

Questions to Ask a Program Officer

1. Is the program staff of your funding agency available to discuss project ideas with persons considering submitting a proposal? Does the program staff review or critique proposals if they are submitted early enough?
2. Our project seeks to address the need for [*specify*] by [*specify your planned activities*]. Does your grant program fund projects of this nature?
3. What kinds of activities or services can be funded under this program? Personnel? Travel? Equipment? Indirect (administrative) costs? Are there any expenditures for which funding is not allowed, or are there limits on any category of spending?
4. Does the amount of cost-sharing or matching contributed by our organization or a third party affect the funding decision?
5. How much funding is available for funding new projects this year? What do you expect the average size of grant awards to be? Can successful projects receive continuation funding next year?
6. Do you know of related funding programs which may be appropriate for a project like ours? Is your funding agency planning to announce any programs in the near future which match our needs?
7. What is the most common mistake or flaw in proposals submitted to you?
8. Can I obtain a list of projects which have been funded in the past year under this program?
9. What criteria are applied to evaluate the proposals submitted to this program? How are funding decisions made? Do reviewers meet to discuss proposals? How are the reviewers selected?
10. How long does the evaluation of proposals usually take? If my project were funded, what is the earliest date the funding would be available?
11. Can you provide me with a copy of a successful proposal from your program or refer me to someone who is currently funded under your program? (Don't be too pushy with this question, even though you are entitled to read *any* proposal funded with federal money.)