A PLAYBOOK ON OBTAINING FUNDING TO ARCHIVE A PROMINENT LONGITUDINAL STUDY (US CENTRIC)

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HOW DID IT BEGIN?

- National Institutes of Health Funding Opportunity Announcement RFA-AG-12-005, August 3, 2011 (R03, small grant program)
- NIA appropriate $800K in FY 2012
  - Secondary analysis of data on aging in the area of psychology, behavioral genetics, economics, demography
  - Archiving and dissemination of data sets to enable secondary analyses in order to further advance research
What Study to Archive?

- NIH/NIA Publicly Available Databases for Aging-Related Secondary Analyses in the Behavior and Social Sciences (PADS_Rev6111)
  - The National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH) was in that list.
  - NSFH was funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) and the National Institute on Aging (NIA). Three waves of surveys were conducted in 1987-1988, 1992-1994 and 2001-2003.
  - According to ICPSR’s Related Literature Database (http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/biblio/series/00193/resources?sortBy=1), 1,093 scholarly publications have used NSFH data since the late 80s.
WHO WILL BE THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR?

- PI is one of the criteria that reviewers will score.
- Name recognition is a must.
  - NSFH Principal Investigators or
  - CDHA Director or
  - CDE Director
What Are the Format, Layout and Required Sections for This Proposal?

- Required and Optional Components
- Page Limitations for R03:
  - Introduction (1)
  - Specific Aims (1)
  - Research Strategy (6)
  - Commercialization Plan (12) and
  - Biographic Sketch (4)
- Due Date: November 3, 2011, by 5:00 PM local time of applicant organization
On November 14, less than two weeks after our proposal was submitted, we received an email from the NIA program officer.

“I am administering RFA-AG-12-005 on behalf of NIA to which you have submitted the aforementioned application. The RFA requested applications with one year budget, but your application was submitted with budget for 2 years, thus it cannot be reviewed with applications submitted for the RFA.”

Our proposal was disqualified due to an budget oversight.
WHAT ARE OUR OPTIONS?

1. Transfer the application to the regular R03 study section where it can be reviewed
2. Withdraw the application
3. Act Two:
   
   In February of 2012 we submitted our proposal to FOA-PA-11-262
   (http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-11-262.html), an ongoing NIH small research grant (R03) program. It accepts proposals three times a year in February, June and October.
The Scientific Review Group (SRG) committee will conduct a preliminary review on all proposals. At that point proposals are sorted into top 50% and bottom 50%. The top 50% go on to be "scored" by the review committee.

- An overall impact/priority score is assigned to reflect reviewers’ assessment on the proposal.
- A score of 1-9 is given to each of these criteria. 1 is excellent and 9 is poor.
  - Significance
  - Investigator(s)
  - Innovation
  - Approach
  - Environment
What Is Our Final Score?

We received Impact/Priority Score of 25 and ranked in the top 22%.

Scores given by three reviewers:
- Significance: 2, 3, 3
- Investigator(s): 2, 1, 2
- Innovation: 4, 3, 3
- Approach: 2, 3, 4
- Environment: 1, 1, 3
WHAT DID THE REVIEWERS SAY?

“The proposed project would have a high impact because creating a data and documentation resource for a widely-used dataset would be a very valuable service to the field. The reviewers agreed that, overall, the strengths of this application and the potential for a public good outweigh the weaknesses.”
WHAT LESSONS HAVE WE LEARNED?

- First grant proposal almost always never receives funding.
- The written critique/summary statement from the review panel is informative and encouraging.
- Technical errors could be made by experienced administrative staff when they are in auto pilot mode.
SHALL WE TRY AGAIN?


- NIH components intend to commit an estimated total of $1,000,000 for FY 2013 (NIA commits $800,000 and Office of Research on Women’s Health (ORWH) commits $200,000).

- A letter of intent is due on 9/3/12 and application is due on 10/19/12.
METAMORPHOSIS OF THE OLD PROPOSAL

- Specific Aims were broken down to bullet points to make them more readable and easy to follow.
- Budget was changed from two years to one year.
- Approach and method were reorganized to improve narrative and relevancy.
- Protection for restricted geo-code files was explained specifically.
- Strengths were amplified and weaknesses were addressed.
WHAT HAPPENED ON THESE DATES?

- Proposal was submitted on October 18, 2012.
- It was assigned to study section on October 26.
- We received an impact/priority score of 19 on February 3, 2013. It did not include ranking.
- NIA sent a Just-In-Time request for an IRB review on February 27.
- A summary statement for R03 AG045503-01 was sent to PI on March 8.
- UW-Madison IRB issued a certificate indicating that “IRB review is not required because, in accordance with federal regulations, your project does not: constitute research as defined under 45 CFR 46.102 (d).” on April 10.
THIRD TIME IS THE CHARM

- RFA-AG-12-005 ($800,000) awarded 10 projects and 3 are for archiving and dissemination of data sets to enable secondary analyses in order to further advance research.
- RFA-AG-13-004 ($1,000,000) awarded 15 projects and 4 are for archiving and dissemination of data sets to enable secondary analyses.
- Approximately 30% of these two RFAs funding was given to archiving and dissemination of data sets.
WHAT ARE THE TASKS WE PROPOSED TO DO?

- Examine and evaluate 631 files at the NSFH project website. Specific data and document files essential to the three waves of NSFH study will be selected for preservation.
- Save all three waves of data files in ASCII format and create SAS and SPSS programming statement files to read in these data files. To facilitate longitudinal analyses of NSFH data, additional setup files in SAS and SPSS will be created to show users how to merge data from all three waves. Finally all three waves of documentation files will be saved in ASCII text, and PDF formats.
- Create metadata documents down to the variable level. These documents will be in compliance with Data Documentation Initiative (DDI)-codebook standard.
- Create questionnaires and skip maps for wave 3 from the CATI system used to conducted wave 3 interviews.
- Collaborate with the UW-Madison Survey Center and the Applied Population Laboratory to create a geo-coded file for wave 3.
WHAT ARE THE TASKS WE PROPOSED TO DO?

- Review disclosure risk carefully on the NSFH geo-coded files and arrange to deposit these geo-coded files as a restricted dataset at ICPSR.
- Expand FAQs to provide quick tips to new NSFH researchers.
- Create descriptive documents in Microsoft Word to accompany three waves of NSFH study, so the receiving archives can use them to create NSFH study records in their holdings.
- Deposit public-use NSFH studies in publicly-accessible archives like the National Archive of Computerized Data on Aging (NACDA), the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) and the Data and Information Services Center (DISC) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
NOW THE WORK HAS BEGUN

We are now working on all the tasks described in our proposal. We can extend the end date by requesting a 12 month no-cost extension if we need more time. We are required to prepare a final report at the time of grant close-out which will be 8/31/15 if we extend our project for one year.
WHAT DO WE TAKE AWAY FROM THIS EXPERIENCE?

- Getting a grant funded is longer than giving a birth: 9/29/11 to 11/14/11, 2/10/12 to 6/14/12 and 8/29/12- 8/22/13.
- Patience and perseverance will carry you through.
- Get a prominent faculty member to be the PI.
- Have a significant dataset and innovative ideas to share it.
- Follow the requirements and guidelines religiously.
- Communication is the key.
EVERYONE CAN WRITE A GRANT PROPOSAL EVEN THOUGH YOU CAN NOT BE THE PI

There are many types of grants issued by the federal government. Here are some from the NIH (http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/funding_program.htm)

- Research Grants (R series)
- Career Development Awards (K series)
- Research Training and Fellowships (T & F series)
- Program Project/Center Grants (P series)

Writing a grant proposal is a process of collaboration and an opportunity for professional growth.