Grant Writing Tips

KBC Breastfeeding Coalitions Conference – October 13, 2017

Elements for the Research Plan/Project Narrative

Prepared by: Lisette T. Jacobson, PhD, MPA, MA
University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita

1. **Specific Aims** (if required by funder)

   - Typically 1 page long
   - Purpose: To provide a summary of the project
   - Lists specific objectives and relevant hypotheses (if applicable)
     - Example #1:
       - **Aim/objective**: To determine the effect of lifetime duration of breastfeeding as a protective factor against stroke among post-menopausal women
       - **Hypothesis**: Lifetime duration of breastfeeding reduces the risk for stroke among post-menopausal women
     - Example #2:
       - **Aim/objective**: To increase the number of families in a CSB community who breastfeed their infants exclusively
       - **Hypothesis**: Families in CSB communities will breastfeed their infants exclusively for a longer period of time than families in non-CSB communities

2. **Research Plan/Project Narrative** – suggested components:

   - **Significance**
     - Explain importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress in the field that the proposed project addresses.
     - Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice.
     - Describe how the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventive interventions that drive this field will be changed if the proposed aims are achieved.
     - Include brief background data, maybe results of a pilot project/study.
     - Suggested sub-sections to include: Scope of the Problem, Justification for Proposed Work, Impact of Proposed Work.
     - Two to three paragraphs are generally sufficient for a Significance section (depending on the funder’s word/character length requirements).

   - **Innovation**
     - Explain how the proposed project challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms.
• Describe any novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, interventions to be developed or used. Do these have any advantages over existing concepts, methodologies or interventions?
• Emphasize any innovative approach that you’re using: Why is your approach better than what has been done before; what makes it novel?
• Innovative methods, innovative equipment, or an innovative way of looking at a problem can be emphasized.
• One or two paragraphs are generally sufficient for an Innovation section (depending on the funder’s word/character length requirements).

• Approach

• Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims (objectives) of the project. Include how the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted.
• Discuss potential problems and alternative strategies.
• If you have preliminary findings from pilot projects/studies, include them in the Approach section.
• Outline your methodology with sufficient detail so that a reviewer/funder who is not familiar with the topic fully understands your proposal.
• If your department will match funds, then be sure you mention this in the Approach section.
• Suggested sub-sections to include:
  ▪ Overview (keep this very brief)
  ▪ Preliminary Data (e.g., pilot data from a related project/study)
  ▪ Study Design (e.g., pre-post, post-only, randomized control trial)
  ▪ Recruitment (how do you recruit, include incentives if applicable)
  ▪ Proposed Intervention (explain content of the program)
  ▪ Survey Instrument (mention name if applicable)
  ▪ Outcome Measures (re-emphasize project/study aims/objectives and why you have selected these outcomes, justify!)
  ▪ Sample Size (and Randomization, if applicable)
  ▪ Statistical Analysis (e.g., descriptive analysis: count and percentages, mean and standard deviation, etc.)
  ▪ Data Management (e.g., who will handle this, explain how data will be stored, who has access to data, etc.)
  ▪ Project Staff and Roles
  ▪ Project Timeline (use a Gantt chart)

3. Limitations and Future Direction

• Suggested sub-sections to include:
  ▪ Potential Problems – describe potential problems you may encounter during the project/study and how you will address these problems.
  ▪ Results and Future directions – emphasize what you will do with study results, and what you will do once the proposed project/study has been completed.