

### MITT Committee's Top Ten Tips for Preparing Successful Grant Applications

1. Choose a grant to apply for. This list is a good starting point, but also be sure to ask your mentor what grants he/she (and his/her prior trainees) have had success with.
2. Read the RFA for the grant that you plan to apply for. This will ensure that you are applying for a grant that is a good fit for you (and your project) and will help you tailor your proposal to what they are looking for.
3. Start early! Preparing a strong grant application takes time (usually in the range of months). This time will allow you to get multiple rounds of edits incorporated into your proposal to improve the quality of your submission.
4. Pay attention to details (grammar, formatting, figure legends etc.). The little things make a big difference when it comes to ensuring that your grant appears professional.
5. Spend a LOT of time and effort on the specific aims page. Just like the abstract of a manuscript, the specific aims page is the first impression for your grant. Make sure this section is clear, concise, and interest-catching.
6. Make sure that the amount of work that you are proposing is appropriate for the amount of time and financial support that the grant allows.
7. Do not blow off the "training plan" section. Particularly for trainee and early career investigator grants, the training plan is weighted very heavily. At this stage in your career, funding agencies are just as interested in training excellent scientists as they are in your particular project. The training plan should be specific and include details (what course work you plan to take, how you are planning to learn the techniques required for your project, where you plan to present your work etc.).
8. Ensure that you have strong mentorship. In the early career stage, this frequently involves co-mentorship. For example, if your primary mentor is early in his/her career, you may need to involve a more senior co-mentor with a track-record of having successful trainees. Similarly, if your grant relies on techniques or expertise that your primary mentor does not have, it is a good idea to have a co-mentor with that expertise.
9. Ask colleagues to review your grant. Some institutions have grant writing workshops and courses where participants can peer review each other's grants prior to submission. If parts of the grant are not clear to your peers and mentors, it is very likely that the reviewers will have similar difficulty understanding your proposal.
10. Don't give up! Every successful scientist has numerous stories of grant rejection. In fact, the majority of grants do not get funded on the first submission and it is very common to have to re-submit. Look at the reviewer's comments with an open mind and try to use them to improve your re-submission.

The NIH has also prepared the following resources to assist with grant preparation, which we recommend that you review in preparation for submitting your first grant.

<https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grants-contracts/prepare-your-application>

<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/ep/Tutorial.html>

<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/format-and-write/write-your-application.htm>

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/funding/grant-writing-and-application-process/grant-writing-tips.shtml>