



TURNING GOOD IDEAS INTO FUNDABLE PROPOSALS

University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture

May 6, 2024

WEBINAR LOGISTICS

RUNTIME



~45 minutes plus 15 at the end for Q&A

Q&A



Questions may be asked throughout the presentation via the chat link at the bottom of your screen. Some may be answered in the moment, while others may be saved until the end.

RECORDING & SLIDES



All attendees will receive a copy of the recording, including the slides.

TODAY'S PRESENTER



Paul Tuttle, MA
GRANTS CONSULTANT



TOTAL WINS

\$175+
MILLION

Total grant funding for clients since 2003 from nearly every Federal funder and many major foundations.

MAJOR AWARDS

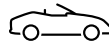


- MA in English with a concentration in Rhetoric and Composition
- Former business and technical writing instructor
- Worked at Hanover 2011-2015 (and now 2022-present)

On a personal note . . .



Born and raised in North Carolina



Interested in classic and modern cars



Hiking, biking, swimming, and reading



TODAY'S AGENDA

GOOD IDEAS VS. FUNDABLE IDEAS

- Recognizing and Generating **Good** Ideas
- Transforming **Good** Into **Fundable** Ideas
 - Understanding the Context
 - Developing a Logic Model
 - Creating a Concept Paper
 - Consulting a Program Officer
- Key Takeaways
- Resources
- Q&A / Discussion

KEY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GOOD AND FUNDABLE IDEAS

A good idea ...	A fundable idea ...
... helps someone	... addresses the funder's target audience
... advances an important agenda	... advances the funder's agenda
... creates interest	... aligns with funder priorities
... is intellectually sound	... is exciting
... addresses something that is poorly understood	... addresses something <i>important</i> that is poorly understood
... can have undefined steps or processes	... takes a clear path from A to B to C (with limited exceptions)
... can be of any scale	... is scaled by prior experience, a budget, and/or a period of performance

Adapted from [Helping Faculty Differentiate Between the Good and the Fundable](#), by Michael Preuss and Susan Perri

An aerial, top-down view of a city street intersection. The image is in grayscale and has a dark, semi-transparent overlay. The street layout is visible, including crosswalks with white stripes and road markings. A car is visible on the right side of the road. The text "RECOGNIZING AND GENERATING GOOD IDEAS" is centered in the image in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

RECOGNIZING AND GENERATING GOOD IDEAS

WHERE DO GOOD IDEAS COME FROM?

- Note the many **problems, concerns, issues, and challenges** surrounding us:
 - Scientific/research problems
 - Capacity/infrastructure inadequacies
 - Information/visibility/assessment concerns
 - Discipline-specific teaching/pedagogical issues
 - Population-specific challenges/differentials in equity or progress
 - Workforce disparities or needs
 - Knowledge gaps
- To address one of them, consider a project design that provides **realistic solutions, answers, and/or new knowledge** based on:
 - Your expertise/experience
 - Known content/disciplinary/methodological interest(s)
 - Testing an existing/proven approach in a new context
 - Leveraging partner expertise/experience

IS MY IDEA BAD, GOOD, OR FUNDABLE?

Scholarly work is contextual and collaborative.

Ask yourself and others whether your good idea might be fundable, if transformed into a project.

- Indicative preliminary data?
- Novelty or innovation?
- Low cost?
- Institutional/external financial support?
- Existing partnerships/expertise?
- Sustainability?
- Meaningful outcomes/significant impact?

Remember that your project **outcomes** or **impacts** serve as funders' **return on their investments (ROI)**.

An aerial, top-down view of a city street intersection. The image is dark and semi-transparent, showing a grid of streets, crosswalks with white stripes, and a few vehicles. The text "TRANSFORMING GOOD INTO FUNDABLE IDEAS" is centered in white, bold, sans-serif font. The background shows a street intersection with crosswalks and some vehicles. The text is centered in the middle of the image.

TRANSFORMING GOOD INTO FUNDABLE IDEAS

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT: PROSPECTING

*Different funders
(and funder types)
have different
cultures and ways of
doing business.*

- Find pertinent funders via **prospecting** using the following:
 - Grants.gov, Candid, Pivot, or other databases
 - Funder websites: NEA/NEH, IMLS, ACLS, NSF SBE directorate, etc.
 - Colleagues, peers, and mentors
 - Hanover prospecting reports
- Adjust the **project concept** to suit the opportunity
 - Focus on what is important to the funder
 - Find ways to help the funder accomplish its mission or vision
 - A caveat: Avoid twisting your project concept into an unrecognizable mess merely to obtain funding

You're poised to request funding to help a grantmaker do positive work in the world.

Your goals and the funder's goals must therefore align.

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT: ALIGNMENT

- Review any **relevant scholarly work**, as appropriate
 - Look for overall trends in problems, solutions, or funding
- Review the funder's **website**
 - Learn its history, mission, and/or vision
 - Understand its recent funding and future directions
- Analyze the **funding opportunity** (RFP, FOA, or solicitation)
 - Recognize its purpose(s)
 - Note caveats, preferences, and emphases
 - Look carefully for what will not be funded
- Review abstracts/proposals from prior awardees
 - NEH: examples of **funded proposals**
 - Other funders: awards databases or USAspending.gov

DEVELOPING A LOGIC MODEL

- Flowchart showing a **theory of change**
- **Planning** and **communication** tool
- **How** and **why** the project will yield **outcomes** or **impact**

Logic models help you plan by:

- Forcing you to concisely describe your approach
- Summarizing linkages more simply than via prose
- Emphasizing the research bases for the project
- Narrowing the focus to **meaningful outcomes**

RESOURCES

Logic Model Development Guide (W.K. Kellogg Foundation)

<https://wkkf.issuelab.org/resource/logic-model-development-guide.html>

Theory of Change materials (Annie E. Casey Foundation)

<https://www.aecf.org/resources/theory-of-change>

Logic models represent the ways your project ideas fit together and move forward over time to advance knowledge.

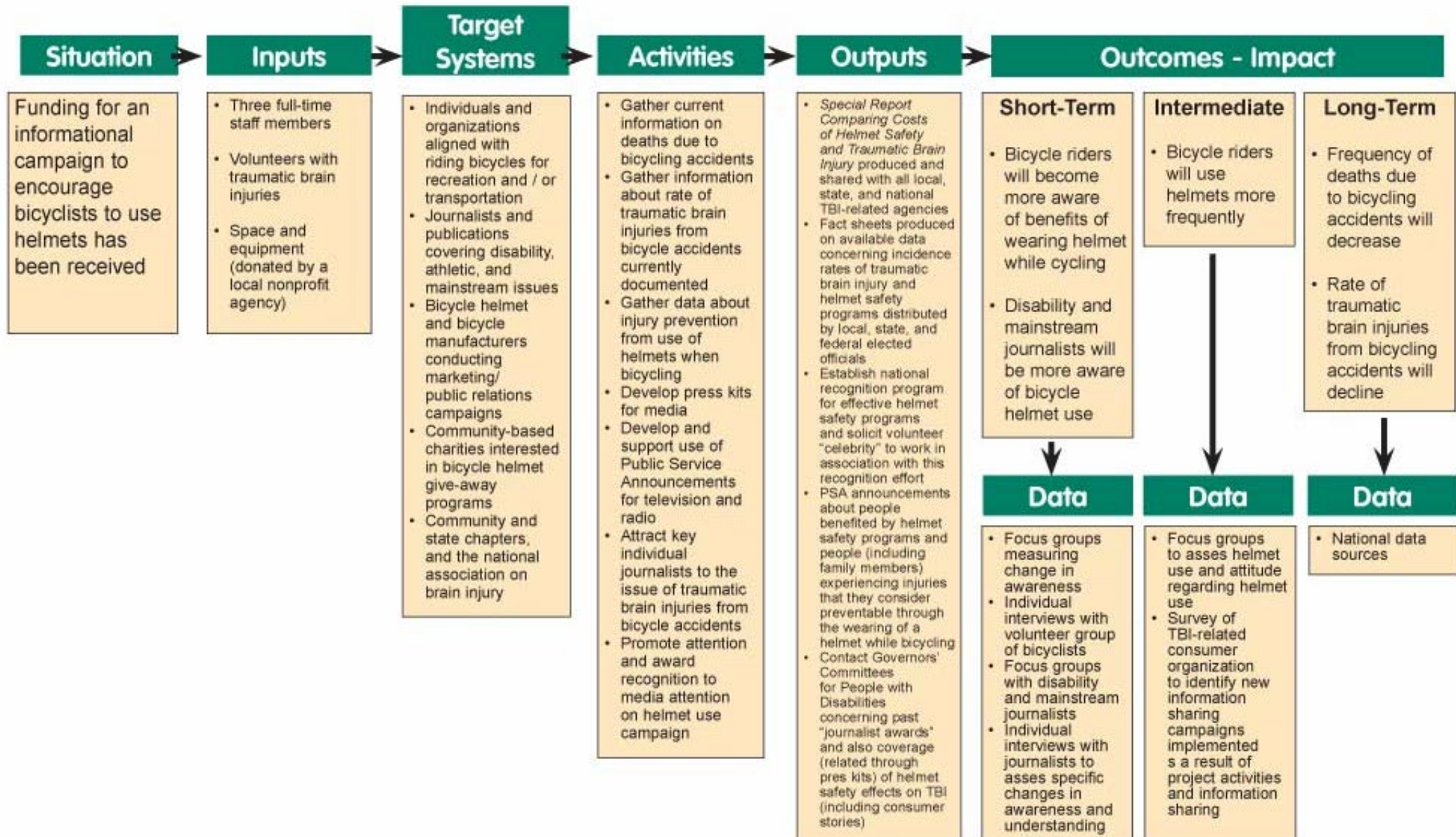
A logic model's constituent elements relate to each other in ways that synergistically optimize the positive effects of the project over time.

ELEMENTS OF A LOGIC MODEL

INPUTS → ACTIVITIES → OUTPUTS → OUTCOMES

- **Inputs** = resources invested in the project
 - Personnel, partners, funding, facilities, time and effort, community engagement, etc.
- **Activities** = actions the project will perform
 - Recruiting, training, marketing, evaluation, travel, workforce development, student support, etc.
- **Outputs** = expected immediate results
 - Focus on project implementation
- **Outcomes** = expected impacts
 - Focus on project effectiveness

EXAMPLE: BICYCLE HELMET AWARENESS



A concept paper (1-2 pages long; also called an “abstract” or “elevator pitch”) is your first attempt at describing your project vision in sentences and paragraphs.

CREATING A CONCEPT PAPER

Many funders specify Concept Paper (or Letter of Inquiry) requirements, but if they do not, here is a sample **concept paper outline**:

- **Executive Summary/Introduction**
 - Org/PI, project title, objectives, anticipated outcomes, amount, term, overarching alignment
- **Problem/Need/Rationale/Background & Significance**
- **Project Plan/Statement of Work**
- **Expected Impacts/Outcomes**
 - Alignment with funder mission/vision/purpose of opportunity
- **Management Plan**
 - Personnel, resources, and timeline
 - Experience with similar successful projects
- **Budget/Amount Requested**
- **Conclusion/Contact Information**

Program officers can help you confirm and validate that your ideas are fundable.

They can also help you target a more appropriate funding opportunity, if necessary.

CONSULTING A PROGRAM OFFICER

- Develop a 1- to 2-page concept paper (more detail = better)
- Make contact early to show preparedness/seriousness
- Request a phone or virtual consultation
- Ask great questions and take copious notes

RESOURCES

“Can We Talk? Contacting Grant Program Officers,” by Bob Porter
<https://www.nordp.org/assets/resources-docs/porter-canwetalk.pdf>

“What to Say—and Not Say—to Program Officers,” by Michael Spires
<https://www.chronicle.com/article/what-to-say-and-not-say-to-program-officers/>

An aerial, grayscale photograph of a city street intersection. The image is overlaid with white text and faint white lines that form a grid and highlight specific areas. The text 'KEY TAKEAWAYS' is centered in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The background shows a street with crosswalks, lane markings, and a few vehicles. The overall tone is dark and technical.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

TO SUM UP

- Generating merely **good** ideas isn't enough. They need to be framed appropriately to be **fundable**.
- How to frame them appropriately:
 - Conceptualize them as a **project** with defined start and end dates; goals, objectives, and activities; a management plan; expected results, anticipated outcomes, and/or measurable impacts; a plan for sharing those results/outcomes/impacts with interested stakeholders; and a budget, budget justification, and timeline
 - Understand the **context** by reviewing disciplinary and funding **trends**, **prospecting** for funders and opportunities, learning the grantseeking **culture** and business practices of those specific funders, and **aligning** your project idea with the funder's mission/vision and the funding opportunity's purpose
 - Develop a **logic model**, create a **concept paper**, and consult a **program officer**



LEVERAGE YOUR RESOURCES



RESOURCES AT YOUR INSTITUTION

[UTIA Office of Sponsored Programs](#)

We provide all pre-award services to all of the UT Institute of Agriculture, including AgResearch, UT Extension, the Herbert College of Agriculture, and the College of Veterinary Medicine.

2621 Morgan Circle
225 Morgan Hall
Knoxville, TN 37996-4514
Phone: 865-974-7357
Fax: 865-974-7451
Email: aggrant@utk.edu or
extensiongrants@utk.edu

GRANTS SOLUTIONS FROM HANOVER RESEARCH

GRANTS CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT



Developing organizational capacity to pursue and win grant funding, through training, strategic assessment, and benchmarking.

FUNDING RESEARCH



Identifying and evaluating grant opportunities aligned to member projects, while enabling longer-term planning through funded project research and forecasting.

PRE-PROPOSAL ACTIVITIES



Assessing and developing competitive project concepts, helping members to navigate funder requirements and build relationships prior to completing submissions.

PROPOSAL SUPPORT



Supporting member-led grant proposal projects by providing review and revision services designed to ensure the strongest possible proposals are submitted.

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT



Leading programmatic grant proposals, in close coordination with member teams, crafting narrative drafts over a defined timeline towards a polished submission.

GRANTS LEARNING CENTER - GRANTS ESSENTIALS

Hanover's Grants Learning Center (GLC) has a new nine-module series designed to help you hone key grantseeking skills. The GLC also houses trainings on NSF CAREER and NIH R-Grants. [Register today](#) with the referral code **Smokey**.



Introduction to Grantseeking

MODULE 1



Program Officer Engagement

MODULE 6



Laying the Groundwork

MODULE 2



Essentials of Competitive Proposals

MODULE 7



Concept Development

MODULE 3



Resubmission Strategies

MODULE 8



Logic Models

MODULE 4



Stewardship

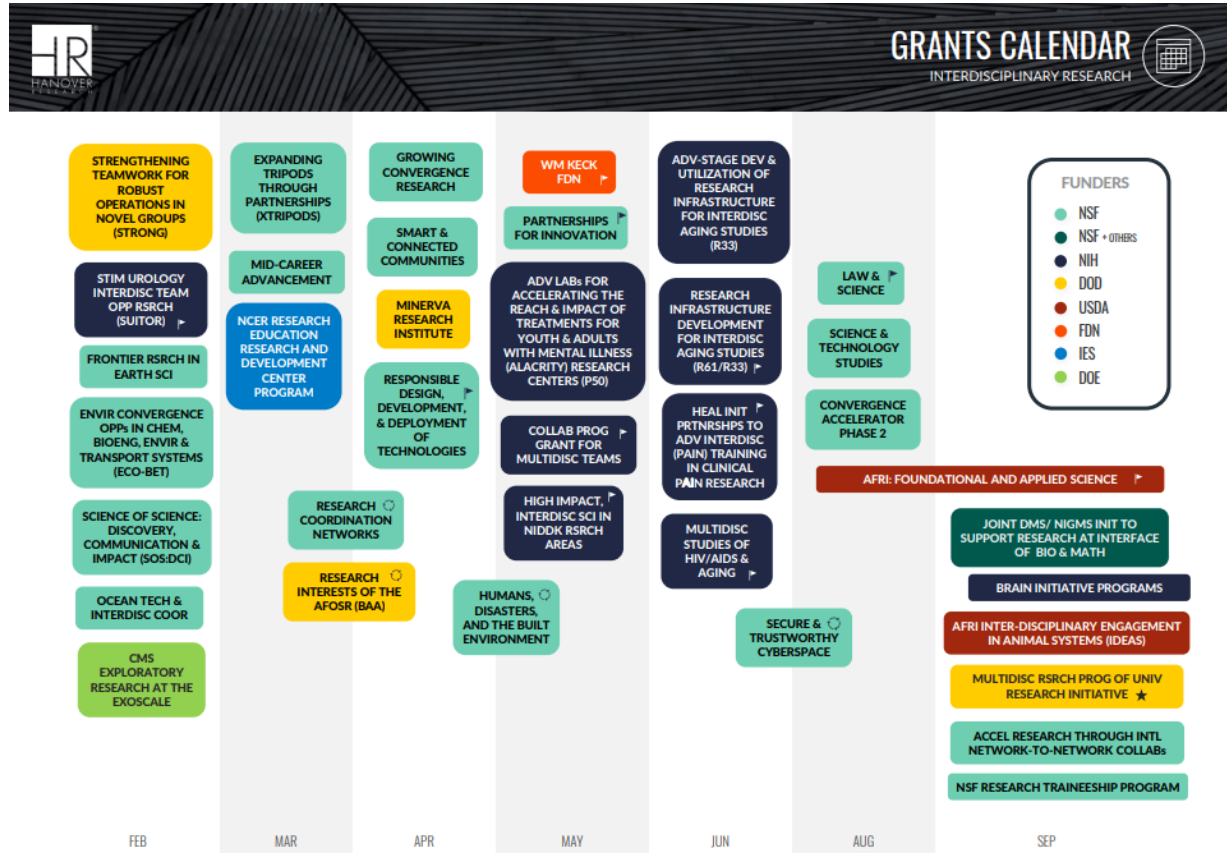
MODULE 9



Prospecting

MODULE 5

EMAIL ALERTS



GRANT ALERTS & DIGESTS

Get notifications of new funding opportunities in select areas.



FUNDING CALENDARS

Receive email updates twice a month on funding calendars on a variety of rotating topics, like the example on the left.



GRANTS WEBINARS

Get notified of upcoming grants webinars to strengthen grantsmanship skills and deepen the knowledge of funding mechanisms.

CLICK to subscribe:

[Hanover Grants Email Alerts](#)



Q&A / DISCUSSION



Kristen Beales, PhD

Content Director, Grants

4401 Wilson Blvd, Arlington, VA 22203
www.hanoverresearch.com

E: kbeales@hanoverresearch.com

P: 703-346-4762