

General suggestions and resources for NIH grant applications

Are you a new investigator, and mystified by the review process?

The [MGH Office for Research Career Development \(ORCD\)](#) offers a wide variety of services, including grant writing seminars and mock study sections that are part of their Faculty Development Seminar Series. Check their website often for more information on these programs and other opportunities.

Was your grant discussed but not funded?

Call your program officer. They often sit in at study section meetings and have additional insight into problems that may have been highlighted in the discussion.

Do you think the reviewers didn't understand the significance of the proposed work?

If your application has issues with clarity, ask a colleague who is outside of your field to read and critique your grant. Do they understand why the work should/must be done? There may be some reviewers in your study section who are not in your field, so clarity is essential to a successful grant application. You may need to emphasize the significance of your work. Start by defining outstanding questions in the field.

Are you worried that there were no reviewers with the correct expertise on the study section that reviewed your grant?

You can research which grants are reviewed and funded by particular study sections using [NIH RePORTER](#). You can use the advanced search to look for text matches and see the reviewing study section in the "details" tab, or you can search by CSR study section.

In addition, you can request a subject expert to be on your review panel in the PHS Assignment Request Form. Read the NIH's resource page provided in the link below regarding the PHS Assignment Request Form and cover letters:

<https://public.csr.nih.gov/ForApplicants/SubmissionAndAssignment>

Did your grant review suggest that you needed increased attention to statistics?

Since the Statistical Considerations of your grant are very important, MGH offers free help with this aspect of your clinical or basic research proposal development. The Division of Clinical Research (DCR) Biostatistics Unit provides consultations to those seeking study design advice and help with preparing statistical considerations for research proposal development. To request a consultation, please use the DCR web link below. For questions, please contact Hang Lee at hlee5@mg.harvard.edu or call 617-726-4293.

https://www.massgeneral.org/research/forms/Request_for_Clinical_Research_Program_Consultations_Services.aspx

Remember to consider your budgets while writing your application

Find out if the NIH institute would allow you to submit a real budget instead of a modular budget. By reaching out to the institute, you will have a better idea of what works best for them.

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