



**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

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# **Grant Writing: An Introduction**

***Effective Proposal Development***

Office of Research  
Office of Corporate and Foundation Relations  
University Libraries



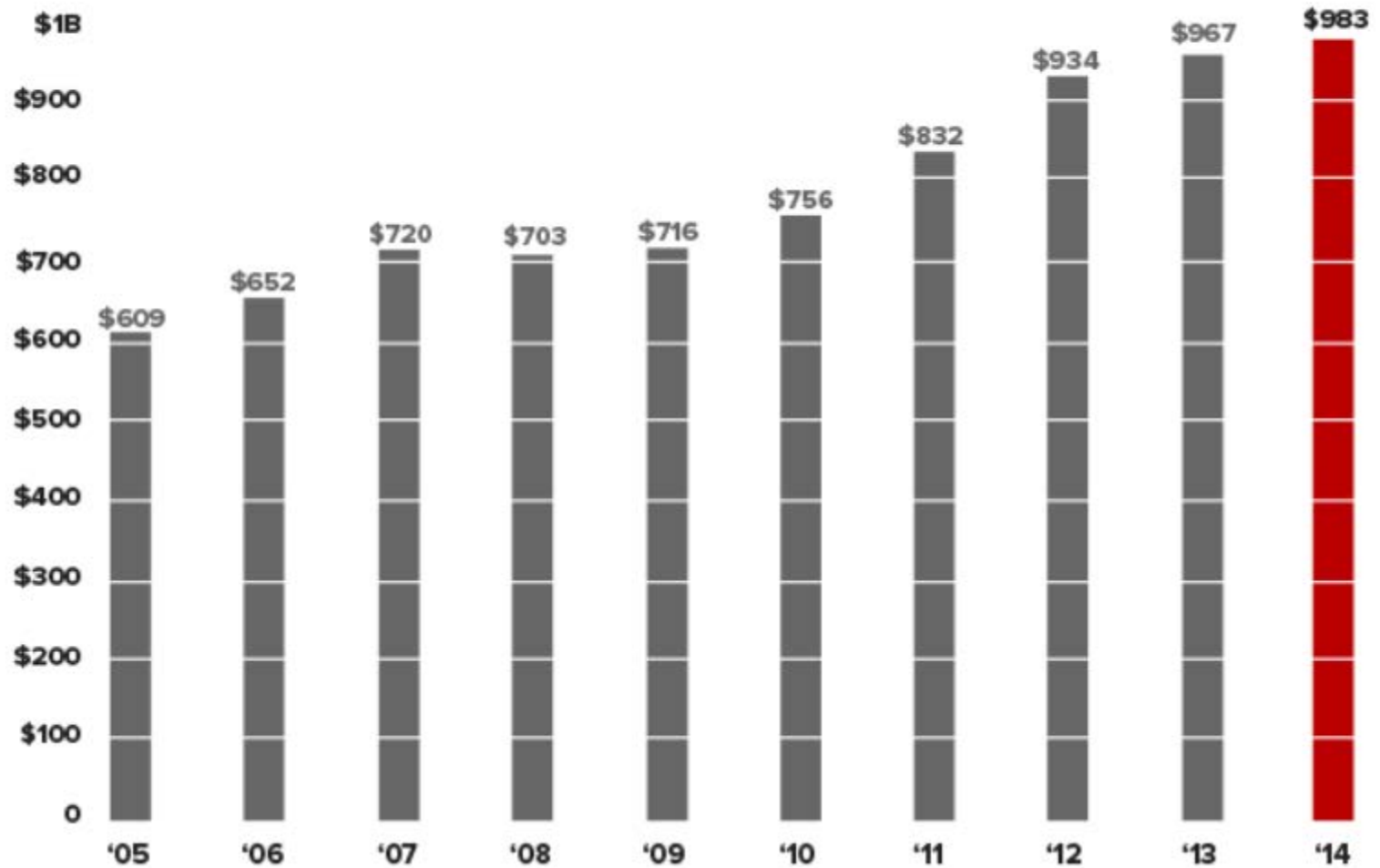
## Workshop Agenda

- Review basic grant terms and parts of a grant proposal
- Know and understand the Solicitation Cycle
- Access funding opportunity resources
- Organize and plan for grant writing
- Avoid common reasons for not being funded



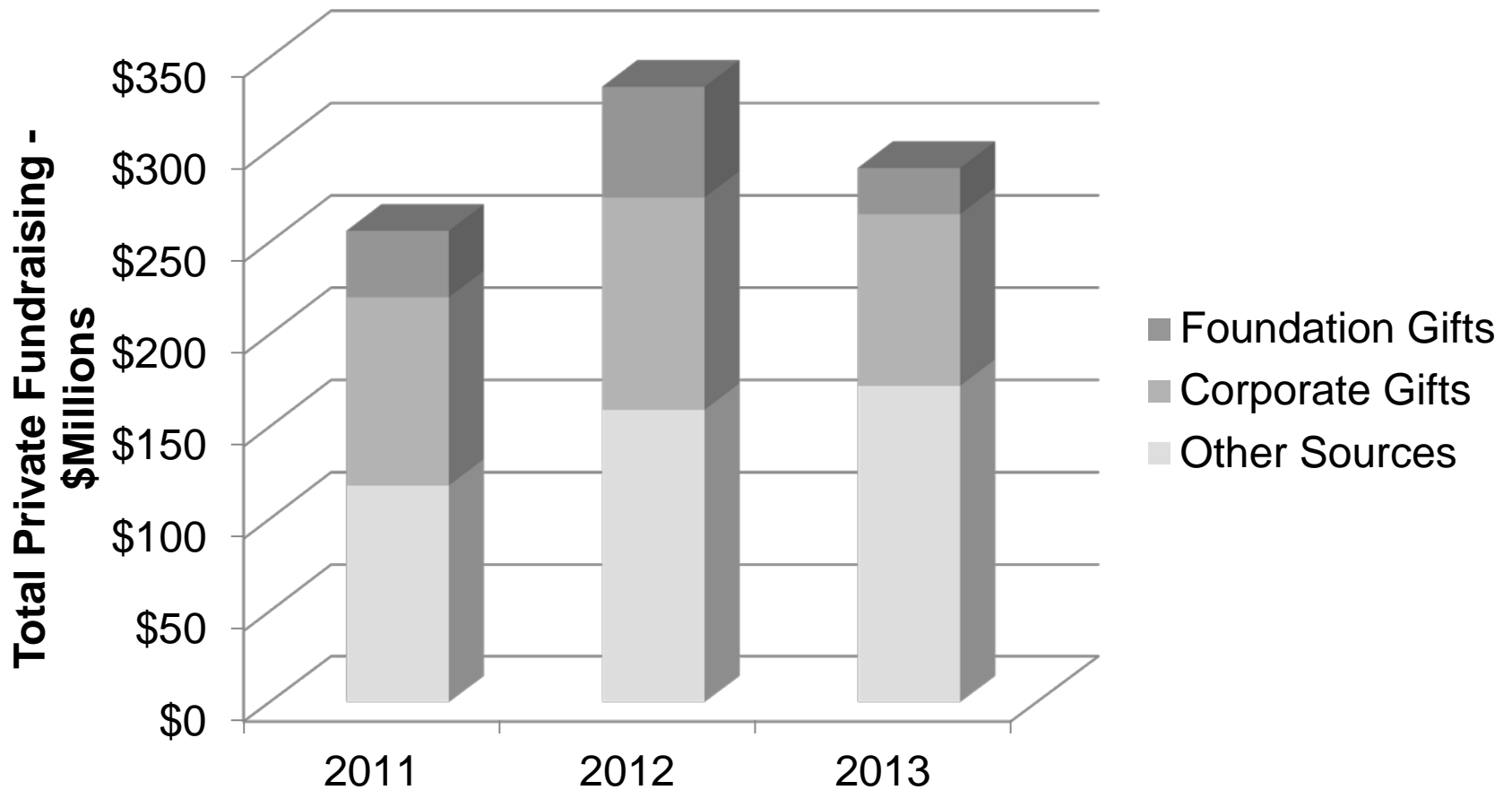
## Ten-year Research Funding Profile (2005-2014)

Dollars in Millions





# The Ohio State University Foundation Total Fundraising Activity





## Grant-Making Organizations

### Government

- Federal – NIH, NSF, DOD, NEA
- State – Jobs Ohio, Ohio Dept of Ed
- County, Municipalities

### Private

- Non-Profit – Sloan Foundation, Columbus Foundation
- For Profit – AEP, Honda, General Electric



## Funding & Research Development

- Assistance with finding funding, locating collaborators, and leveraging Ohio State's resources
- Coordination of the limited submission process, Ohio State's internal nomination process

### Jeff Agnoli

 [agnoli.1@osu.edu](mailto:agnoli.1@osu.edu) or  (614) 292-6269

Office of the Vice President Research  
208 Bricker Hall, 190 N. Oval Mall  
Columbus, Ohio 43210



## Funding and Research Development ([go.osu.edu/funding](http://go.osu.edu/funding))

- **SPIN Funding Opportunities Database**
  - [www.infoedglobal.com](http://www.infoedglobal.com) > SPIN
- **Research Development and Grant Writing Newsletter**
  - <http://go.osu.edu/grantwritingnews> (OSU login required)
- **Federal Grants and Contracts**
  - <http://grants.gov>
- **Research Databases**
  - <http://library.ohio-state.edu/screens/databases.html>



## Funding and Research Development ([go.osu.edu/funding](http://go.osu.edu/funding))

- **Finding Collaborators**
  - <http://osu.academicanalytics.com/> faculty expertise)
- **Internal Funding Opportunities**
  - College, institute/center, and department web sites
- **Sponsored Program Officers**
  - <http://osp.osu.edu/spos>
- **Google Alerts and Google Scholar searches**
  - <http://google.com>





# Grant-Seeking Career Strategies



Internal Funding - Small Grants - Medium Grants - Big Grants - Huge Grants  
Beginning or Early Career .....Height of Career



## Office of Foundation Relations

- Foundation Center database (funding from community agencies, corporations, and families)
  - Available through college development officer
  - Also accessed through University Libraries catalog
- **Contacts**
  - Aaron Conley, [conley.540@osu.edu](mailto:conley.540@osu.edu)
  - Emily Irwin, [irwin.290@osu.edu](mailto:irwin.290@osu.edu)
  - Marilyn Roberts, [Roberts.1561@osu.edu](mailto:Roberts.1561@osu.edu)
  - Dinessa Solomon, [Solomon.189@osu.edu](mailto:Solomon.189@osu.edu)
  - Helena Thigpen, [Thigpen.18@osu.edu](mailto:Thigpen.18@osu.edu)



## University Requirements

### Proposals require:

- ePA-005 – Authorization to Seek Off-Campus Funds form with appropriate signatures
- Principal Investigator (PI) Status Eligibility
- Approvals for human subjects, animals, or other institutional clearances (research risks); conflict of interest requirements
- Facilities and administrative (F&A) costs
- The Ohio State University or The Ohio State University Foundation is listed as the applicant and contractual entity



## University Requirements

### Proposal may also require:

- Documentation that sufficient research space is available
- Documentation of sources of cost sharing, if included in proposal
- Faculty salary recovery if required by college



## Cayuse424 Electronic Proposal Submission

- Ohio State's federal agency proposal development and submission system
- Automates some tasks, e.g. completion of forms; facilitates collaboration, checks for common errors and/or missing information, etc.
- Recommend submitting proposal at least 3-5 days before the actual deadline



## What is the Difference between...

### Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP)

- Does not have a 501(c)(3) designation
- Reporting requirements help determine who submits Government grants (federal, state, local)
- Facilities and Administration Costs where applicable
- <http://osp.osu.edu>

### The Ohio State University Foundation

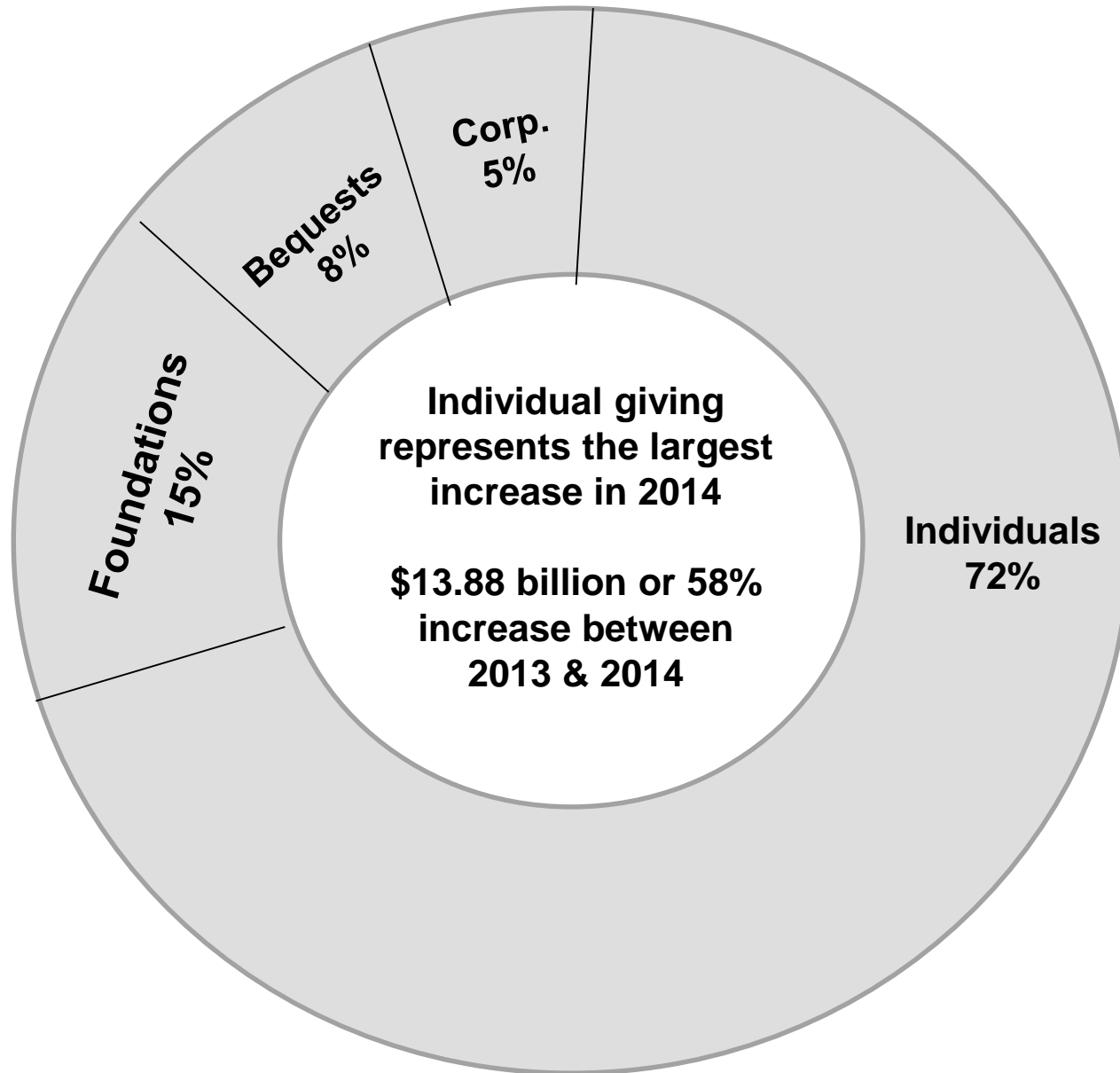
- Does have a 501(c)(3)
- Individual donors
- Foundations
- Corporate funding
- Six month check hold (administrative costs)
- <http://giveto.osu.edu>



# An Overview of Giving in 2014

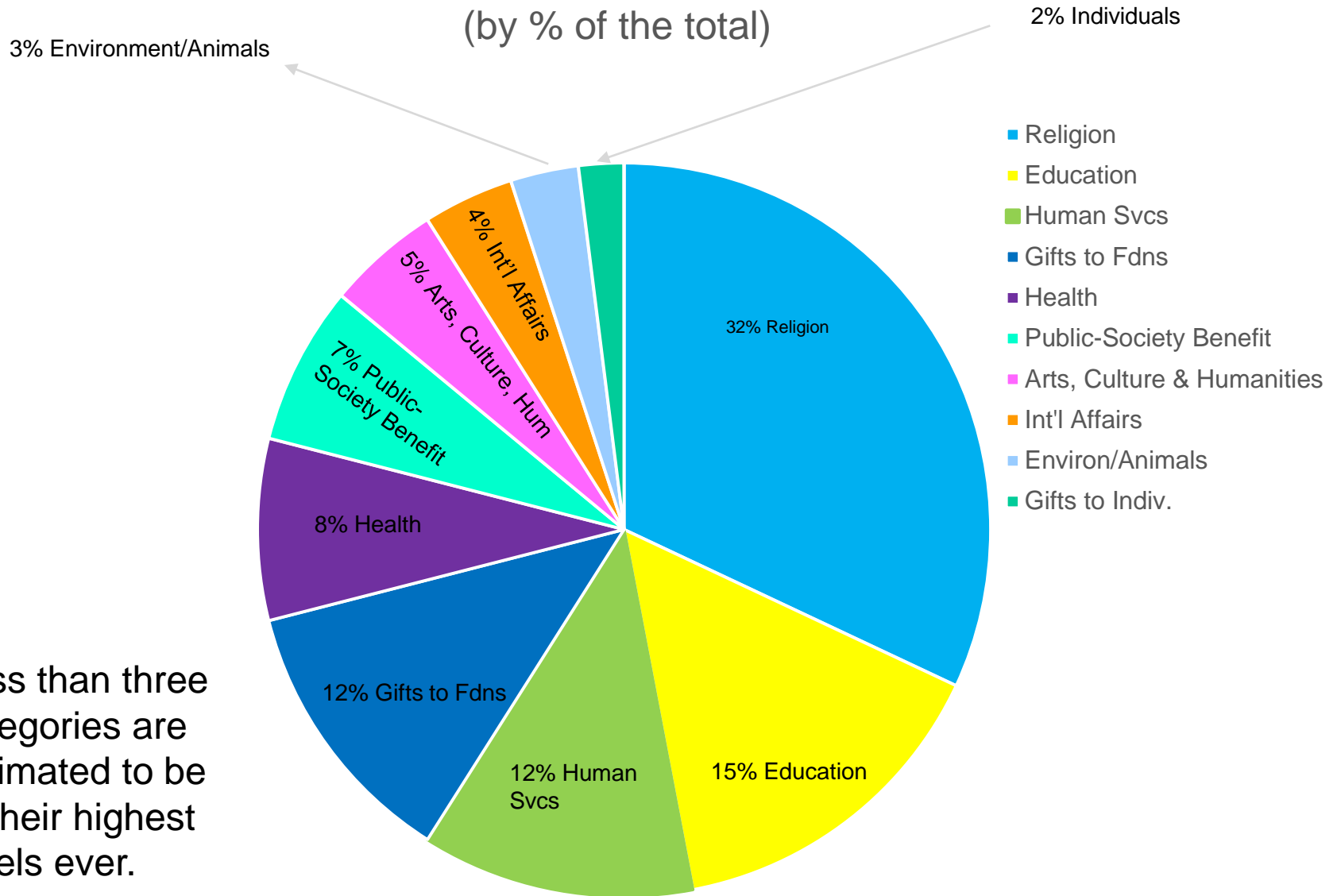
Total Contributions: \$358.38 billion

Contributions by source (by % of the total)





# Contributions by recipient category







## What is the difference between...

**A Gift**



**A Contract**



**A Grant**





## What is a Gift?

A gift is a contribution or donation made on a non-competitive basis and may obligate the recipient to produce specific results, e.g., naming rights and other university benefits.

Processed by the Ohio State University Foundation.





## What is a Contract?

**Contract:** legally binding agreement between one or more sponsors and the grantee

- Outlines specific goals and requirements for goods and/or services to be provided by the grantee
- The relationship between the sponsor and the grantee is one of procurement
- Processed by the Office of Sponsored Programs



## What is a Grant?

**Grant:** an assistance award, generally financial in nature, given for the implementation of a specific task

- Generally not as restrictive as a contract
- Processed by the Office of Sponsored Programs
- Processed by the Ohio State University Foundation if a 501 (3) (c) nonprofit organization requirement is listed in the guideline



## Solicitation Cycle

### *Identification*

- Help identify who (people and organizations) shares your passion for your work?
- Determine if they have the capacity (finances/resources) to support your work?

### *Research*

- Study these potential sponsors; gather business intelligence and past funding history (who is the right person(s) to ask; how much/what is the right amount; what is the right project at the right time)
- Foundation Relations can assist with providing profiles of prospective sponsors, current board members, funding history, etc.



## Solicitation Cycle

### *Strategic Planning*

- What are the best ways to engage with this sponsor, i.e., request an introduction through an established colleague, etc.
- Best time to request funding (funding cycle, most dollars available)

### *Cultivation*

- Enables potential funder to learn more about your organization
- Work to establish a lasting relationship
- Investment is a natural resolution to a mutually recognized problem



## Solicitation Cycle

### *Solicitation*

- State your case effectively and show impact of investment
- Be sure to provide exactly what they request

### *Stewardship*

- Fulfill all required reporting; say thank you
- Inform sponsor of your organization's success in delivering the service

### *Renewal*

- Sponsors are inclined to give to previous investments
- Do an outstanding job on service delivery/research and share results
- Ask about future support



## Developing Your Proposal Begins with a Good Idea

- Does it address an important problem, i.e., will scientific knowledge be advanced and sustained?
- Does it build upon (incremental) or expand current knowledge (transformative/novel/innovative)?
- Is it feasible to implement and to investigate?
- Have you researched the sponsor's web site? Has it already been funded?
- Have you selected the right sponsor; is project aligned with sponsor's mission?
- Have you followed all guidelines?
- Is the budget realistic and includes only essential costs?





# Application Development Strategy

Plan

Think

Write



## So WHY Plan?

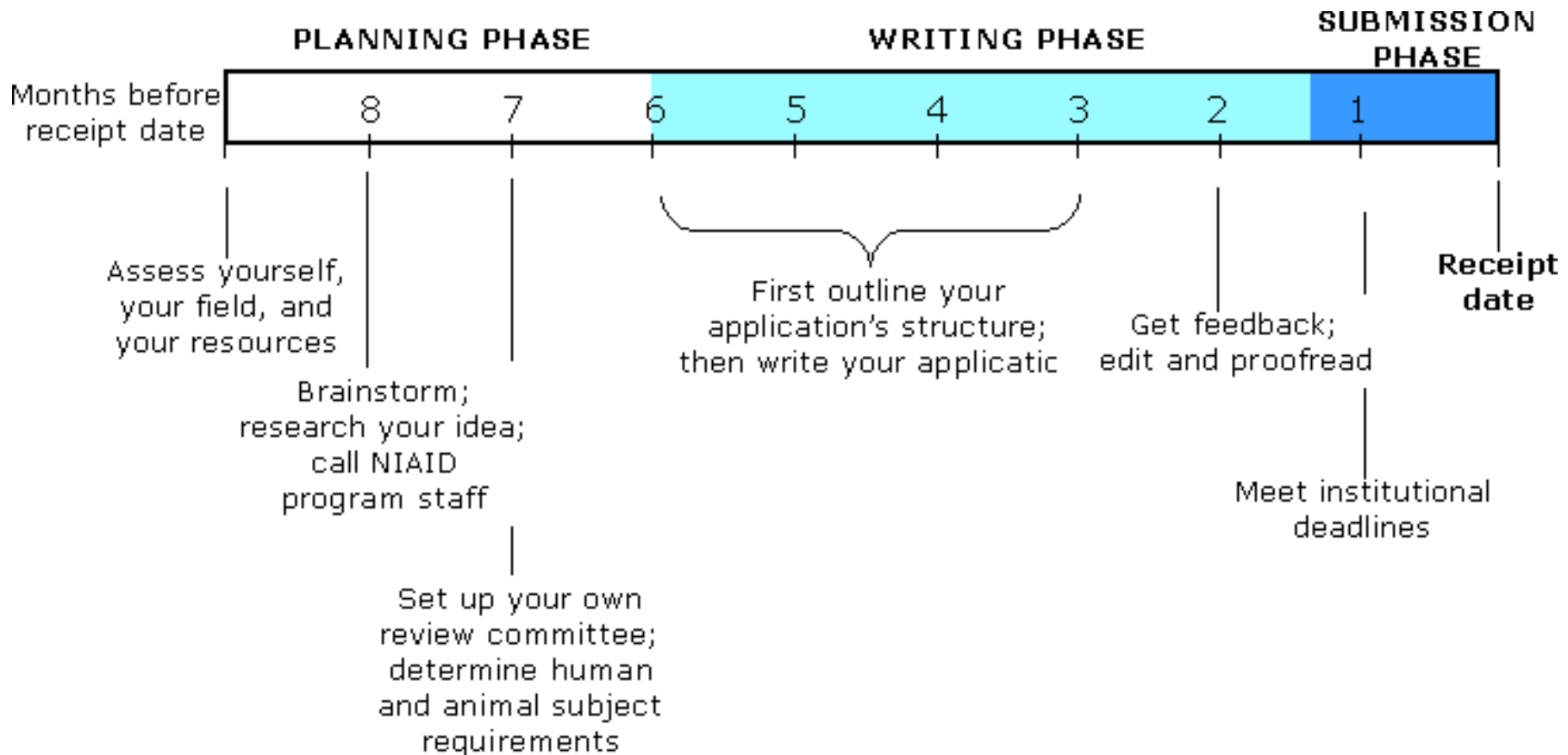
### You're more likely to get...

- A compelling scientific question
- Appropriate sponsor
- Appropriate review committee
- Adequate time to complete
  - A major stress reducer, no need to wait to get started

...a better grant application



# Sample Pre-Submission Timeline





# Components of a Grant Proposal



## 8 Components of Grant Proposal

- ✓ Cover Letter (**write last**)
- ✓ Executive Summary
- ✓ Problem Statement
- ✓ Project Description (includes evaluation)
- ✓ Budget
- ✓ Organizational Information (ask department/college for assistance)
- ✓ Conclusion
- ✓ Appendix



## Components of a Cover Letter

- Reference conversations/past contacts
- Make the request (including the ask amount)
- Describe what is in your proposal package (narrative, appendix)
- Offer to answer questions/meet
- Institutional signature(s)



## Executive Summary Components

- Need Statement
- Project Description
- Funding Requirements/Budget
- Expertise/Organizational Info



## Problem or Need

- How it relates to the goal and mission of the project
- The applicant's capacity to make a change in the condition
- Who is experiencing the problem
- Project purpose



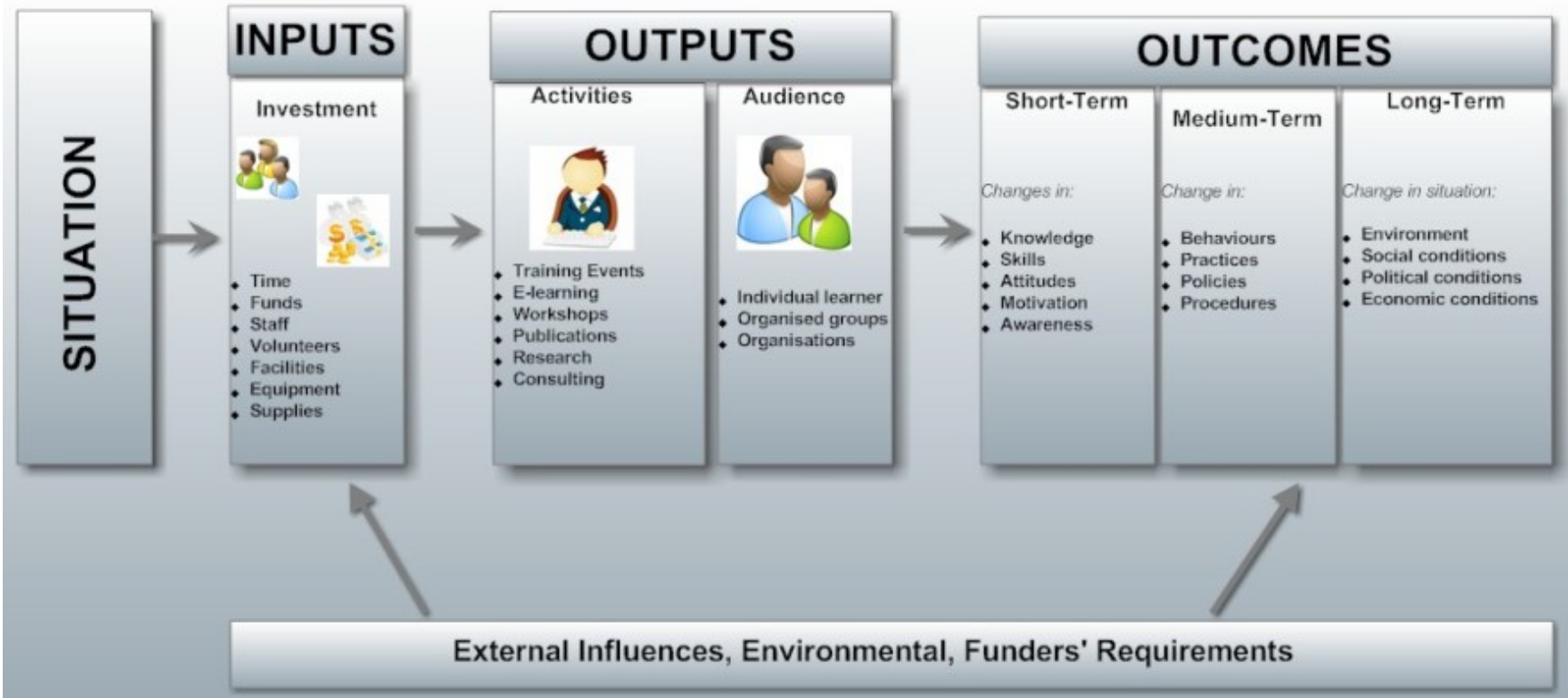


## Project Description

- Goals and objectives
- Planned activities (outputs)
- Project time line (logic model)
- Evaluation and sustainability plan



# Sample Logic Model





## Organizational Information

- Depending on which organization (OSP or CFR) submits the proposal, additional institutional information may need to be submitted, e.g., list of board members, audited financial statements, etc.



## Conclusion

- Final appeal
- Reiterate what your nonprofit wants and why it is important



## Budget

### ***1. Expense Information***

- Personnel
- Non-personnel
- Overhead

### ***2. Income Information***

- Earned income
- Grants and Gifts

### ***3. Budget Narrative and/or Justification***



## Appendix

- Additional information they may request, examples memorandum of understanding (MOU) or letters of support.
- Additional documents which add to the credibility of the proposal, e.g., journal articles, CVs, etc. (refer to guidelines)



## Scientific Proposal Contents

- Abstract
- Methods
- Expected Results
- Potential problems and plans for resolution
- Budget and justification
- Personnel and their qualifications
- References cited
- Letters of support



## Why Are Proposals Not Funded: Common Proposal Weaknesses

- Project not “innovative” or “transformative” enough; questionable importance
- Project not logical; planning is lacking
- Lack of preliminary data; need not documented
- Staff unqualified; team lacks expertise
- Overly ambitious; project timeline unrealistic
- **Key point: make it easy for reviewers to understand and read**





## NSF: Return Without Review

- Inappropriate for funding by the NSF
- Insufficient lead-time before activity is to begin
- Does not separately address merit review and one-page Project Summary
- Already received a “not invited” response; duplicates another proposal already awarded
- Does not meet requirements, i.e., page limits, formatting, etc.; not responsive to program guidelines



## Common Reasons Cited for a Weak Application

- Lack of or weak impact
- Significance not obvious or weak
  - Too ambitious, lacking focus
  - Unclear or flawed hypothesis
  - Feasibility unsupported
- Poor writing
- Applicant track record weak or lacking appropriate expertise
- Approach flawed



## Hallmarks of an Outstanding Grant Application

- Strong significance to an important problem; IMPACT is high; high degree of novelty and innovation; clear rationale
- Strong track record by a well-qualified applicant
- Relevant and supportive preliminary data
- Clear and focused approach that provides unambiguous results
- Careful attention to details:
  - **Fonts, clarity of data, spelling, etc.**



## How To Assure That Your Grant Gets Funded?

- Good ideas, well-presented always win
- Think and write clearly
- Be complete but not verbose
- Never lose sight of the significance; point to the impact
- Pay attention to details
- Collaborate with other investigators
  - Fills gaps in your expertise and training
  - Add critical skills to your team
- “Team Science” is powerful



## The Peer Review Process

- Incorporate review criteria in your subheadings
- Know that reviewers are exceptionally busy people
  - Typically do not read proposal all at once
  - Most may not have expertise in your field of study
- Ask for a list of reviewers when available; review their funding history and publications
- Talk with colleagues who have served as peer reviewers and/or volunteer to serve as a reviewer



## Science of How You Communicate

- Use active voice rather than passive voice
- Minimize the separation between subject and verb; use short, concise sentences
- Articulate the direction action in the verb when appropriate
- The subject whose story is being told should be at the beginning of the sentence in the topic position
- New, important (exciting!) information should be at the end of the sentence in the stress position



## Excellent Proposal

### Reviewer Comments:

1. Strengths are numerous and include novel and innovative hypotheses, sound experimental design using multidisciplinary approaches, a highly qualified investigator and research team, and a high likelihood of meaningful findings
2. Strengths include the significance of the central hypothesis, the well-designed experimental plan, supportive preliminary data...
3. ...the rationale for the studies are clearly delineated, appropriate controls are in place, scope of the studies is appropriate, and there is ... complete discussion of possible limitations of some approaches and how findings will be interpreted



**Jeff Agnoli** ([agnoli.1@osu.edu](mailto:agnoli.1@osu.edu) or 614-292-6269)

Education, Funding and Research Development  
Office of the Vice President for Research  
208 Bricker Hall / 190 N Oval Mall

**Dinessa Solomon** ([Solomon.189@osu.edu](mailto:Solomon.189@osu.edu) or 614-688-3049)

Executive Director, Foundation Relations  
The OSU Foundation, Office Foundation Relations  
1480 West Lane Avenue

**Amanda Rinehart** ([Rinehart.64@osu.edu](mailto:Rinehart.64@osu.edu) or 614-292-3336)

University Libraries | Data Management Librarian  
18<sup>th</sup> Avenue Library, Room 490