BPC-Centric Proposal Writing

Jan Cuny

National Science Foundation

November 7, 2008

The Review Process for BPC

NSF Programs are very competitive.

Having a great idea is not good enough: You have to sell the idea, and your ability to pull it off.

You have to sell the idea to a panel.

First your proposal has to get to the panel …

- Follow the GPG guidelines on page limits, font, & URLs, etc.

BPC Panels

- BPC panels have 25-30 proposals & 8 -15 people.
- BPC panels include members of all targeted groups, CISE researchers, experts on K-12, experts on CCs, and evaluators.
- The panel is charged with assessing the proposals according to the solicitation.
- The panel's recommendations are advisory.

Implications of Panel Review

- Organize your proposal well; make it easy to find key sections.

- Make your case to the expert and nonexpert alike.

- Make sure that your proposal is responsive to the solicitation.

  - Read the entire solicitation carefully, checking for additional criteria (BPC has some).

  - Address each area in the solicitation.

  - Talk to the program officer.

Example: Current BPC Instructions for Project Description

Must include 4 sections:

1. Project Goals and Outcomes
2. Implementation Plan
3. Partnership Plan
4. Evaluation Plan

Example: Current BPC Instructions for Project Description

■ Highlight potential for successfully aligning with similar programs and efforts.

■ Describe creative, strategic actions that promise significant improvements in underrepresentation.

■Describe existing research base & new research that will further contribute to the knowledge base.

If you have never been on a panel, get on one.

Learn more about the goals of BPC

BPC Solicitation: It will be new, check in late Jan

See funded proposals (NSF pages, "Awards," choose "Cuny" for PO or better, "7482" for program element code)

Also read (Hopefully on new website by then)
- ☐ Report from Fall '04 BP Meeting
- ☐ Freeman & Cuny CRA's CRN article
- ☐ Dave Patterson's ACM article
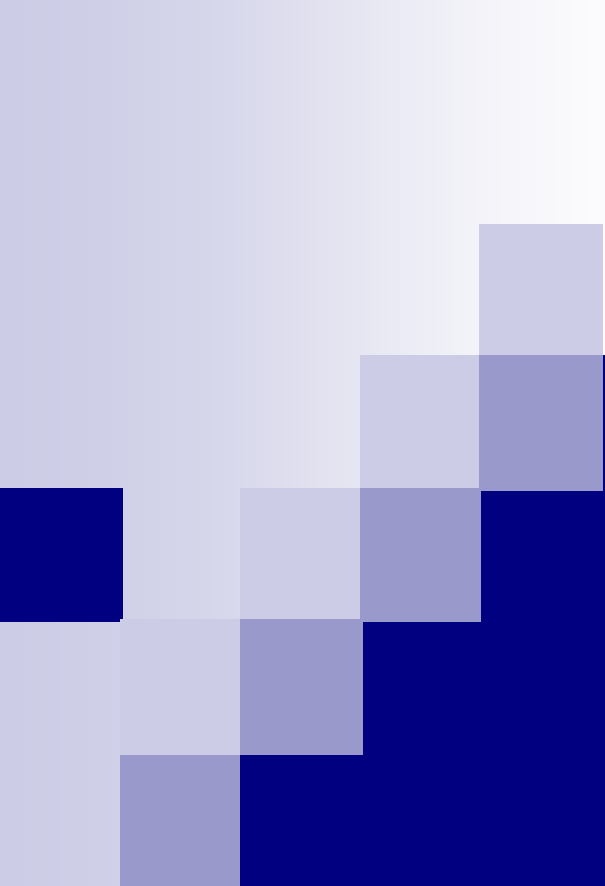- ☐ BPC FAQs

A Proposal Contains

- Cover Sheet and other special forms
- Suggested List of Reviewers to (not) use
- Project Summary - *1 page, must address Criteria I & II*
- Table of Contents - *automatically generated*
- Project Description (including prior NSF support) - *max 15 pages (extra 5 for Alliance Prior Results)*
- References Cited - *Required!*
- Biographical Sketches - *2 pages/senior person*
- Budget sheets and justifications
- Current and Pending Support - *all sources*
- Facilities, Equipment and other Resources - *only those relevant*

BPC Panels wanted to see ...

- Novel (well, memorable)
- Pathway from K-12 activities to college enrollment
- Longer term engagement
- Effect beyond improvements in local environment
- Great literature review
- Details on the evaluation plan, Independent evaluator or social scientist
- Activities / Approach specific to targeted groups
- Added value
- Things not covered in other NSF programs

General Tips

- Talk to your program officers.

- Participate on a panel.

- Get copies of previous proposals from your colleagues.

- Do your own peer review.

- *EVERYBODY* has NSF declines: Be persistent.

Thanks for your interest in BPC & Good luck with your proposals!