

Proposal Development Tools and Guides

A complete proposal for a sponsored program typically has the following sections:

1. The **Cover or Title Page** containing the following information:
 - PD/PI's name, address, phone number
 - Title of proposal
 - Sponsor name and address
 - Period of performance with start and end dates
 - Amount requested
 - Submission date
 - Signature of PD/PI
 - Signature of institution's Authorized Official
2. **Introduction:** This section typically establishes the context for your proposal. This is often the place where you set up the credibility of the PD/PI(s) and the institution. (For boiler-plate paragraphs on Lincoln, please see below or contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at osp@lincoln.edu for assistance.) The majority of your proposal will be discussing your research/project, but this is your opportunity to convince the funders that YOU are the best person to conduct this research and/or implement this project and that LINCOLN is the best place for this to happen.
3. **Need or Problem:** This section typically provides support for your research/project. You must identify that a need exists to complete the activities listed in your proposal. It is best if you can establish this need with scholarly/researched evidence and/or data. Provide general background of how the project relates to previous and current research.
4. **Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes:** This section typically follows the "Need or Problem" section seamlessly. In the previous section, you've identified a gap that needs filling. Now you will begin to explain to the funders how you will fill that gap. This section will focus more specifically on the types of information or the outcomes you hope to achieve with your project.
5. **Methods/Statement of Work:** This section typically follows the "Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes" section in that this is the opportunity for you to explain how you will carry-out your research/project. Remember that funders want specific details, and it is generally the case that unsuccessful proposals are not funded because the proposal was not clear as to how the activities will be carried out. Describe very clearly how the work will be done, where it will be done and who will do the work. Provide a project activities timeline/table.
6. **Evaluation:** This section documents your plans for evaluating the success of your project/research. We are all very aware of the importance of assessing student learning; the same holds true for assessing sponsored programs. Funders want to make sure that you can offer tangible evidence for the outcomes of your project. Some funding announcements ask for very specific details related to program evaluation, including a detailed assessment plan, draft evaluation form, and methods for analyzing the data.
7. **Dissemination:** This section links with the "Evaluation" section in that this is the place where you explain how/where you will disseminate the results of your evaluation.

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8. **Project staff:** This section lists the personnel who will be working on your project. Even if they are not being paid by the grant (or receiving time and effort) they still need to be discussed in the proposal. This is your opportunity to explain why the staff members are qualified (usually completed with a brief bio-sketch). You want to make sure that there is a sufficient staff—and that they are of an appropriate rank—to support the project.
9. **Budget and Budget Narrative:** The budget is the financial expression of the project should be an excel spreadsheet where you propose the funds used to carry out the project. Often, the funders will provide you with a template budget spreadsheet, which explains how you should categorize the items. Please pay special attention to this section of the funding announcement! If funders will not allow certain types of expenses, they will be clear about this in the funding announcement. However, you must also be aware that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) have put out a series of circulars which clearly explain what the government will pay for and what they won't. Consult ORSP to ensure that you are following Lincoln's and the government's guidelines when building your budget. The budget narrative is your descriptive explanation of your budget. This is where you will describe the PD/PI's time and effort, for example, or the specific equipment you will purchase.
10. **Bibliography:** list all references cited in the proposal.
11. **Additional Information.** May consist of the following:
 - Current and pending support. The sponsor may require a listing of the PD/PI's (and sometimes key personnel's) current awards and pending proposals.
 - Letters of support from non- Lincoln investigators may also be required.
 - Sub-award documentation: If the proposal involves collaboration with investigators at other entities, detailed information about the sub-recipient should be included in the proposal. Documentation would normally include the sub-recipient's scope of work and detailed budget, and the institutional approval from the sub-recipient organization's Authorized Official.
 - Description of current facilities
 - Table of Contents (if required by sponsor guidelines)
 - Certifications and representations required by federal sponsors

It's important to note that these sections are not always identified as such in a proposal. A Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) may ask for your proposal to include 4 sections: Executive Summary, Goals, Project Activities, and Project Staff. The budget and budget narrative may be another part of the application separate from the proposal. Every FAO is unique, and it's imperative that you follow the funder's instructions, while remembering that they will require the above pieces of information in some form in your application. **Consult with ORSP to learn about the best way to structure your proposal if you are unsure.**

Online Proposal Writing Tools

- [National Science Foundation Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide](#)
- [NIH Grant Writing Tips Sheet](#)
- [NIH Tips for New NIH Investigators](#)
- [National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases \(NIAID\) Funding Page](#) is an excellent resource for all NIH applicants
- [Guide for Writing a Funding Proposal](#) by S. Joseph Levine, Ph.D., Michigan State University – helpful hints and examples for major sections of a proposal; includes useful links to other proposal-writing sources
- [Albert Einstein College of Medicine's Grantsmanship Tutorial](#) – described as a quick, no-nonsense guide that most faculty investigators, regardless of discipline, would find useful
- [Jacob Kraicer: The Art of Grantsmanship](#)
- [The Foundation Center: Proposal Writing Short Course](#)

The Lincoln University Boilerplate

The Lincoln University was founded in 1854, making it the nation's first degree-granting Historically Black College or University. Located forty-five miles southwest of Philadelphia, the University serves about two thousand undergraduate students, with an additional five hundred students in its graduate programs. The story of Lincoln University goes back to the early years of the nineteenth century and to the ancestors of its founder, John Miller Dickey, and his wife, Sarah Emlen Cresson, when they founded the school as the Ashman Institute and set as one of their original purposes the training of young missionaries for service in Africa. Consequently, the three members of the first graduating class of 1859 went to serve in Liberia. The Institute was renamed Lincoln University in 1866 after President Abraham Lincoln. Since its inception, Lincoln has attracted an interracial and international enrollment from the surrounding community, region, and around the world. The University admitted women students in 1952, and formally associated with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1972 as a state-related, coeducational university.

During the first one hundred years of its existence, The Lincoln University graduated approximately 20 percent of the Black physicians and more than 10 percent of the Black attorneys in the United States. Its alumni have headed 35 colleges and universities and scores of prominent churches. At least, 10 of its alumni have served as United States ambassadors or mission chiefs. Many are federal, state and municipal judges and several have served as mayors or city managers. Some of the alumni from this impressive list include: U.S. Supreme Court Justice, Thurgood Marshall; Harlem Renaissance poet, Langston Hughes; musical legend, Cab Calloway; song artist and activist, Gil Scott-Heron; Tony Award winning actor, Roscoe Lee Browne; and architect of the debate team portrayed in the film, *The Great Debaters*, Melvin B. Tolson; and Founder of Crossroads Africa, which served as the model for the Peace Corps, Rev. James Robinson; the First President of Independent country of Nigeria, Nnamdi Azikiwe; First President of the Independent country of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah.