**Why serve as a reviewer?**

One of the best ways to improve your own grantsmanship, short of writing a lot of proposals, is to read and evaluate grant proposals others have written. As a reviewer for a federal or state agency or other organization, you will read a variety of proposals written for the same grant program – excellent training for what makes a successful grant and what does not. If you also serve on a review panel, you will have the benefit of learning how other reviewers, some of whom may be veteran reviewers, evaluated the same proposals.

Serving as a reviewer provides you firsthand knowledge about a funder and the priorities of its granting program. Having been a part of it, you will understand the review process and what it takes for a grant to be funded by that organization. This information will serve you well should you yourself later apply for a grant from that funder. In addition, reviewing is a great way to keep abreast of the current topics and areas of research in your field and to network with others working in your area.

Finally, you, as an experienced reviewer, become a valuable resource for the grant-seeking community at UNI!

**What experience is needed?**

In most cases, you do not need to be successful grantee yourself to be a grant reviewer. Junior faculty as well as non-Ph.D.-holding professionals are often welcomed as grant reviewers. Funders do generally look for reviewers with experience or expertise in the fields or areas in which they are granting.

**What is involved?**

Depending on the funder’s review process, reviews are conducted in a number of ways. A funder may provide you a set of proposals to evaluate independently; you may share your evaluations with the funder via mail, e-mail, conference call, or online meeting. In other instances, you may conduct an initial review of proposals and then convene as part of a review panel at a funder’s designated location for a joint group evaluation. The review format can vary widely and may or may not involve travel. Funders will generally cover any travel expenses and may provide a small stipend for your review work.

In addition, the review process often requires a lot of a reviewer’s time over a short period. For instance, a panel session may be conducted in two 10-hour days. It is advisable to understand the time and travel commitments involved before agreeing to serve as a reviewer.

**How do I become a reviewer?**

Many federal, state and organization funders are continually seeking reviewers and have websites allowing you to easily volunteer. To volunteer, choose a funder that fits your area of interest and/or expertise. Check that funder's website for instructions on how to become a reviewer. Often, you will e-mail an appropriate contact for the program you are interested in and provide your contact information and area of expertise. Funders may also ask you to submit a CV. Some funders have questionnaires for potential reviewers to complete. Funders will then contact you when they have a review opportunity matching your expertise and interest.

If you don’t find specific instructions on how to become a reviewer for a funder, contact the funder’s grant manager or appropriate program officer and express your interest in serving as a reviewer.

**Already served as a reviewer?**

RSP is interested in the reviewing experience of any faculty and staff members. If you have served as a reviewer in the past, please contact us at rsp@uni.edu and let us know which agency(ies) or organization(s) and which grant programs(s) you’ve reviewed for and when.