



**ONCOLOGY NURSING SOCIETY
FOUNDATION**

GRANT WRITING TIPS

If you are early in your research career, i.e., this is your first or second grant submission; you must find a doctorally-prepared oncology nurse scientist who is an expert in your content area to work with you as a co-investigator. If you are having trouble finding a co-investigator, the ONS Research Department can assist you in finding one.

If you are a junior investigator, a consultant should be selected to support content areas beyond your expertise. They also can be helpful in providing an objective overall critique of the proposal. If you are having trouble finding a consultant, the ONS Research Department can assist you in finding one.

Use your consultant to help you develop and critique the proposal. Incorporating their suggestions in the final grant can strengthen proposals. Choose a consultant wisely. They should be known, i.e., have publications or presentations in the content area of the grant. A useful strategy is to have them read and critique the proposal in the early, formative stages.

Use the grant application and instructions as your road map. Read and follow them carefully--in the beginning, in the middle, and at the very end--to be sure that you have followed the rules and have not forgotten anything that pertains to your particular study.

A full-scale study is often proposed when a pilot study would be far more appropriate. A pilot study is useful to determine an effect size; assess the feasibility of a design, instrument, or method; as well as to assess the safety, acceptability, side effects and compliance with an intervention. If you are proposing a pilot study, keep your aims, method, and analysis consistent with the intent of a pilot study. For example, don't propose statistical hypotheses testing when you really are trying to estimate variance and effect size.

Be sure to make a compelling case regarding why the study is significant to oncology nursing even if the relevance may seem obvious to you. Animal studies must also address relevancy.

Use the biosketches to highlight the expertise of the investigators and consultants. Include those studies and/or publications relevant to the area of the study itself. If there is still room, include oncology related material. Do not exceed the page limit by attaching resumes or curriculum vitae.

Make your presentation pleasant to look at and to read. Use a clean style font no less than 12 characters per inch. Use subheadings, tables, figures, and other creative approaches to present your work. Do not disregard the rules and put off the reviewers by adjusting the margins or decreasing the font to squeeze in more content.

Write clearly in an organized fashion using active voice and non-sexist language. Use an editor to help you with your writing and punctuation. Typographical errors and misspellings reflect poorly on your attention to detail.

Use your appendices to support, not replace, the body of the proposal. Be as purposeful in developing your appendices as you are in preparing your narrative.

Make sure your support letters are written specifically about your proposal and your work. Be cautious with generic letters that show that the writer has little knowledge of your proposal. Provide support letters that address specific types of support such as release time, space, equipment, statistical support, or access to a patient population.

Only request allowable budget expenses. Justify your budget carefully. The reviewer should be able to comprehend why the expenditure is needed and how you reached each calculation.

Check your own work looking for fatal flaws such as inadequate sample size, low significance to oncology nursing, or projects with too large of scope. Ask your colleagues to review it and offer constructive feedback. Your proposal must show that your research is significant; "do-able" with the resources, budget, and time frame allowed; as well as scientifically sound.

Check the integrity of your proposal for your own purposes. Draw a diagram identifying the purpose, specific aims, concepts and interrelationships, design, sample, variables, instruments, and data analysis plan. Are the various components consistent and appropriate? Are there any holes or gaps in the project that may result in a fatal design flaw? Have you adequately developed a thread(s) to connect each specific aim to the other sections of the proposal? Have you lost anything or have you added something that is unrelated to your aims? Have you justified your choice of methods or measures where alternatives may be available? Stay focused.

Make sure you differentiate between ethnicity and culture. Cross-culture research goes beyond the translation of tools. If you are planning a study in which you address such issues, seek consultation.

If questions or concerns arise about the feasibility of the study ideas or the mechanics of preparing the application and budget, the ONS Research Department (research@ons.org) can provide assistance or referral.