

## Keys to Grants Success: FAQs

### Finding funding sources

Q: How do I find a funding source for my research or special project?

A: The University of Detroit Mercy subscribes to several searchable grants databases which list available funding opportunities.

InfoEd SPIN is a comprehensive, searchable database listing both government and private sources of funding. You can subscribe to at [www.infoed.org](http://www.infoed.org) and set up email alerts. They will send you a daily digest listing all funding opportunities that match your parameters.

The Foundation Directory Online, <https://fconline.foundationcenter.org/>, is a searchable database of foundation and corporate funding sources. Records summarize the foundation's interests,

all the awardees are large research institutions, then that particular opportunity may not be the best fit.

Also, many Project Directors and

## Grantsmanship/Grant Review

**Q:** Are there any tips or secrets to making a grant stand out to reviewers?

**A:** There is an element of marketing involved, even with federal grants. It is a good idea to start with a good hook so that reviewers' level of enthusiasm begins high.

Be sure to read the mission and purpose of the organization and tie your project directly to it. Also keep in mind their review criteria (i.e., significance/intellectual merit, innovation, broader impacts). What impact will your project have? Why is it important? Making sure your approach/methodology is clear is also important. Work plans/timelines/logic models can be helpful in this respect.

Small things like appropriate sub-headers, enough white space on the pages, and some figures and graphs to break up the text can make a lot of difference.

**Q:** One reviewer sounded like he/she missed the whole point of the proposal. What can I do to avoid this, or can this be avoided?

**A:** It is imperative that each element of the proposal, including each question, is clearly answered. Especially in the case of federal grant proposals, when reviewers use standard evaluation forms that mirror the proposal, failure to directly and fully respond to an item can result in a significant loss of points. Similarly, for RFP's in which the funding purpose is somewhat prescribed, be certain that the proposal is fully aligned with the requirements both in content and philosophy.

Also, it is a good idea to obtain feedback from colleagues to make sure your intent is clear. Asking for feedback from readers both inside and outside your discipline can help you understand how your proposal reads. Be sure to give them two weeks to read it, and yourself at least a week to make revisions based on their feedback.

## Resources

Q: How do we access a template that would have a lot of the university background information that would go into a grant?

A: The OSPRA has many templates which include such information. Email Cate at [caldwecr@udmercy.edu](mailto:caldwecr@udmercy.edu). I am also happy to help facilitate the procurement of Institutional Research data. Our IR director Shelley Wagnon would like at least three weeks lead time for data (such as enrollment, retention, graduation, etc.)

Q: Who can help with statistical support?

Internally, Professor of Mathematics Xiaohui (Kathy) Zhong has expressed willingness to provide statistical help on grant projects, as has Assistant Professor of Business Administration Mithu Bhattacharya. The OSPRA also keeps a list of external consultants.

Approaching the Program Officer

not be able to conduct the project. However, I would advise keeping the budget free of bloat. Costs should be reasonable.

### Tenure/Promotion

Q: Do failed grant applications help support tenure and promotion applications, or is it a waste of time?

A: Not all grant applications are equal. For instance, the promotion and tenure committees understand that a proposal to the National Institutes of Health for an R01 grant is a considerable amount of work, and that they are very competitive. A scholarly proposal to the NSF or NIH, even if unfunded, would help support an application for tenure/promotion, while an unfunded application for a smaller grant might not.

A longtime member of the University Promotion and Tenure Committee said that “faculty should add all grants submitted regardless of funding status in their dossier -- they do need to make it very clear which grants were funded and which were not funded, but being on the University P&T committee in the past, it is helpful to see a faculty's productivity in writing grants and his/her willingness to not be successful since we all know you don't get funded every time you apply.”