Dealing with Rejections and Revisions
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Based on previous work by previous workshop leaders

The Hard Facts
- You will have proposals rejected and you may feel that the reviewer/panel have been unjust
- The only way to avoid rejection is not to submit anything

Who Here Has Been Rejected?
Take a moment to share your experience

What is the Process?
NSF
- Proposal is submitted
- Proposal is reviewed by program manager
  - It is possible to be rejected at this point (hopefully with some clues regarding how to resubmit)
- Proposal goes to reviewers
- Panel reviews the reviews
  - May reject without discussion
  - Rank after discussion
- Program officer makes funding recommendations
- NSF funds/rejects

What is the Process?
NSF Panels (USGS similar)
- Work hard to avoid conflict of interest
- Work hard to be fair to all proposals
  - We’ve all had proposals rejected
- Many quality proposals are not recommended
- At times the cutoff between recommended and not is very small

What is the Process?
- It is perfectly possible that a fantastic proposal might not be funded even with excellent reviews - Why?
- Proposal did not convey the awesomeness of the proposal
- Poor fit with RFP/call/funding agency
- Others may disagree about said awesomeness
So – you didn’t get funded

What do you do with this information?

- Take a moment to develop strategies individually
- Now share with a partner
- Report back to the group

Next Steps

- Take a deep breath
- Might be good to step away from the proposal for a few days
- Address all of the issues brought up – especially by the panel
- Remember – the job of the panel is to create a summary that will truly help the investigators
- Big picture: is this worth pursuing?

What do you get?

- Program officer letter
- Panel summary (very useful)
  – Panel summary attempts to summarize the reviews and “neutralize” potentially unreasonable reviews
- Reviews
Make sure that you....

1. Specifically and directly address each review critique.
2. Substantially revise, rewrite, or remove sections that were critiqued in earlier reviews.
3. Updates preliminary/pilot data and interpretations.
4. Incorporate new references that may have appeared since the previous submission (or were missed in the prior proposal).
5. Refined/revised list of potential reviewers based on reviews (some reading between the lines required).
6. Create a proposal that appears noticeably stronger than the prior version.

Complete your strategic plan worksheet

• What resources do you need to be successful?
• What are some potential funding sources for this research?
• What strategies will you apply to develop your proposal?
• If funded, what is the timeline for this research?

Other Things to Do

• Ask colleagues in the same field as you about expectations for proposals in your field
• Ask trusted colleagues to read through proposals
• Ask for copies of proposals from colleagues