PREPARING GRANTS FOR THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Presented by:

Dr. Maxine Harper, Interim Director

Joey Rutherford, Project Coordinator

Center for Educational Research and Evaluation

Purpose of Grants in the Social Sciences

- To study the effects of current interventions (projects) on targeted populations
  - Example: Determining how the use of a specific technology affects the algebra achievement of students with learning disabilities

- To study the longitudinal effects of interventions over time on targeted populations
  - Example: Measuring the development of children from birth to age 3 whose mothers receive weekly mentoring

- To study the effect of a particular course of study on participants' attitudes about a given topic
  - Example: Surveying participants in an international exchange program to determine changes in their attitudes about government

Sources of Grant Opportunities

- **Government agencies**
  - National Science Foundation
  - National Institute of Health
  - U. S. Department of Education
  - Institute for Education Sciences

- **Private foundations**
  - Kellogg Foundation
  - Hearin Foundation
  - Agencies focusing on a specific topic or need

Components of a Grant in the Social Sciences

- **Introduction** – Gives the purpose of the grant and describes the overall project

- **Research Questions** – Lists the research questions that will be addressed in the grant
  - Example: Does targeted professional development increase the Algebra I state test passing rate of a school's population of students with learning disabilities?

- **Review of Literature** – Covers prior related work that has been published

- **Theoretical Framework** – Gives the basis for your belief that this intervention will have an effect on the participants

Components of a Grant in the Social Sciences (Continued)

- **Description of the population to be studied**
  - Example: First through sixth grade students whose teacher is a member of the Mississippi Teacher Corps Program
- **Procedures that will be followed in conducting the study** – Sequential steps that will be implemented in the course of the proposed research study
- **Research method** – Specific information about how the study will be conducted
  - What types of data will be collected and how it will be collected
  - How the data will be analyzed and interpreted
  - How the results will be reported
- **Dissemination plan** – A description of the proposed methods of disseminating the results (e.g., journal articles, presentations, etc.)

Components of a Grant in the Social Sciences (Continued)

- **Evaluation plan** – A description of how the project will be evaluated to determine whether the research was conducted according to the original design

- **Timeline** – A list of activities in order of their planned occurrence by month or by quarter

- **Institutional capacity** – A description of the resources available to carry out the project

- **Description of key personnel** and their qualifications specific to the project

- **Proposed budget and budget justification** – A category by category (line by line) detail of how much money will be spent in what categories and for what purposes

Components of a Grant in the Social Sciences (Continued)

- For some grants (especially NSF), the **intellectual merit of the proposed activity** – A description of how the proposed research will contribute to the current knowledge base in that area

- For some grants (especially NSF), the **broader impact of the proposed activity** – A description of how the proposed research will impact society in general

Experiences from a Veteran Grant Writer

- It requires writing a lot of grants just to get one funded.
- Funding comes when you least expect it, and it sometimes doesn't come when you most expect it.
- If you have a good idea for a grant and it doesn't get funded, look for other funding sources to which you might apply the same idea, with just a little tweaking to meet the criteria of the new funding source. For example, we wrote a grant for the National Science Foundation (NSF) dealing with professional development for algebra teachers. Even though it was declined (because it didn't match the goals of that particular proposal exactly), the program officer in charge of the grant encouraged us to tweak it and reapply the next year. We are also tweaking it and sending a submission to the Institute for Education Sciences (IES).
- The bottom line is: Don't give up on good ideas!

Conclusion

- Select a topic for which you have a passion

- Search the possible funding sources for available grants on that topic (or grants that could be used for that topic)

- Read the RFP (Request for Proposal) to learn the specific requirements for that proposal

- Work with the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs to submit your grant in the proper format