research Traineeship (NRT) Program Officers hosted an informational webinar. This program provided an overview of the program solicitation and answered questions about the structure and goals of the new NRT program. This webinar and associated PowerPoint slides are now available for viewing on the NSF website.

RAC Graduation Reception—Save the Date!

Date: June 10, 2014
Time: 10:00—12:00pm
Location: Butler Board Room

If you have completed all eight RAC sessions for this academic year and have not already RSVP’d, do so by sending an email to OSPEvents@american.edu and reference RAC reception in the subject line.
Gerda Henkel Foundation -- *Islam, the Modern Nation State, and Transnational Movements*

The special programme "Islam, the Modern Nation State and Transnational Movements" is aimed at researchers who, with an eye to current developments, are examining the emergence of political movements in the Islamic world at the national and/or transnational level. Historical studies are encouraged and supported, together with projects in the areas of religious, cultural or political science. The special programme takes a look at the dynamics between Islamic teachings, Islamism, nationalism and transnational orientations and environments. Scientific discussion of the countries and regions of the Islamic world should bring together expertise possessing regional and thematic focus in order to allow the problems associated with areas of conflict to be expounded upon, particularly with regard to global influences and processes of cultural exchange.

**Deadline: June 27, 2014**

Alexia Foundation -- *Women’s Initiative Grant*

The Alexia Foundation's main purpose is to encourage and help photojournalists create stories that drive change. The Alexia Foundation is pleased to announce the call for entries for our 2014 Women’s Initiative Grant which will provide a $25,000 grant for a project to be produced on a significant issue involving and affecting women. While considering the idea of women's issues, several themes have been suggested, including femininity and the culture of abuse; women making a difference, leading, changing things for the better; gender inequality; the direct connection to women and education, and the impact on birth rates, health of children and the productivity of the women; gender discrimination, women in leadership, women in the military, mental health issues.

**Deadline: June 30, 2014**

Sundance Institute -- *Documentary Fund*

The Fund provides creative and financial support to cinematic, feature documentaries from independent filmmakers globally. We provide $1M-$2M in non-recoupable financing annually across all stages of development, production, post-production, and strategic audience engagement.

**Deadline: July 8, 2014**

National Endowment for the Humanities -- *NEH/DFG Bilateral Digital Humanities Program*

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) in the United States and the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG) are working together to offer support for projects that contribute to developing and implementing digital infrastructures and services for humanities research. In order to encourage new approaches and develop innovative methods in any field of the humanities, these grants provide funding for up to three years in any of the following areas: developing innovative methods, as well as standards and best practices, for building and merging digital collections that are significant and of major current interest, for use in humanities research; developing and implementing generic tools, methods, and techniques for accessing and processing digital resources relevant to humanities research; creating new digital modes of scholarly communication and publishing that facilitate international cooperation and dissemination of humanities scholarship; and developing models for effectively managing digital data generated in humanities research projects (for example, texts, audio files, photographs, 3D objects) and exemplifying those models in case studies.

**Deadline: September 25, 2014**
FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Spencer Foundation -- Measuring the Quality of Civic and Political Engagement
This Request for Proposals (RFP) extends the New Civics Initiative to measurement. It provides funds for scholarly efforts to create reliable and valid measures of the quality of civic and political engagement among youth ages 15-25. Specifically, we are interested in the development of measures of the quality of two dimensions of civic and political engagement: 1) Engagement with Evidence and Arguments and 2) Engagement Across Difference. 
Deadline: July 1, 2014

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation -- Public Health Services and Systems Research
Studies funded through this solicitation will focus on multidisciplinary research that examines the organization, financing, delivery and quality of public health services and the subsequent impact on population health outcomes. Projects may seek to: 1) elucidate the health and economic value of public health activities; 2) understand how elements of the public health system influence the effective implementation of evidence-based public health strategies and/or strategies for collaboration between the public health and clinical health care delivery systems; and/or 3) test the impact of alternative strategies for delivering evidence-based public health services and/or collaborative approaches aimed at community health improvement between the public health and clinical health care delivery systems.
Deadline: July 23, 2014

Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation -- Research Grants
The foundation welcomes proposals from any of the natural and social sciences and the humanities that promise to increase understanding of the causes, manifestations, and control of violence and aggression. Highest priority is given to research that can increase understanding and amelioration of urgent problems of violence and aggression in the modern world.
Deadline: August 1, 2014

The Sociological Initiative Foundation -- Action Research Projects
The Sociological Initiatives Foundation is dedicated to the belief that research and action are intrinsically inseparable. We invite concept proposals for projects that link an explicit research design to a concrete social action strategy. Projects should also have clear social change goals. SIF has funded projects in the areas of civic participation, community organizing, crime and law, education, health, housing, immigration, labor organizing, and language/literacy.
Deadline: August 15, 2014

National Institutes of Health (Department of Health and Human Services) -- Macroeconomic Aspects of Population Aging
Economic productivity is an integral part of a society’s ability to produce health and well-being. Macroeconomic factors such as the size and composition of the labor force, domestic and foreign investment, the design of public institutions, and technological development all influence productivity. All of the factors, in turn, can be influenced by population aging. The NIA Division of Behavioral and Social Research (BSR) has traditionally supported research on the economics of aging that uses microeconomic approaches. This FOA invites research using macroeconomic methods to better understand how population aging affects health and well-being. This Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) invites research on the macroeconomics of aging - the impact of population aging on macroeconomic factors and how in turn macroeconomic factors impact health and well-being of populations.
Deadline: October 3, 2014
Department of Education (Institute of Education Sciences) -- Education Research and Development Center Program

The Institute's purpose in awarding these grants is to provide national leadership in expanding fundamental knowledge and understanding (1) of developmental and school readiness outcomes for infants and toddlers with or at risk for disability, and (2) of education outcomes for all students from early childhood education through postsecondary and adult education. Purpose of Program: The central purpose of the Institute's research grant programs is to provide interested individuals and the general public with reliable and valid information about education practices that support learning and improve academic achievement and access to education opportunities for all students. These interested individuals include parents, educators, students, researchers, and policymakers. In carrying out its grant programs, the Institute provides support for programs of research in areas of demonstrated national need. Competitions in This Notice: The Institute will conduct seven research competitions in FY 2015 through two of its National Education Centers: The Institute's National Center for Education Research (NCER) will hold five competitions: One competition for education research, one competition for education research training, one competition for education research and development centers, one competition for statistical and research methodology in education, and one competition for partnerships and collaborations focused on problems of practice or policy. The Institute's National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER) will hold two competitions: one competition for special education research and one competition for special education research training.

Deadline: Notice of intent to apply, June 5, 2014; full proposal: August 7, 2014

Brady Education Foundation -- Grants

The Brady Education Foundation seeks to close the achievement gap for children at risk for poor school outcomes due to environmental factors associated with living in poverty. The Foundation pursues its mission by promoting collaboration between researchers and educators via the funding of research and program evaluations in education.

Deadline: August 15, 2014
U.S. Department of Agriculture (National Institute of Food and Agriculture) -- Integrated Research, Education, and Extension Competitive Grants Program (NIWQP)

The goal of the National Integrated Water Quality Program (NIWQP) is to contribute to the improvement of the quality of surface water and groundwater resources through research, education, and extension activities. Projects funded through this program will work to solve water resource problems by advancing and disseminating the knowledge base available to agricultural, rural, and urbanizing communities. Funded projects should lead to science-based decision making and management practices that improve the quality of the nation’s surface water and groundwater resources in agricultural, rural, and urbanizing watersheds.

Deadline: July 3, 2014

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH—NIH Funding Opportunities—Grants & Funding Page

(Search by keywords to narrow down your search to locate funding opportunities)

Academic Research Enhancement Award (AREA) Program—The AREA program supports small-scale research projects in the biomedical and behavioral sciences conducted by faculty and students at education institutions that have not been major recipients of NIH research grant funds. These grants are intended to create a research opportunity for scientists and institutions otherwise unlikely to participate extensively in NIH programs. It is anticipated that investigators supported under AREA will:

- benefit from the opportunity to conduct independent research;
- that the grantee institution will benefit from a research environment strengthened through AREA grants and furthered by participation in the diverse extramural programs of the NIH;
- and that students at recipient institutions will benefit from exposure to and participation in scientific research in the biomedical and behavioral sciences.

The application should include plans to involve undergraduate or graduate students in the proposed research, however the AREA program is a research grant, not a training or fellowship program. The application should include plans to expose students to hands-on research and should not include training plans.

Deadline: September 8, 2016

You can view more information about the AREA program on the NIH website here.

FEDERAL CONTRACTS

Federal Business Funding Opportunities

(Search by keywords to narrow down your search to locate funding opportunities)
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- Commonly Used Research Administration Acronyms
- OSP Spotlight: Gemma Puglisi
- Post Award Hot Topics

CONTACT INFORMATION

Office of Sponsored Programs
202-885-3440
osp@american.edu
www.american.edu/provost/osp/index.cfm