

## **ADVICE FROM NSF PROGRAM OFFICER**

### **Prior to developing/submitting a proposal:**

Talk to Program Director (PD) about their vision for the project – e-mail, call, meet at conferences.

Push them about budget information – they will probably give you a ballpark figure.

Volunteer to serve on review panels – PD's are impressed and you learn a lot.

Obviously, follow all instructions for the proposal.

Make proposal easy (and fun) to read and exciting.

You can call the PD a few weeks/months after you submit your proposal and ask if you are definitely going to be rejected so you can re-write in time for the next funding cycle.

The only things that can be discussed in the panel review are:

- Advance knowledge/benefit society?
- Creative, original, potentially transformative?
- Sound research plan that includes assessment?
- Well qualified investigators?
- Adequate resources?

### **CRUCIAL ELEMENTS IN ANY PROPOSAL:**

1. Intellectual merit
2. Describe clearly the broader specific impacts on society. Explain why they are desired.

DON'T try to convince the PD that your proposal fits their program – if they say it's not right, accept their decision.

### **After a reject decision:**

Call PD and ask for feedback on panel discussion. Result can't be changed. BUT if you feel that the Review Panel made a 'bad' decision because they didn't have the technical expertise to fully understand the proposal technicalities, talk to the PD and next time you submit, the PD may look for more suitable panel members.

The feedback you get from the reviewers is not normally truthful – they write things that will enable the PD to feel that the panel has done its job. So ask the PD for the lowdown.