NIH Reviewers-Write for them!

Things to keep in mind while writing-Make your proposal REVIEWER FRIENDLY

1) Reviewers read MANY proposals and read many of them late at night-one right after the other-MAKE YOURS STAND OUT! Capture their attention!

- Be persuasive, tell them why the agency should fund your project and why you are the person to do this and how it supports the mission of the agency.

- Make it easy to read-proper spacing and font-well written-avoid lengthy run on sentences-spell out acronyms and avoid jargon-organize it in the manner the agency requests- don’t make reviewers flip through your document to find pertinent information- **highlight** important information-making it easy for reviewers to find. (Avoid *italics* and *underscores* these are hard for old tired eyes to read).

- Say what you **EXPECT** to find, obtain -use strong words to relate what you will find-avoid weak words like: we *hope* to find, we will *try* to obtain...etc...

- Choose your words carefully and make every word count! Stay within the limits, be concise, organized and logical-have a logical flow to your thoughts and check your spelling! Have “fresh eyes” that have not seen your proposal read it.

2) Reviewers are asked to score applications in five areas, as follows:

**SIGNIFICANCE** - Does your project address a critical need-one that the NIH has identified as critical or highly important-how will it advance your field? Specifically say “The knowledge gained will be **significant**...it supports the NIH mission...“(Don’t assume the reviewers will see the significance or be able to relate it to the agency’s mission)

**INNOVATION** - What are the novel ideas or approaches in your project that make it stand out above all the rest? You must indicate unambiguously how the proposed research will meaningfully **advance knowledge**. **Note:** “innovation” has assumed paramount importance in the NIH review process!

**APPROACH** - Is the design of the project appropriate to successfully carry out the study to completion-all methodologies, experiments, analysis plans, and time-lines in line with the project’s goals and objectives? Address the feasibility.

**PRINCIPAL INVESTGATOR/APPLICANT** - Are you qualified to carry out this study? Have you surrounded yourself with qualified people?

**ENVIRONMENT** - Is your Institution in full support of your efforts? Have you recruited qualified collaborators that will work well with you and fill gaps? Surround yourself with experts! Get a **letter of support** from your Chair or Dean to show support in the way of offering to pay for space, provide administrative help, release time, cost sharing- whatever you need. **Letters of support** from collaborators supporting the project and agreeing to work on it in whatever capacity you stated. **Really write a very detailed description of all that is available to you and to your project in particular**- make it tailored made for you!