

# Tips for writing an NSF Career Proposal

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April 10, 2007

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- DREAM BIG, THINK BIG!!!

This is a five year award, so stretch your imagination about what might be possible in that time frame.

For me, this meant thinking about how my research could interact with a related subfield of mathematics.

Although it is hard work, writing a proposal often gives a real boost to my research.

- Spending sufficient time on writing a proposal is worth it.

Even after basically knowing what my research and educational activities would be, I spent a very full month completely focused on writing and revising my proposal.

Have colleagues from various backgrounds read and comment on the proposal.

- Look at several previous winning proposals.

Ask colleagues for samples and look at the available grant libraries.

Ideas for educational projects can come from Career proposals in any subject matter.

Regular NSF research proposals inside and outside your subfield are also useful to measure the tone and expected audience.

While writing your proposal, keep in mind one or two colleagues who are fairly far removed from your research area.

- The education portion of my proposal is available at: <http://www.math.uic.edu/~bshipley/career.education.pdf>

It includes: undergraduate course development, undergraduate research (summer REU program), recruitment of undergraduate and graduate students (math talks for undergrads), organized a two week conference/workshop for graduate students and post-doc's at the intersection of two mathematical subfields participated in various mentoring programs for women in mathematics

- Plan a variety of educational activities.

Outreach programs for underrepresented minorities are often looking for a variety of presentations. You don't have to be a member of any minority to help out. One such program is WISE at UIC, I'm sure there are others.

Consider activities for undergraduate students, graduate students and postdoc's. Consider volunteering to help with existing programs as well as starting your own.

Talk with colleagues who are already involved in educational activities about other activities they may have considered.

Get involved with various educational activities even before you submit your proposal. List this on your biography or cv. (I certainly didn't do this with all of the activities, but had done a few before.)