Preparation Prior to Writing the Grant

1. **Explore the territory** – finding out who – which funding agencies – are interested in the type of research you are proposing.

a) An excellent starting point, if new to the process, is the **University of Idaho research office**. Usually have great staff to help you identify where the money might be. They continually are monitoring the ebbs and flows of grant monies. Have an office in Morrill Hall, with a vast listing of up-to-date references. In addition, have a pretty good web site, with direct links to such agencies as National Science Foundation, National Endowment of the Humanities, Departments of Education and Energy, Environmental Protection Agency, National Institutes of Health, etc.

> They of course have a **vest interest** in your success. In the instance of the U of I's Research Office, if the research is conducted off-campus, they are to have budgeted in a 25% indirect cost – right off the top. And if the research will be done on campus, thus using university facilities, the indirect cost is 43.% (check, as rates do change). So if you need $10,000 to fund a summer project, you need to ask for an extra $2,500 to cover the indirect costs. In turn, those monies are distributed to the supporting department and to university over-head (most of it). The sum total of all generated research becomes a major part of the university's annual budget.

b) Also **network** with like-minded anthropologist, particularly your mentors. The "elders" should help alter you to any inside scoops that may be developing in the horizon. Network also with the area of research or the community you are (or would like to) working. A lot of my own research have spun off of other projects completed in the Coeur d'Alene community.

c) Look for the research topics that are **"in"** and "fashionable" – priority subjects always changing.   In journals, what grants are being awarded, asking colleagues, etc.

> Just because something is "**in**" doesn't it make it less academically appropriate and sound. Nothing more naive than to somehow hold up the standards of "academic purity," and not modify your research, and thus not get funded. We often adopt our interests to fit the funding profile of our day.

2. Develop partnerships – **"Collaboration"**

As part of the networking, considering building a proposal around **collaborative linkages**, with other colleagues at other institutions. **Multi-institutional** partnerships are really in right now, given funding limitations and image of "wish use of limited tax dollars."

> And in addition, if you can attract a **multi-discipline** approach to your research topic, all the better.

Contact the prospective grant agency and **ask for help** – they got the staff, who have the insights and it doesn't hurt to build "inside" support.

The Writing – Does and Don'ts

First principle in grantsmanship is that a proposal is an **argument** – need to be **persuasive** and come across with competence and a degree of passion. To write "objectively," without a degree of emotion, but also without being sappy or radical, is not always the best approach. You have got to "sell" your research – particularly if it is more qualitative in nature. You have to convince the reviewers of the merits of your particular research topic and strategy.

> i.e., The Gentle Art of Friendly Persuasion.

> Show clear **costs benefits**, if that is nature of research. Or make the "pure research" question **exciting and fascinating**. Put a unique spin on your proposal.

Be complete, read the granting agencies guidelines and requirements, **answering all categorical** questions and sections of the particular granting agency's application – whether you think it is relevant or not.

> Pay particular attention to the **deadlines** and meet them well in advance – its an ideal seldom achieved!

Read the "literature" and **know what the methodological and theoretical, as well as subject territory** is all about. **And show you know your stuff –** included in that background in your proposal.

> Just as likely to have one of the reviewers object to your proposal because you are already duplicating a previous study or committing the same errors

As qualitative studies have a perceived methodological **"softness" bias**, build in **"rigor" checks**. Make it sound as if you are a "hard scientist" – **explicitly layout**, write it into grant, how you will do the following:

> **Criteria of adequacy** – instead of suggesting that your research will sample said number of subjects, you focus on the amount of data collected – the **saturation factor** = when account for most variation. Keep sampling until repetition from multiple sources obtained.

> **Criteria of appropriateness** – sampling based on theoretical needs and construction of "text" – rather than random sample.

Audit Trail – carefully layout the conceptual and methodological development and processes of your project so that **others, hypothetically, can reconstruct the research –** that is, they can be walked through it and it makes sense – not that other could replicate a "constructionist" project in the field.

Criteria of authenticity – resulting text is taken back to the informants to confirm accuracy and legitimacy – which may result in additional information

Multiple rater or evaluator – may use a second investigator to read and code transcripts and check adequacy and appropriateness will in field. This of course violates the inductive process and construction of text in collaboration with informants – i.e., add additional baggage. Induction often involves "insights" and "intuitions" on the information, not necessarily shared by other researchers.

One trick that can further legitimize a "unique" or "soft" research topic is bring in **reference to a "pilot study"** you've already completed – maybe part of a senior or graduate research project, for example. But it lets reviewers know that you've already explored the research field and that you are serious.

Address issues of **ethics** and working with "human subjects." Review the Code of Federal Regulations concerning "Protection of Human Subjects."

Gather all the **letters of supporting** agencies and key people, as well as permissions – Endorsements by the Tribal Council, for example.

All **signatures** from key people doing this sort of research.

Include **vita** of all key project personnel – with **indications of clear track record in research and publication.** You want to impress these folks that you got **some big guns.**

First and last drafts should always be printed on **high quality laser printers**. It makes a difference.

Have a "**tough love" colleague**, ideally someone outside your discipline, but who is familiar with grant writing, first **proof** the style-appearance, mechanic such as budget. and the content-logic of your argument. Tighten up the methods. Anticipate the flaws and short-comings. Make the budget as realistic as possible.

Last thing you should do is stand back, get a gestalt of the entire research proposal and in a setting where you feel you are most creative and imaginative, write your **introductory narrative statement**. This has got to **capture the support of your potential adversary**. This will likely be the reviewers **first impression**.

Keep it short 250 to 500 works – application often specifies

cover in an imaginative and clear fashion: defining the project, its procedures, and your qualifications

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Budget:

Keep in mind the university's "**indirect costs**" 25% for off-campus and 43.4% for on-campus research.

Mileage and per diem – lodging and meals and .31 a mile (rates and per diem changes, so check)

Big expense is **transcription of taped interviews**. Rule of thumb – for a fast typist (more than 65 words per minute) is four times the length of the tape. If you have a 3 hour interview, that would be 9 hours of transcription. Calculate the time expected and then double it – allowing for more realistic completion process. So if charge $25 an hour, that could equate to $450 per three hour interview

Honorarium for elders – $100 to $700 per project, depending on involvement – this is a plus and reviewer like to see you spread the money around.

Equipment – get the best possible digital audio and/or video recorder – dependable, external condenser flat and directional mics. Also consider still digital camera. Lots of batteries and high-grade, large capacity memory card. The quality of the recorded interview can never be compromised. You get one short at that most insightful interview.

Show strong **"cost sharing" ratio** – reviewers like to see support from your home institution, other granting agencies, and any "**in-kind**" contributions you and your staff can provide. Typically an even match – 50% or more of entire funding.

As with the Humanities Council, "cost sharing" actually is critical in their funding processes – the more they can show the greater funding they can generate.

One of the biggest complainants from fellow reviewers is what seems like **extravagant salaries requested for the research directors** – you! Try to keep it realistic, market rate, given your experience and institutional affiliation.