

# Proposal Writing Series

## Planning Before You Write



Research & Innovation Office

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

# Jim Mazzouccolo

## Proposal Editor & Writing Coach

- Supports AB Nexus (Anschutz-Boulder Collaborations)
- Focus on NIH & Biosciences proposals on CU Boulder campus
- Works with all bioscience associated departments across campus (including NIH proposals coming out of CEAS) on multi-disciplinary proposals
- Helps individual investigator & small teams proposals, as available
- Focus on stylistic, structural, substantive, and revision editing of research proposals from the prospective of an educated, non-SME reviewer



# Agenda

- Purpose and Expectations

## **Session Topics**

- Mindset
- Investigator Readiness & Career Considerations
- Refinement of Research Idea
- Acquiring Intelligence
- Composing the “One Pager”
- Liaise with the Agency
- Extrapolate: Go-No-Go





# Why We Plan Ahead

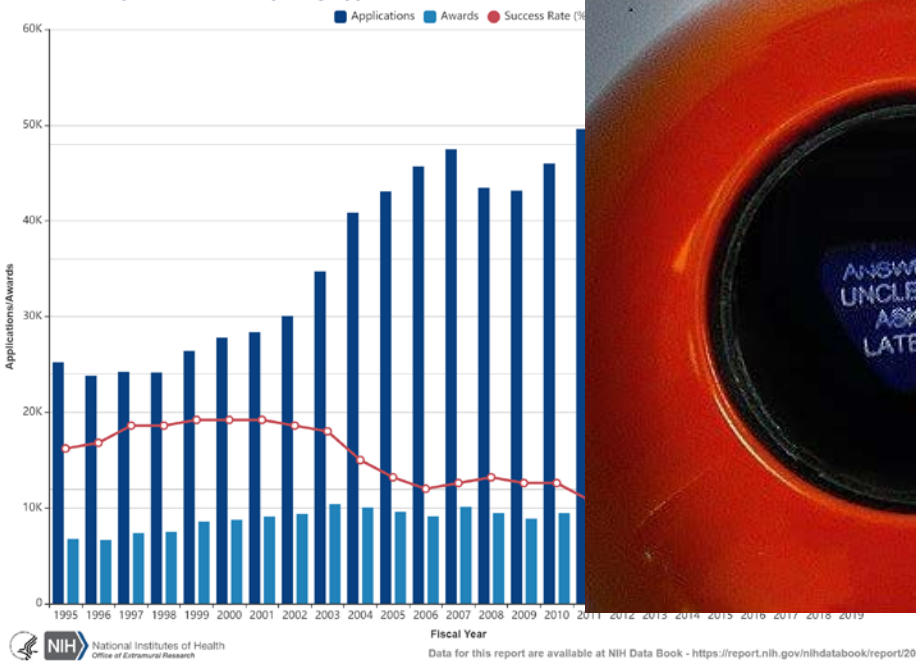


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# Mindset

Research Project Grants: Competing Applications, Awards, and Success Rate (%)



Remember..

Focus on what you can influence  
Be confident



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# Investigator Readiness

- Laboratory
- Publications
- Preliminary Studies
- New Investigator/Early Career/Young Investigator

## Career Considerations

- Tenure
- Departmental Requirements
- Role of the Project in Your (1, 5, 10 year) Plan
- Research Focus

Resources: [\*Making the Right Moves -A Practical Guide to Scientific Management for Postdocs and New Faculty\*](#)  
[\*CU Boulder Faculty Development Roadmap\*](#)



# Idea

## Structure the Idea by Answering Key Questions

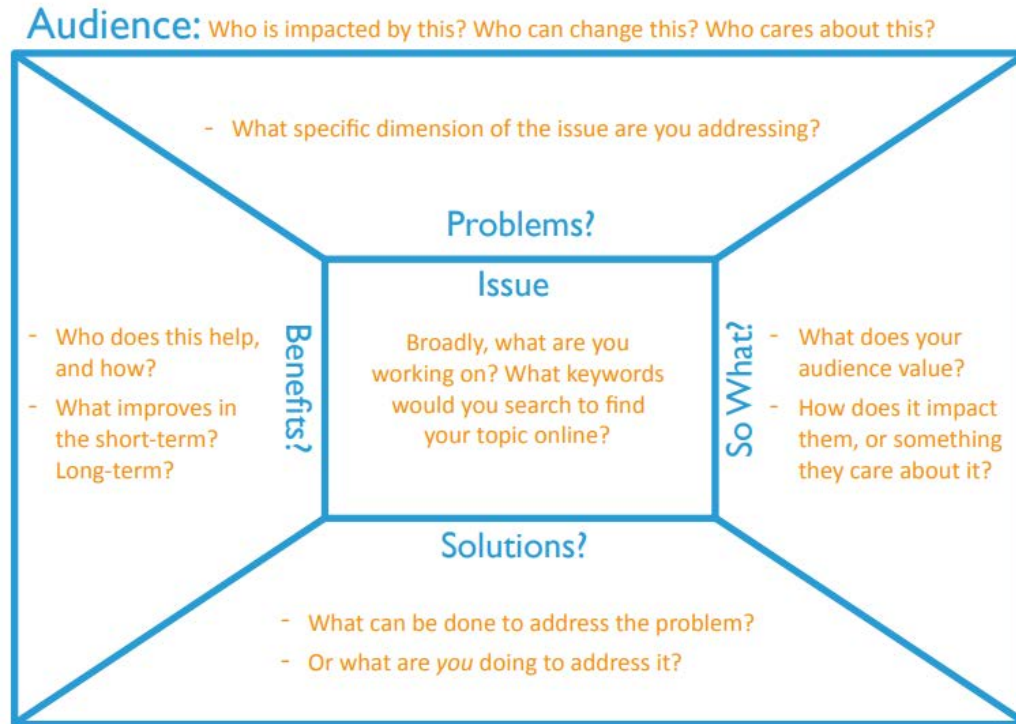
### “Heilmeier Catechism”

- What are you trying to do? Articulate your objectives using absolutely no jargon.
- How is it done today, and what are the limits of current practice?
- What is new in your approach and why do you think it will be successful?
- Who cares? If you are successful, what difference will it make?
- What are the risks?
- How much will it cost?
- How long will it take?
- What are the mid-term and final “exams” to check for success?



# Idea

## Message Box



6/9 Explaining the Project in One Paragraph  
6/16 Writing a One-Page Project Summary





# Acquiring Intelligence

- Investigator Initiated or a Response to a Solicitation?
- Finding an Agency/Program (N/A if responding to a solicitation)
  - Determine Program Officer
- Funding History of the Program
- Agency/Program Priorities and Language
  - Strategic Plans and Assessments
  - Council/Program Meetings
- [National Academies Press](#)
- Congressional Testimony
- Colleagues and mentor(s)



# One-Pager

- Presentation of Your Idea
- Geared to the Agency/Program
- Establishes a relationship with Program Officer
- First step for writing the proposal
- Iterative Process
- Review



# Contact the Agency

- Contact the Program Officer
- Show you know agency/program priorities
- Ask for feedback on attached one-pager
- Note: Process may differ by agency/organization



# Go-No-Go

- Carefully consider feedback given
- Consult with colleagues/mentor(s)
- Reflect upon Readiness and Career Considerations





# RIO Grant Writing Series

[Jim Mazzouccolo](#)

Proposal Editor & Writing Coach

[PGP](#): he/him/his

[Research & Innovation Office](#) – [Request Proposal Support](#)

- 6/2: [Knowing Your Audience and Review Criteria](#)
- 6/9: [Explaining the Project in One Paragraph](#)
- 6/16: [Writing a One-Page Project Summary](#)
- 6/23: [Keeping the Narrative Simple](#)
- 6/30: [Sustaining Your Argument](#)

