****

**CREATING A PROJECT WORK PLAN**

Crafting a competitive proposal for external funding requires that a “great idea” be transformed into a great research project. Creating a work plan is a very effective way to think through your great idea and operationalize the research you want to conduct, whether a single project or multi-year research agenda. By thoughtfully and objectively identifying the purpose and scope of your research – and the resources necessary for success – identifying potential funders becomes much easier and adjustments can be made to the work plan to fit the budget and project duration parameters of a specific call for proposals (e.g., the proposal will address only research question/goal #1; the methodology will be tested on two versus five identified variables). As a result, **creating a work plan should be the first task you undertake when beginning to craft your research agenda, concept paper, or grant proposal.**

As you create the work plan, stay focused on the research you want to conduct; in other words, don’t allow your thinking to be constrained by a particular call for proposals. Always start with what you want to do, what you are passionate about, and the work necessary to address significant problems and needs in your field.

To start, focus on the “so what?” of your project; that is, articulate why a funder should invest in you and your research:

* What significant problem or need does your research address?
* How does your project address that problem/need?
* How is your project different from what has already been done? How is it innovative?
* Who will benefit from your project, both directly (e.g., participants; you, as a researcher; your department and college) and indirectly (e.g., Texas State, local schools and/or community, the state/nation/world)?
* What is the broader impact of your research (e.g., filling gaps in the literature, informing policy and practice; changing the world… think grandiosely!)?

Addressing these “so what?” questions will help you generate and refine your research questions/goals, which will then drive the operationalization of your project – the related objectives and key actions will define its scope of work and identify the resources required for success. The completed work plan can then be used to identify collaborators with the expertise necessary to complete your project and develop the research methodology, project timeline, and budget/budget justification.

As you create your work plan, please take advantage of the support available through the College’s Office of Research and Sponsored Programs:

* Stephanie A. Korcheck, Research Coordinator for Proposal Development, can assist with conceptualizing your research and completing the work plan template.
* Dr. Afi Y. Wiggins, Senior Research Analyst, can help develop your research methodologies and ensure key action steps related to data collection and analysis are included in the work plan.
* Alex Lengefeld, Research Coordinator for Post-Award Administration, can assist with translating your work plan into a budget spreadsheet and budget justification.

**<*INSERT PROJECT NAME*> WORK PLAN**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **What significant problem/need does your project address?** |  |
| **How does your project address the problem/need?** |  |
| **How is your project innovative?** |  |
| **Who will benefit from your findings?** | **Directly:** |
| **Indirectly:** |
| **What is the broader impact of your research?** |  |

**Research Question/Goal #1:**

|  |
| --- |
| **Objective 1.1:** |
| **Key Action** | **Timeframe** | **Required Steps/Resources****(e.g., logistics, personnel, data, supplies, travel)** | **Milestone** | **Person(s) Responsible** | **Comments** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Objective 1.2** |
| **Key Action** | **Timeframe** | **Required Steps/Resources****(e.g., logistics, personnel, data, supplies, travel)** | **Milestone** | **Person(s) Responsible** | **Comments** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Objective 1.3** |
| **Key Action** | **Timeframe** | **Required Steps/Resources****(e.g., logistics, personnel, data, supplies, travel)** | **Milestone** | **Person(s) Responsible** | **Comments** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Research Question/Goal #2:**

|  |
| --- |
| **Objective 2.1:** |
| **Key Action** | **Timeframe** | **Required Steps/Resources****(e.g., logistics, personnel, data, supplies, travel)** | **Milestone** | **Person(s) Responsible** | **Comments** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Objective 2.2** |
| **Key Action** | **Timeframe** | **Required Steps/Resources****(e.g., logistics, personnel, data, supplies, travel)** | **Milestone** | **Person(s) Responsible** | **Comments** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Objective 2.3** |
| **Key Action** | **Timeframe** | **Required Steps/Resources****(e.g., logistics, personnel, data, supplies, travel)** | **Milestone** | **Person(s) Responsible** | **Comments** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Research Question/Goal #3:**

|  |
| --- |
| **Objective 3.1:** |
| **Key Action** | **Timeframe** | **Required Steps/Resources****(e.g., logistics, personnel, data, supplies, travel)** | **Milestone** | **Person(s) Responsible** | **Comments** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Objective 3.2** |
| **Key Action** | **Timeframe** | **Required Steps/Resources****(e.g., logistics, personnel, data, supplies, travel)** | **Milestone** | **Person(s) Responsible** | **Comments** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Objective 3.3** |
| **Key Action** | **Timeframe** | **Required Steps/Resources****(e.g., logistics, personnel, data, supplies, travel)** | **Milestone** | **Person(s) Responsible** | **Comments** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |