AEJMC Spotlight presentation ..... 

AEJMC’s Washington, D.C., Conference, The Renaissance Hotel Downtown, Exhibit Hall 
Tuesday, Aug. 7, 2018 — 3 p.m.

Getting the Money: Grant-Writing 
Facilitator: Kim Bissell, University of Alabama

Playing the Grant Writing Game: Finding external funding for JMC researchers

1. READ THE ELIGIBILITY RULES—if you are applying for funding from a governmental agency, you do 
want to make sure your institution/university is eligible;
2. GIVE YOURSELF PLENTY OF TIME TO PREPARE—writing a grant proposal often takes a month or 
two or several months, depending on the type of grant you are applying for. Allow yourself enough time for 
others to give you feedback and for your sponsored programs office to help you with the budget.
3. KEEP IT SIMPLE—it is very likely the reviewers will not have a mass communication or journalism 
background and may not be familiar AT ALL with theory and practice in your area. Keep it simple so there 
is no confusion.
4. FIND YOUR OWN EXTERNAL REVIEWERS—you should never submit a grant or proposal that has not 
been read by others first. Our research makes the most sense to us, but it may not be as clear to outsiders. 
Get feedback—it will improve your proposal.
5. EXPLAIN WHY RESEARCH IS NEEDED—in grant proposal terms, it is call your “specific aims”. This is 
where you make your case for the objective of the project AS WELL AS why continued research is needed.
6. ADD EXPERTS TO YOUR PI/CONSULTANT LIST—despite what YOU know, you will need others to 
round out your proposal—a statistician, someone to do assessment, experts in areas that are outside of 
what you do. If you can find others who have gotten funding in the past, even better.
7. GO TO THE GRANT-WRITING WORKSHOPS ON CAMPUS—yes, they can be boring, and often, they 
do not pertain to what we do, but if you get one bit of insight that helps you improve your proposal, it is 
worth it.
8. CONSIDER GRANTS THAT ARE DEVELOPMENT/SERVICE GRANTS—ideally, we want funding to 
support our research. But, it might be easier to get funding for a service project, exploratory project, develop-
ment project or something that is something else first and research second. Don’t rule anything out.
9. BE FAMILIAR WITH FUNDING CYCLES AND AGENCY DEADLINES—the submission deadlines for 
NIH, for example, are almost always the same, so familiarize yourself with those deadlines so you can work 
with enough advance notice.
10. DON’T GIVE UP—keep in mind that proposals RARELY get funded on the first submission. Getting 
scored on the first submission is a big win. If you can incorporate the feedback from the reviewers into a 
revised version, submit the proposal again.
11. DON’T OVERLOOK THE SMALL DETAILS—reviewers will notice small details like a word or two on a 
single line, indicating you did not take the time to tighten your writing to maximize the allowable space.
12. CONSIDER CROSS-DISCIPLINARY WORK—the key to success (SOMETIMES) is working in a small 
capacity on someone else’s grant, giving you more credibility for your own submission. Even if your role is 
in dissemination, that experience can pay off down the road.

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