

# PROGRAM OFFICER CALL PREPARATION GUIDANCE

## DISCUSSION TOPICS

During a call with a Program Officer, listen carefully for overt and subtle signals about funder priorities and interest. Present your project succinctly and give the PO plenty of space to talk. Common questions you can use to elicit information:

- Is this project a good fit / competitive for this opportunity / your funding priorities?
- Are there other opportunities that would be a better fit?
- What are your recommendations for improving the fit / competitiveness?
- What other recommendations do you have?
- What are the most common causes for proposals being declined for this opportunity?
- What are the usual success rates for this program?
- What is your preferred method for me to contact you if I have additional questions?

## FOLLOW UP

Follow up with an email thanking the PO for their time and summarizing the key points you took away from the call. In any future communication about this opportunity, reference your call. Change the subject line of your email to reflect the purpose and urgency of the request.

## SAMPLE EMAIL TO REQUEST A CALL

Subject: Request for call to discuss XXX due on DATE

Dear Dr. X:

I am interested in submitting a proposal for RFA #XXX “RFA Title” and would like to schedule a call with you to discuss whether my research is appropriate for this opportunity. [If your request is urgent, indicate that here and explain why.]

[Briefly describe your proposed work and why you think it is a good fit.] If it would be helpful, I can provide a [brief concept paper / specific aims] for you to review prior to our call. [If you have specific questions that you want the PO to consider, include them here.]

[Provide possible days/times *or* indicate that you can be available at the PO’s convenience.]

Thank you in advance for your assistance. I look forward to talking with you soon.

Contact Info