

# KNOWLEDGE ARTICLES ABOUT FUNDING MECHANISMS

EMERGE knowledge articles are designed to answer frequently asked questions and help investigators troubleshoot common problems. They are written in plain language and designed to be a how-to guide, providing practical guidance that research development (RD) professionals would give to investigators at their home institutions. Look for the “RD Says” boxes to learn more about their perspectives and successful strategies.

EMERGE knowledge articles about funding mechanisms equip investigators with fundamental competitive intelligence and help them understand and respond to funding solicitations. While these articles are a comprehensive resource, they are not a substitute for reading the funding solicitation. The table below describes the basic structure and provides insights about how you might use the information.

What is the information?	Why is it presented?	What can you do?
<b>Purpose</b> What is the sponsor's primary motivation?	This section provides the first clues about the sponsor's purpose and funding priorities. All sponsors have goals they'd like to achieve through making awards.	Learn as much as you can about the sponsor's goals and priorities. Begin thinking of ways to demonstrate how your project helps the sponsor reach its goals. Projects that are not in alignment with the sponsor's goals won't score well.
<b>Background and Funding Trends</b> Who/what ideas were funded?	<p>Documenting the history of the program/mechanism and using publicly available tools like <a href="#">NIH Reporter</a> or <a href="#">NSF's Award Search</a> we report information about the recipients of prior awards and funding/success rates to help investigators see who/what has been successful.</p> <p>The profiles or research ideas of prior recipients can help assess “fit” with the funding and manage expectations about the chances of being awarded.</p>	<p>Talk with your office of sponsored programs, research development office, or other research leaders to consider where/how to invest your time.</p> <p>Read successful applications and reviewer comments to understand why the application was funded. Review the research findings and publications of previously funded researchers, and the outcomes and impacts of previous recipients.</p>
<b>Eligibility</b> Who can apply?	These factors or priorities give investigators insights into the review/selection criteria. They outline the minimum conditions or suitable attributes for consideration. Sponsors might exclude specific types of investigators or institutions.	<p>Avoid wasting time, and carefully review eligibility criteria to assess if you and your institution meet the sponsor's requirements.</p> <p>Check with your office of sponsored programs or similar offices to determine eligibility.</p>
<b>Allowed and Typical Activities</b> What can be funded by this grant?	Understanding what's allowable helps investigators consider what falls inside the sponsor's boundaries.	Begin drafting your narrative and proposed budget with a clear understanding of the allowed activities to ensure that your idea is within the scope of the opportunity. Not all sponsors will cover all aspects of a project.

What is the information?	Why is it presented?	What can you do?
<b>Budget Considerations</b> What are the spending expectations?	Sponsors communicate their expectations and requirements about how the award can be spent. They will share the maximum or minimum award levels, or if they require cost-sharing or matching requirements from your institution.	Before working on the narrative, assess whether the grant provides enough funds for your project. A well-prepared budget will be consistent with the narrative and demonstrate that the funds will be used wisely.
<b>Unique Features/Special Sections</b> What should the package include?	These are non-standard sections, requirements or unusual programmatic features of the funding mechanism. In some cases, the sponsor will require investigators to describe a special emphasis, skill, or institutional resource.	These unique features/special emphases often provide more clues about the sponsor's motivation and funding priorities. Be sure that your proposal package adequately addresses these special features as they will be reviewed closely.
<b>Application Review</b> How do reviewers evaluate the proposal?	Input received from reviewers will be used to make the funding decision.	Securing funding is very competitive, be sure to fully understand how the proposal will be assessed and scored. Pay attention to the point value assigned to each criterion.
<b>Submission Strategy</b> What is the long-term strategy to get funded?	Many applications are not funded on the first submission, so this section provides insights about the long-term considerations for funding.	Consider making resubmissions an expectation of your process and an opportunity to improve your grant-writing skills.
<b>Proposal Timeline</b> When should things get done?	This section gives the step-by-step guidance to ensure there is enough time to assemble a high-quality and complete application that has benefitted from feedback and is formatted correctly.	A proposal is a significant investment of time. You owe it to yourself to be prepared and set yourself up for success. Competition is tight for funding, give yourself every opportunity to develop a competitive and high-quality proposal.

