



Applied Research Competition Proposal Preparation Tip Sheet

Background Section

- What overall problem or challenge are you addressing?
- What is the current status of this problem?
- Why is it an important problem? “So What?”
- What specific research question or questions are you going to answer?
- Do you have hypotheses?
- Who will benefit if you are able to answer these research questions? What type of benefit? [OAR funds “applied research”. We do not fund research whose only aim is to increase the evidence base or generate new knowledge purely for the sake of generating new knowledge]
- If you are proposing to develop or evaluate an intervention - what service system and what types of providers do you imagine would adopt this intervention if it proves effective? How have you, or how will you, involve members of this end-user population in the development of your intervention? For instance, if you are developing an intervention for special education teachers then how are you involving special education teachers in the development phase to maximize the likelihood that whatever you develop is acceptable and feasible to this group of implementers?
- How would this intervention scale and be paid for once implemented? We don’t want to invest in developing interventions that are only available to families who can pay privately for clinical services.

Methodology Section

- Population and Participants
 - The autism spectrum is very diverse.
 - Be clear about which “part” of the autism spectrum your sampling will target and why.
 - What subset of the spectrum are you hoping your results will generalize to?
 - Why are you focusing on this subset of the spectrum?
 - Be very clear about knowing your terminology: “population”, “sampling”, “sample”, and “recruitment.” Use these terms correctly.



- How will you conduct sampling? Where and how will you find/recruit participants? Exactly what are your recruitment inclusion and exclusion criteria??
 - What makes you think this sampling and recruitment approach is feasible? Have you tried it before?
 - Why is this the best method for sampling for answering your question?
 - How are you addressing issues of inclusion and diversity in your sampling?
 - Discuss how your approach to sampling relates to bias and generalizability of the findings.
- Measures and Data Collection
 - Understand the difference between constructs and measures. How will you measure your main constructs? Clearly describe your key measures, where they came from and/or how they were developed.
 - Why did you choose these measures? Why are they the best for your research question vs. possible alternatives?
 - What do you know about the reliability and validity of these measures?
 - How, exactly, will data be collected and from whom? What is the mode of data collection? How often will data be collected?

Evaluation/Data Analysis Section

- Organize this section by research aim or research question. Be very clear how each analysis will answer that particular question and why it's the best choice of analysis technique given alternatives.
- Be clear on the difference between correlational analyses and causal analyses.

Outcome Recommendations Section

- Be specific here. Don't be vague. How will the results of your study improve lives? How will the results of your study impact policy or practice?
- Submit a list of proposed products and working titles for things like paper manuscripts. Be specific about what your deliverables will be.