Some tips on how to start the grant writing process

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1. **Have a clear, concise, and specific idea of your project**
   a. What is the scope of your project?
   b. What are the methods for your project?
   c. What is/are the objective(s) of your project?
   d. Who is your audience?
   e. Who will be involved in creating/building/completing your project?
   f. What resources do you need?
   g. How, exactly, do you intend to spend grant funds?
      i. Salary for yourself (PI/Co-PI)?
      ii. Salary for staff?
      iii. Salary for students?
      iv. Equipment/software/physical items?
      v. Rental of space/purchase of services?
      vi. Other?
   h. Do you intend to sell your project and/or charge people to attend (in the case of an event)?
   i. What is your Data Management Plan?
      i. Do you have data?
      ii. How much and of what type?
      iii. Have you secured server storage space?
      iv. How will you maintain and sustain that data?
   j. Do you have a prototype of your project (initial findings, small study, and/or work sample)?

2. **Identify the person/people writing the grant**
   a. Will you submit the grant as an individual?
   b. Will you submit the grant on behalf of an organization (inside or outside of UND)?
   c. Will you be submitting as a solo PI?
   d. Will you be submitting as a co-PI?
      i. Are you and your co-Pi(s) at the same institution in the same college?
      ii. Are you and your co-Pi(s) at the same institution in difference colleges/units?
      iii. Are you and your co-Pi(s) at different institutions?
      iv. If you are not at the same institution and same college, have you worked out an agreement in regards to work/resource commitment/expectations/responsibilities, cost match (in-kind or cash) and/or the division of indirects (aka F&A), if the grant allows them? (Note, this may involve conversations with Deans or others to work out memos of understanding)

3. Researching Granting opportunities
   a. Are you eligible to apply?
      i. Read the grant guidelines to find out who will be considered for this grant.
      ii. Note that if you plan to sell your project/research and/or charge for admission to events, you may not be eligible for some grants.
      iii. Pay close attention to whether or not this grant is for individuals or (non-profit) organizations (UND is a non-profit organization and can serve as an umbrella organization to other organizations on campus, but pay close attention to see if institutions of higher education are eligible or not).
      iv. Also note that there may geographical/population restrictions (GFK is, technically, a metropolitan statistical area, which means that organizations might not qualify for some "rural" grants).
      v. If you aren't among those eligible to apply, your application won't be considered.

   b. Are the expenditures that you have in mind (as noted above) allowable?
      i. Read the grant guidelines on eligible and ineligible expenditures.
      ii. If the expenditures aren't allowable, your application won't be considered.

   c. What are the priorities/types of projects/special initiatives/general guidelines for the projects that will be considered?
      i. Read the grant guidelines, notice of funding opportunity carefully, and related website materials carefully.
      ii. If your project does not fit within the agency's guidelines, mission, and/or priorities, your application won't be considered.

   d. What is the maximum/minimum amount of the award?
      i. If your desired amount is beyond the maximum allowed, adjust your budget accordingly.
      ii. If the amount that you need is below the minimum needed, find a different grant that fits your project needs better.

   e. What is the stated cost-sharing/cost match requirement?
      i. UND's policy, last I checked, was to follow the minimum cost-share requirement. This means that if there isn't a required cost-match, UND will not authorize a cost-share (and that may make your application less competitive)
      ii. Do you have the resources (either in cash or in-kind) to meet the cost match?
         1. Note, cost match funds cannot be "double dipped" (the same cash used for one grant cannot be used on another, the same goes for percentage of salary, etc.), so keep that in mind if you are applying for multiple grants.

          iii. If you do not have the cost match, you'll need to wait until you do to submit your grant application.

   f. Is there a limit to the number of applications that can be submitted from UND?
          i. Check to see if your proposal will be selected by UND as one of the representative applications.

   g. What is the process?
          i. Is there a letter of inquiry?
          ii. Is there a letter of intent to apply?
          iii. Is there an initial proposal?
          iv. What does the application require?
              1. When is the deadline? (Must be met, no exceptions)
              2. What is the page/character limit?
              3. Does it require letters of support?
              4. Does it require a work sample?

4. **Writing your grant**
   a. Follow the process/procedures of the granting agency **exactly**
          i. When completing the grant application, pay close attention to the details, if they specify number of pages/words, margins, spacing, font type & size, if it isn't to their requirements, the application will not be considered.
          ii. If you miss the deadlines, your grant application will not be considered.

   b. Tailor your grant narrative to the mission/initiatives/guidelines of the granting agency (THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT).
          i. For example, if you are applying to a state agency whose mission is to serve the people of ND and your narrative focuses primarily on how your project will benefit UND or GFK, your grant application will not be competitive.
          ii. Or, another example, if your project is focused on education/outreach (middle school through post-secondary), the granting agency is focused on k-12 initiatives, and your narrative focuses exclusively on benefits to the college students, your grant application will not be competitive.

   c. Generally speaking, write your grant in clear, concise language that effectively communicates your project to an audience outside of your specific field or discipline (aka avoid field specific jargon/language).
          i. While some reviewers may be in your general field, this is not always the case, so keep that in mind as you write.

d. Carefully calculate your budget following all of the guidelines of the granting agency (only including eligible expenditures) and the policies of UND.
   i. Meet with your grants officer before or while writing your budget to ask questions/get help, this will help smooth the internal transmission/approval process.

e. If your grant application requires letters of support, be sure to get commitments for those letters well in advance of the deadline and be sure to send the grant guidelines to the letter writers, who can then tailor their letters to the opportunity to which you are applying.

f. If your project requires IRB approval or some other legal documents (contracts, IP, copyright, whatever), be sure that you have those in hand and/or a process/timeline to get what is necessary in time for the application and/or award.

g. Have someone else (or a couple of people) read a draft of your application narrative (even better if they have no knowledge of your field/project, because that will let you know whether or not your are communicating your ideas effectively)

h. Complete your grant application (including assembling all of the necessary supplementary documents) at least a week (preferably 2) before the deadline so that you can get your grant application through the internal transmittal process.
   i. Fill out basic information of Internal Transmittal Form (available here: http://und.edu/research/resources/all-forms.cfm)
   ii. Get necessary signatures: dept. chair, dean, dean of grad studies (if grad students involved), grants & contracts officer, and RD&C.
   iii. Note how the grant is submitted: for example, if it is electronically through grants.gov, you will need to have Barry Milavetz or David Schmidt submit the grant, as they are those authorized to do so at UND.

i. And, again: DO NOT MISS THE DEADLINE: IF YOU ARE LATE, YOUR GRANT APPLICATION WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED, NO EXCEPTIONS.