Coffee Talk with OSPR

Getting Started with External Grants

What OSPR (really) does:

- Navigate
  - FARS
  - A-133
  - SF424
  - AOR
  - F&A
  - PAR
  - IDC
  - ORCA
  - SFI
  - COI
  - T&E
  - IRB
  - IBC
  - FWA
  - OHRP
  - IP
  - DUNS
  - FFATA
  - JIT
  - OLAW
  - OMB
  - OMG

- Translate

- Troubleshoot

- Keep you out of jail

What OSPR (really) does

- Help faculty identify funding opportunities
- Help interpret sponsor guidelines
- Assist with proposal and budget development
- Review applications for consistency with sponsor and MSU requirements
- Submit completed proposals
- Work with the University Research Committee to make Intramural Grants

What OSPR doesn’t do:

- Write proposals
- Review proposal content
- Seek quotes from vendors
- Upload proposals for submission
- Manage funded grants
Developing a “fundable” idea

- Locating the right funding opportunity requires you to start with a clear and focused idea. Ask yourself the following questions:
  - What do you want to do?
  - Why do you want to do it?
  - Who cares about “it” or its outcomes?
  - How much money do you need and what do you need it for (e.g. personnel: faculty, students; travel; materials or supplies; equipment)?
  - Is there anything unique about you or your project?

Tips

- A proposal with a strong chance at getting funded starts with an idea or project that has the following attributes:
  - A clear plan
    - Know what you want to accomplish and what steps you will take to do it
  - Realistic and measurable goals
    - Establish clear and focused goals and objectives
    - Don’t over-promise—be realistic about your expected outcomes.
    - Consider your timeline, budget, and any other factors that might influence success.
  - A reasonable (but sufficient!) budget
    - Ask for what you need to complete the project—but don’t pad the budget.
When considering sponsors

- Evaluate the request for proposals (RFP) to ensure your idea fits with sponsor guidelines.
  - Consider the type of funding (capital, program, research, etc)
  - Make sure your request EXACTLY matches any guidelines
  - Make sure the size of your funding request matches with funding limits
  - Check for eligibility issues (geographic, citizenship, nonprofit status, etc)
- Consider your timeline for proposal development carefully
  - Some applications take longer to prepare than others
  - Some faculty can put together a competitive application quickly, but most will need at least a few months to prepare a federal grant
  - If a deadline is too short, check:
    - Is this a program with annual (or quarterly, etc.) deadlines? If so, aim for a later deadline date.
    - If not, consider whether or not a rushed proposal can *really* be finished, and if so, if it will be competitive. If not, consider alternate funding sources instead.

Some tips on finding funders

- Start with SPIN, MSU’s funding opportunity database.
- Look at the acknowledgment section of articles, presentations, etc. Who has funded others who do similar work?
- Sign up for professional society newsletters and check websites
- Ask colleagues, peers, mentors, etc. how their work has been supported
- Look at previously funded grants on sponsor websites
- Use grants.gov, a database of more than 1,000 grant programs offered by all federal agencies.
- Contact OSPR—I’m happy to help with the funding search
How to Search for Funding Opportunities

• Use SPIN, MSU’s funding opportunity database. You can register for an account at [https://spin.infoedglobal.com](https://spin.infoedglobal.com) (you must use the campus network to access)
  
  • SPIN is a searchable database for funding opportunities
    
    • Set up and save searches that match your research interests
  
  • SMARTS is an email subscription service that delivers new and updated funding opportunities that match your saved searches to your inbox on a daily or weekly basis.

• Contact Brittany Norman (sponsoredprograms@msutexas.edu) in OSPR for a detailed demonstration and assistance setting up saved searches.

Upcoming Events

• **OSPR Brown Bag #1:**
  – **Topic:** First Steps in Grant Writing: Crafting a concept paper
  – **Friday,** Oct. 19, **12-1pm,** CSC Kiowa
  – **RSVP by Wednesday,** Oct. 17

• **Faculty Research Retreat**
  – Join OSPR to escape distractions and dedicate time to your scholarly work.
  – **Saturday,** Oct. 20, **8:30 am - 4pm,** Sikes Lake Center
  – **RSVP by Thursday,** Oct. 11

• **Coffee Talk:**
  – **Topic:** TBD
  – **Tuesday,** Nov. 6, **3-4 PM,** Moffett Library Leisure Reading Room

• **OSPR Brown Bag**
  – **Topic:** TBD
Final notes

• You can download the slides and handouts on the OSPR website under “Events, Workshops, and Networking.” There is a link on the OSPR homepage (http://msutexas.edu/academics/ospr)
• Suggested topics? Please let me know!
• Any questions?

It’s time to….

• What are your research interests?
• Do you have any ideas that you might like to seek funding for (now or in the future)?
• Have you searched for funding in the past?
  • If so, how did you search and what were the outcomes?
• What are some of the challenges or barriers to seeking grant funding?
• Are there any grant-related topics you’d like to learn about in the future?