

INTRODUCTION

The Grants Development Office has developed this handbook to help faculty, staff, and students of Mansfield University obtain external funding for research, equipment, faculty projects, program development, conferences, and related projects. The office provides information regarding policies and procedures guiding the application process and the subsequent managing of funds. This handbook is a work in progress, therefore sections will change as rules and regulations change.

The staff at the Grants Development Office is available to answer any questions for those who are interested in seeking external funding. Please feel free to contact us about your funding ideas or needs.

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Director of Grants Development
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WHAT IS A SPONSORED PROGRAM?

“Sponsored Programs” are those projects or programs that are conducted by faculty, staff, or students that are supported in whole or in part by externally restricted funds awarded to the university. Sponsored programs may involve research, instruction, or service. In all sponsored programs, Mansfield University has obligations to the funding agency in accordance with the stipulations of the proposal or agreement. Although the award is made on the basis of an individual proposal, the university, as its formal recipient, assumes programmatic and fiscal accountability for the project. For this reason, internal review and approval are required prior to submitting any proposals to external agencies.

All grants and sponsored programs are processed through the Grants Development Office. The Grants Accountant assists in monitoring all grant-related expenditures to ensure oversight and compliance; however it is the project director’s responsibility to adhere to university and funding agency guidelines.

RELATED POLICIES

The following Mansfield University policies may affect the conduct of sponsored activities.

[Conflict of Interest](#)
[Technology Transfer](#)
[Research Misconduct](#)
[Protection of Human Subjects](#)
[Export Control](#)

ROLE OF THE GRANTS DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

The Grants Office serves as a centralized location for all matters related to external funding for university projects. It serves as a facilitator in helping faculty and staff secure external funding from any

source – federal, state, or private foundations. The Grants Office also supports the project once funding is awarded. It is the responsibility of the Grants Office to assure that all agency guidelines and university policies are followed. The following are a list of some of the services that the Grants Office provides:

- Maintaining and disseminating information about funding opportunities.
- Locating potential funding sources upon request from faculty or staff.
- Providing resource materials on proposal writing.
- Presenting workshops on proposal writing and related topics.
- Working with the University Legal Counsel to finalize grant award contracts, agreements, and memorandums of understanding.
- Contacting funding agencies about proposed projects.
- Working with Project Directors/Principal Investigators to develop proposals.
- Helping complete federal and state forms.
- Providing information about university policies, procedures, and agreements with federal agencies.
- Assisting with the preparation and review of draft proposals and budgets.
- Verifying all matching or cost-sharing agreements.
- Coordinating the internal review and endorsement process.
- Providing supporting documentation (e.g. financial statements, proof of non-profit status), ensuring that all required forms and information are present, and submitting proposals to funding agencies.
- Assisting with proposal revisions and budget negotiations if necessary.
- Requesting reviewers' comments and reasons for non-funding.
- Assisting with the preparation and submission of final reports.
- Facilitating access to FastLane, grants.gov, and other electronic grant application portals.

GRANT DEVELOPMENT, PREPARATION, AND SUBMISSION

Anyone with an idea that may have potential for external funding is encouraged to contact the Grants Development Office to discuss their project. Ideas for proposed projects should also be discussed with your department chair and Dean to verify that the planned activities will:

- Be consistent with Mansfield University's mission, values, strategic plan and the State System of Higher Education.
- Contribute to scholarship and knowledge.
- Comply with all University, federal, state, local government, and granting agency regulations, policies, directives, etc. pertaining to, but not limited to, the following:
 1. Collective bargaining agreements
 2. Affirmative action and equal opportunity
 3. Civil Rights Compliance
 4. Protection of human subjects
 5. Protection of animal welfare
 6. Copyrights, patents, royalties
 7. Property rights
 8. Use of hazardous materials
 9. Matching funds or cost-sharing

Initial Contact with Funding Agencies

Faculty and staff are encouraged to make preliminary contact with prospective grantors in order to verify congruence with the funders' granting priorities, to obtain grant guidelines, or to discuss possible projects. Contact can be made by telephone, email, letter of inquiry, or preliminary proposal. Please send informational copies of any query letters or preliminary proposals to the Grants Development Office. **Please note that you may not commit or bind the university in any way, or enter into any formal agreement, without the express authorization of the President or her designated representative. The University President and Provost are the only individuals authorized to sign grants or proposals on behalf of the University.**

FINDING FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The university subscribes to InfoEd SpinPlus, a searchable database of government and private funding opportunities. It can be accessed from any on campus computer on the [Mansfield University Grants Development Website](#). SpinPlus can also email relevant opportunities to Project Investigator's based on their research interests. Please contact the Grants Development Office for information on how to establish a GENIUS account.

PROPOSAL FORMAT

The format of your proposal is usually specified under the sponsor's guidelines. Investigators should request a copy of the application kit or grant guidelines and the most recent annual report from the sponsor if they are not available online. The guidelines identify eligibility requirements, funding levels, application procedures, evaluation criteria, and deadlines. The guidelines provide specific instructions and should be followed **exactly**. The Grants Development Office can help you be sure that you have got the details right.

Your proposal must convince the reviewers of your capability to offer something that will contribute significantly to their program. Therefore, your idea must be clearly developed with measurable outcomes in an area of need identified by the agency. You must provide a clear picture of why your project is important, what goals you are trying to achieve, and how you plan to achieve them.

Accurate and timely data to describe the institution and to document the need for proposed research project or program are essential elements of competitive proposals. Factual information that describes the organization, mission, and characteristics of Mansfield University and its students are available from the Grants Development Office.

Successful applications are readable, contain an appropriate budget, are supported by documentation, clearly explain the proposed activities, and are proofread before submission. Please allow ample time to complete your proposal and submit it to the Director of Grants Development for internal review.

Proposals generally include an abstract, statement of problem, goals/objectives, plan of operation, evaluation, budget, and dissemination plan. The **abstract** is generally a one-page summary of the project that should provide a concise overview of the project and grab the attention of the reviewers. Within the **problem statement**, you must present a clear picture of why your project is important, what

goals you are trying to achieve, and how you plan to achieve them. The **objectives** must be stated in measurable terms specifying what you will accomplish through your project. While goals establish the overall direction for the project, objectives are the measurable activities. The **plan of action** describes the procedures or activities for carrying out the stated objectives and is the outline for achieving your program goals. If the objectives are clearly written to describe outcomes, the procedures should flow systematically. The plan of action should clearly describe to the reviewers the *who, what, where, and how* information concerning the project.

Funding agencies will also require a plan to evaluate the proposed activity. **Evaluation** plans must be developed in concert with writing the program objectives. Clearly written objectives can provide criteria with which to determine success. The evaluation plan must detail the type of information to be collected, how the data will be analyzed, and how it will be reported.

Most funding agencies will also require a **dissemination** plan. Agency staff must consider a larger audience and will want to share their data and information with as many people as they can. A dissemination plan should include what information will be disseminated, in what format, and in what numbers.

Please submit proposals to the Grants Development Office at least 10 business days prior to the deadline to allow enough time for internal review and to obtain the required signatures. **All proposals must be submitted through the Grants Development Office.**

A [Proposal Routing Form](#) must be completed and sent to the Grants development Office with your proposal.

BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

Research and program costs typically include two categories of expenses: **direct costs** (such as personnel, equipment, travel, and supplies) needed to carry out the project, and **indirect costs** which reflect very real but less visible overhead costs (such as building maintenance, utilities, computer services, administrative support, and accounting) to the University of supporting research and grant sponsored programs. Some grant funding agencies do not award indirect costs, or limit the amount of indirect costs. Except in cases where indirect costs are not awarded by the funding agency, all funding requests should include both direct and indirect costs.

DIRECT COSTS

Salaries and Wages: List professional staff, starting with the project director/principal investigator; staff, graduate students, undergraduate student employees, and part-time workers respectively. In all cases, estimate how much time will be needed to carry out the project successfully and how much time each person will actually commit to the project. If the proposal is for more than one year, salary increases should be reflected in the budget. Please remember to include fringe benefit costs in your budget proposal.

During the academic year, faculty salaries are based on the percentage of release time required to perform the grant-funded responsibilities. During the summer, the salaries are based on the number of summer credits (up to 12 total) per summer (not per session) to be paid by the grant, or the grant can

pay a reasonable stipend. Grant funds cannot be used for overload. It is important to keep in mind that the PASSHE Compensation Policy for Sponsored Activities details the maximum amount of compensation that may be paid to faculty members or other PASSHE employees who perform sponsored activities covered by a federal grant, a state grant, a contract, or a similar agreement.

Fringe Benefits: To calculate or estimate your fringe benefits for a proposal, multiple the salary by the appropriate fringe benefit rate, or contact the Grants Development Office for assistance.

Consultants: A consultant is an expert who is not an employee of the University and is hired at an hourly (or per diem) rate, without benefits, to provide some service related to the grant project. When hiring a consultant, there must be a written agreement specifying the specific work to be performed, the number of hours the person will work, the rate of pay and the expected date(s) or term of the contract.

Supplies: Supplies include any items costing less than \$5,000 that are needed to complete the project. Individual grants may specify a different dollar cut-off for the designation of supplies versus equipment.

Equipment: Many funding agencies will not pay for capital equipment. Some funders that do not permit the purchase of equipment *will* permit the lease of equipment. Be sure to read the funding guidelines carefully. Please keep in mind that all expenditures in excess of \$19,100 must be competitively bid and expenditures between \$10,300 and \$19,100 require three informal quotes. The [Purchasing Office](#) is the only department authorized to issue an invitation for bids or quotes.

Travel: Identify travel for University personnel only. Indicate the destination, duration, and purpose of the trip. Include transportation, registration fees (if appropriate), lodging, meals, car rental, parking, and other expenses. If a personal or university owned vehicle is to be used for travel, indicate the number of miles that will be traveled and calculate the anticipated cost using the current University mileage reimbursement rate. Please see the [Travel](#) website for the current mileage reimbursement rate and travel policies. Please keep in mind that international travel may require that additional procedures be followed in order to be compliant with [Export Control](#) laws.

Subcontracts: If any of the work is to be completed by another institution or company, identify the organization by name and indicate the total anticipated cost. The subcontractor must provide a letter of intent indicating the willingness of the organization to enter into a subcontract with the university.

Other: This category covers any allowable expenses necessary for the completion of the project.

The most important thing to remember regarding costs is that the funding agency is looking to ensure that your costs are reasonable. You will be required to include a **budget narrative** or **budget justification** where you can clearly and concisely describe how you arrived at the costs listed in your budget.

INDIRECT COSTS

Indirect costs are expenses incurred in conducting or supporting research or other externally funded activities that are not directly attributable to a specific project. General categories of indirect costs include general administration (accounting, payroll, purchasing, etc.), sponsored project administration,

facility operation and maintenance, library expenses, departmental administration expenses, depreciation or use allowance for buildings and equipment, and utilities.

Indirect costs are calculated at the University-approved rate (federally negotiated), unless restricted by the funding agency guidelines (some grant funders will not award indirect costs, or limit them to a specified percentage of direct costs). **Indirect costs may not be waived without the express approval from the President or Provost.** To determine the appropriate indirect costs to be budgeted, multiply the current indirect cost rate by the total salaries and wages.

Cost Sharing/Matching Funds: Some agencies and foundations require the university to demonstrate its commitment to a project by sharing the total cost of the project. Two kinds of matching funds exist:

- Cash Matching Funds (also known as hard match) is any actual cash outlay from sources other than the grantor used to purchase merchandise, university services, or pay personnel costs directly attributable to the grant.
- Soft Match (also known as in-kind contribution) refers to services, use of departmental supplies, use of office or classroom space, computers services, personnel costs in service areas, equipment usage, and the like that will be furnished by the university to specifically support the grant project.

INTERNAL REVIEW

Although grant awards are made on the basis of proposals written by faculty or staff for projects directed by project directors, the university, as the formal recipient of all grants, assumes programmatic and fiscal accountability for all projects. Only the President or his/her designee has the authority to sign a grant proposal on behalf of the university. Therefore, internal review and approval are required prior to submitting and proposals to external agencies. An internal review form is circulated through the approval channels for this purpose. The process of internal review, which will be coordinated by the Grants Development Office, takes at least five business days. Earlier submission is needed for large proposals or those that require a university match or release time.

MANAGEMENT OF GRANT AWARDS

Most award documents require review by the University Legal Counsel and the Vice President for Finance and Administration. Under no circumstances does the project director have the legal authority to accept an award on behalf of the university. Contracts and agreements may only be entered into by officials who have signatory authority. Work on a sponsored project may not begin until the contract or agreement has been deemed a **fully-executed contract**, which is one that has been reviewed and signed by all required parties.

It is important for the project director/principal investigator to have a thorough understanding of the fiscal terms and conditions of their grants, as well as the report requirements. The Grants Accountant, [Renee Potter](#), can help the project director understand the fiscal terms and conditions of the grant/contract award and the procedures for processing expenditures and requests for payment. When

scheduled fiscal reports are required by the funding agency, they must be validated by and submitted through the Grants Accountant.

All grants have a budget, and upon award of a grant, the approved budget becomes the official spending plan. The budget categories and expenditure patterns permit deviation only to the extent noted either in the grant guidelines or as subsequently authorized in writing by the granting agency. The university faculty or staff member designated as the principal investigator or project director is responsible for carrying out the aims of the project and for complying with applicable rules for financial and program administration.

Once a proposal has been funded, the following steps are followed in order to expend the funds:

- The contract, letter of understanding, memorandum of understanding must be signed by a university official with signatory authority, generally the President or Vice President for Finance and Administration. Other signatures, including University Legal Counsel, may be required.
- Each funded grant/contract will be assigned a SAP account number by the Grants Accountant to track expenditures.
- Expenditure requests are coordinated by the PI/PD with the Grant Accountant. The expenditures of budget line items must conform to the original intent of the grant/contract award. PD/PI must maintain documentation for auditing purposes.
- All expenditures must occur during the project dates approved by the funding agency according to the approved budget line items and the schedule of activities outlined in the proposal narrative.
- All expenditures must be in accordance with University, state, and federal guidelines in effect during the granting/contracting period and with any special terms and conditions imposed by the funding agency.
- Any change to the distribution of the awarded funds must conform to the policies of the funding agency and the University. Budget revisions that require prior approval by the funding agency must be processed through the Grants Office and approved by the funding agency.
- Equipment purchases, rentals, and maintenance agreements under grants/contracts must be coordinated through the business office. (Equipment is identified as any asset costing over \$5,000 or greater, not to include consumables). Ample time must be allowed for any bid requirements. It must be clearly written in the contract or grant proposal as to whether any equipment purchased through a grant/contract is to be retained by the University or returned to the grantor/contractor at the end of the funding period. Arrangements for maintenance agreements should also be considered as part of the budget when grant funds are to be used for equipment purchases or rentals.
- Under certain conditions, funding agencies allow a project extension beyond the approved project period if no additional funds are required. Most funding agencies require a request for extension 45 days prior to the termination date of the grant. Unless an extension is authorized, the grant will be closed on the date specified on the grant contract and the Grants Accountant will refund any balances of unobligated funds to the funding agency. If an extension is requested and/or awarded, the Grant Accountant must be sent a copy of documentation.

ROLE OF THE GRANTS ACCOUNTANT

In accordance with the requirements of the funding agency, the Grants Accountant will:

- Prepare required financial reports.
- Invoice the funding agency.
- Participate in the close-out process.
- Coordinate any financial audits required by the funding agency.
- Monitor expenditures for compliance with the original budget.

WHO SHOULD I CALL...

If I need help finding **grant sources** or **preparing a proposal**:

Anne Loudenslager, Director of Grants Development
662-4809 aloudens@mansfield.edu

If I need information about the **financial management** of my grant budget:

Renee Potter, Grants Accountant
662-4869 rpotter@mansfield.edu

If I plan to include **human subjects** in my research:

Anne Loudenslager, Director of Grants Development
662-4809 aloudens@mansfield.edu

If I plan to use **animals** in my research:

Anne Loudenslager, Director of Grants Development
662-4809 aloudens@mansfield.edu

If my grant includes a **temporary grant-funded employee**:

Billie Sue Morgan, Human Resources
662-4050 bsmorgan@mansfield.edu

If I need current **reimbursement rates** for mileage, lodging, meals, or other travel related expenses:

Connie Black, Accounting
662-4884 cblack@mansfield.edu

If my grant includes equipment that needs to be **competitively bid**:

Jason Welch, Purchasing
662-4148 jewelch@mansfield.edu