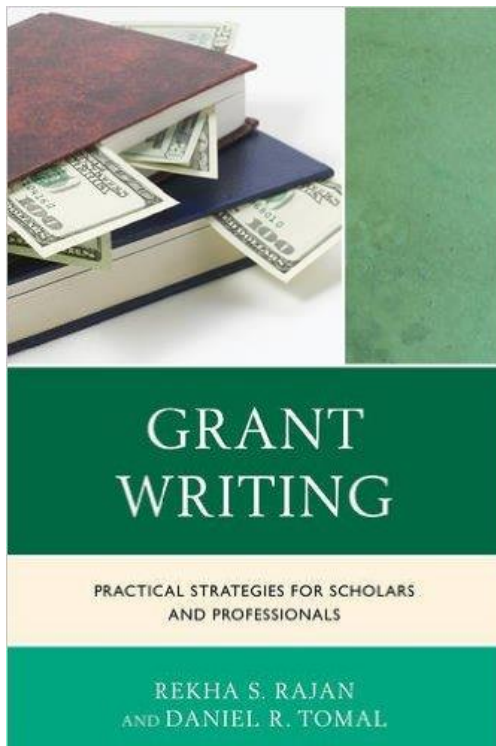


## Book Review

### **Practical Funding Strategies for Scholars and Professionals**

#### **“Grant Writing” by Rekha S. Rajan and Daniel R. Tomal**

By Amitabh Vikram Dwivedi



*Grant Writing: Practical Strategies for Scholars and Professionals*, written by Rekha S. Rajan and Daniel R. Tomal, provides a cohesive, comprehensive, and clear step-by-step process for understanding grant writing from beginning to end. The book is divided into six chapters of almost equal length, excluding an epilogue. The book is supported with a list of appendices (A-J) in thirty-three pages, illustrating the Grant Professional Association’s code of ethics and standards, Public Law 106-107 (the Federal Financial Management Assistance Act of 1999), the privacy policy of the website Grants.gov,

eligibility for government grants, processes for grant applications, various sample formats, and glossary terms. The authors provide tables and figures to highlight their points, and headings, including notations and reflections for summing up each chapter.

In chapter one, “Overture: An Introduction to Grants,” the authors claim that “grant writing is an important, ever-changing field,” and scholars, university faculty, industry professionals, consultants, and independent researchers can validate their research through securing grants and external funding (p. 1). Further, they state that “grant writing is both a science and an art” and this chapter provides an overview of answers to grant-related questions pertaining to what to apply for, where to apply, and how to ask for a grant (p. 3). The writers provide a grant writing conceptual framework, demonstrating links between a grantee’s needs, a funder’s needs, and institutional needs. The chapter also lists some basic definitions of principle terminology and highlights ethical and legal considerations “involved with writing and administering grants” (p. 8). The authors also provide a list of software programs, including Wizehive, Grants Network, Regpack, Fluid Review, Flexi-grants, Aims, Grant Manager, GranTracks, and Grants Cloud.

Chapter two, “Exposition: Finding the Grants,” provides an answer to the question: “Where do you find grants?” (p. 14). The authors discuss some of the largest government funded grant agencies, including the National

Endowment for the Arts, the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, and the US Department of Education. They also address private and corporate funded grant agencies, including the Grammy Foundation, the Alzheimer's Association, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Spencer Foundation, the Whitehall Foundation, and the American Psychological Association. The authors suggest that "it is better to start small" (p. 20). Further, they emphasize that applicants must have an understanding of the policies and priorities of the funding agency from which they are seeking funding. An applicant must also be mindful of the deadlines and length of time "funding is available" (p. 23). The rest of the chapter provides tips on how to write a letter of intent and how to make a call to agencies' program officers for help in developing bids for grants.

In chapter three, "Theme and Variations: Developing the Proposal," the authors discuss the process of developing a grant proposal. They state that the majority of proposal guidelines ask for an executive summary, a project statement, a purpose and rationale, goals and outcomes, an assessment, and personnel information. The remaining parts of the chapter provide a brief description of these six elements.

Chapter four, "Recapitulation: Completing the Proposal," deals with issues related to finalizing the proposal. The authors argue that "grant writing is perhaps the only time when repeating ideas is acceptable and expected" (p. 41). When the applicant's project statement has been written and revised to meet the funding agency's specified requirements, the applicant should then build the proposal narrative, including such components as a literature review, a budget, a timeline, and an evaluation and assessment. The final part of the chapter emphasizes the importance of managing the timeline, which "demonstrates how you will

implement the grant" (p. 49). The authors provide an example of a backward timeline using a PERT chart. Regarding assessment and evaluation, the authors suggest the following questions for the applicant to consider when finalizing the proposal: What are the main goals and outcomes of the project? Who is involved with implementing/managing the project? And Who/what will be the focus of this project? (p. 55).

In chapter five, "Finale: Revising and Editing the Proposal," the authors discuss the relevance of editing and revising a grant proposal to help its chances of success. They state that "writing succinctly and clearly are key to successful writing" (p. 70). They highlight several reasons for ineffective writing, tabulating them in 10 points that include one's academic background, communication style, the use of hedging and jargon, a lack of planning and editing, the use of the wrong tone, the creation of a confusing budget, focusing on the project's problem rather than solution, and using the passive rather than active voice. They claim that only a persuasive proposal can get a grant and that such a proposal reflects characteristics of effective writing related to structure, tone, composition, movement, format, voice, rhythm, grammar, and illustrations.

Chapter six, "Encore: Beyond the Proposal," makes various suggestions for what to do after the proposal is completed. The authors suggest that one should submit the proposal at least a week ahead of the deadline and invite their colleagues to review the proposal beforehand. Applicants should also familiarize themselves with the review process and try to reach out to the program officer. Last, but not least, "if your proposal is rejected, consider minor revisions and resubmit to another funder" (p. 83). This chapter ends with a positive note, arguing that grant writing is not only an opportunity to gather external funding, but also

a venue to build and foster meaningful professional relationships.

Overall, *Grant Writing* is simple in the sense that is clear and straightforward, but it is certainly not simplistic in its content. It deals with language (money) that all nations understand. One noticeable shortcoming, possibly stemming from the fact that the researchers reside in the United States, is that it lacks examples from different countries. If provided the opportunity in a future edition, I hope the authors will include and modify their draft in this regard. Overall, however, this is a useful, handy guide for scholars and professionals, faculty members, and researchers, as well as a helpful text for institutional leaders engaged in finding and securing grants.

**“Grant Writing: Practical Strategies for Scholars and Professionals.”** By Rekha S. Rajan and Daniel R. Tomal. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015. ISBN 978-1-4758-1441-5

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