

Tips For Successful Proposals

Many of these tips will be useful regardless of the research grant program to which one may be applying. However, grant programs also vary in their requirements. Therefore this tip sheet has been prepared specifically to focus on applications to the AAHPERD Research Grant Program.

GRANT REVIEWERS LOOK FOR ...

- ☞ a principal investigator who is **qualified** to complete the work proposed and who has successfully conducted similar work in the past. This is weighed more heavily in the established investigator category. With the early career and graduate student categories, this is still a consideration, but weighed less heavily – often in these categories the review committee considers the entire research team, including advisor for graduate students.
- ☞ a proposal that is **feasible** to complete within the timeframe and budget proposed.
- ☞ a study that is **realistic** in terms of its ability to show results on the goals that it is intended to achieve.
- ☞ a proposal that has the potential to yield an **outcome valuable** to AAHPERD's mission and **relevant** to practice.
- ☞ a proposal that has a high probability of publication in a major journal and that can make a substantial contribution **to the existing body of literature** on this issue.
- ☞ a proposal that adequately discusses current **background literature** on the proposed topic and, when appropriate, includes an appropriate **theoretical framework**.
- ☞ a study that is **significant** and has a strong **rationale**
- ☞ a study that describes **methods suitable** for the objectives outlined. In other words, the proposed methods will enable the researcher to answer the research question(s).
- ☞ a proposal that includes the **appropriate analy-**

sis to measure the results.

- ☞ a study that employs the **correct tools**. (i.e. survey instruments)
- ☞ a proposal that is **clearly written** and contains no grammatical or spelling errors.

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL PROPOSALS

- ☞ Address each of the points above in preparing the proposal.
- ☞ Follow application instructions carefully; include all requested information.
- ☞ Have the proposal **reviewed by colleagues** for clarity. Having colleagues not in your special area of expertise is very useful since some grant reviewers may not be experts in your area of submission. For this reason, it is very important to avoid technical phrases, specialty jargon, and the use of excessive number of abbreviations.
- ☞ Ensure that there is **consistency between and among the study aims** (objective/hypothesis), **data collection methods** used to carry out each study aim, **and analysis**. All methods and instruments listed in the methods should relate to the aims. All aims should have instruments to measure them and have a way to analyze their impact to the study.
- ☞ Include information about **pilot study and/or other relevant data** that may be available.

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