Proposal Preparation Process Overview
Presented 9/24/10

I. Identify funding opportunities
   A. NIH
      1. NIH grant website:  http://grants.nih.gov/grants/oer.htm
      2. RFA—Request for applications
      3. PA—Program announcements
      4. Parent Announcements—Unsolicited applications
      NOTE: All PIs planning to submit a proposal through NIH and key personnel
      who will work on an NIH award must have an NIH eRA commons user name.
      Please use this link to register for a user name:
      https://www.research.cornell.edu/NIH/Registration/nih-reg.html
   B. NSF
      1. NSF grant website:  http://www.nsf.gov/funding/index.jsp
      2. Program announcements
      NOTE: Most NSF proposals will be submitted through FastLane and must be
      started by the PI. The PI then gives access to others who will work on the
      proposal. Please use this link to register for a FastLane password:
      http://www.osp.cornell.edu/FastLane/
   C. Other
      1. Cornell University subscribes to the Community of Science (COS) and the
      Illinois Researcher Information Service (IRIS), two Web-based resources for
      funding opportunities and alert services.
         a. COS website:  http://www.cos.com/
         b. IRIS website:  http://www.library.illinois.edu/iris/

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II. Review guidelines specific to the announcement
   A. NIH
      1. Application guide:  
      2. Guidelines specific to RFAs or PAs may differ between NIH institutes or centers
      from the general guidelines so be careful to review RFA or PA guidelines.
   B. NSF
      1. Proposal and awards policies and procedures guide:

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III. How we can help

A. Who can serve as a principal investigator or project director on a sponsored project?
   1. Individuals with professorial titles can serve as PIs. If an individual has a title other than professorial, Cornell has a mechanism in place through which PI status can be requested on a case by case basis. Information regarding Principal Investigator eligibility can be found at this address: 
      http://www.research.cornell.edu/VPR/Policies/PI-policy.html

B. Application overview
   1. PI sends us the link for the announcement to which we are applying; we will review for cost share requirements, allowable indirect costs, budget limitations, etc.

C. Budget preparation
   1. PI sends a list of items to include in the draft budget
      a. PI academic year or summer salary
      b. Graduate research assistant—calendar or academic year
      c. Other salaries: co-investigators, non-student research support, hourly student support, etc.
      d. Travel details
      e. Project specific supplies and materials
      f. Data purchases
      g. Other

   2. We will prepare a draft budget for review and will work back and forth with the PI until a budget is prepared that will meet the needs of the project while staying within the agency guidelines.

D. Forms preparation
   1. Cover pages, budget pages, university information, key personnel, etc.
   2. Information upload for electronic submissions.

E. Subcontractor and consultant paperwork assistance
   1. Provide information to the PI or directly to the subcontractor or consultant regarding the paperwork that needs to be included in the proposal; typically this will be a commitment letter, statement of work, and budget, but varies depending on the application requirements of the funding agency.

F. Assist with compilation of final application materials
   1. Review for inclusion of all materials requested.
   2. Review for unintended cost share commitments. (Cornell does not typically write cost share into an agreement unless required by the funding agency. If cost share is written into an agreement, it must be formally tracked whether a requirement of the agency or not.)

   3. Assist the PI in preparation of the form 10 (a form internal to Cornell which provides an overview of information related to the proposal and is reviewed and approved by the PI(s), department chair or center director, and the college assistant dean for administration. OSP will not send the proposal to a funding agency prior to receiving the approved form 10. Please note that if co-PIs are named in the proposal, the co-PIs and the corresponding department chair must also sign the form 10.

G. Assist in preparation of response for agency request for additional information
   1. Prior to making an award, NIH will typically request other support information, confirmation of human subjects training certification and human
subjects approval, if appropriate. This request for information is not assurance that an award is being made.

H. Additional information
   1. We request that all proposals be complete and ready for department/center submission to OSP six working days prior to the agency deadline. After PI and department review, OSP provides an additional review of the proposal for completeness and accuracy before sending/submitting it to the funding agency.
   2. If a funding agency does not allow full indirect costs, we must attach to the form 10 guidelines from the agency that states the maximum indirect rate allowed.
   3. It is important that the PI understand and pay attention to guidelines for font sizes, page limitations, margins, etc. because preparing the research section is much easier if the guidelines are followed throughout the preparation process rather than having to make adjustments after the writing is complete.
   4. Whenever you are asked to sign an agreement, for example, a restricted access data agreement, a non-disclosure agreement, materials transfer agreement, etc., the agreement must be reviewed, approved and signed by OSP. We, PIs nor administrators, are authorized to sign agreements on behalf of the University. If you have an agreement that needs to go to OSP for processing, the initial step is to start with the department manager and that person will guide you through the process.

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Footnotes:

1 Please note that this section outlines typical support offered through the Department of Policy Analysis and Management and the Bronfenbrenner Life Course Center. Home departments may have different procedures and this information is not intended to override those procedures.

2 Important salary funding information:

   NIH: If an effort commitment is made in the proposal for personnel named in the award document, that commitment cannot be reduced by 25% or more without prior approval from NIH. If NIH reduces an award amount from that in the proposal, the PI effort is not reduced by a corresponding amount. The PI effort written in the proposal is the effort commitment recognized by NIH.

   NSF: As a rule, NSF does not allow more than two months salary be paid to an individual from NSF even if from more than one NSF award.