SRAI | SOCIETY OF RESEARCH ADMINISTRATORS INTERNATIONAL

Supporting NIH Institutional Training Grant Applications

A Flexible Framework for Research Administrators

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This session will *not*:

Walk through every application component in detail
We will not cover each section line-by-line

Review NIH instructions or standard submission requirements
Assumes familiarity with basic application structure

Provide detailed budget development guidance
Focus is not on calculations, rates, or budget mechanics

Cover "how to write" each section of the proposal
Focus is on coordination, not content development

This session focuses on how to coordinate the people, resources, and timing needed to build a strong application

Why Training Grants Are Different

This Is Not a Typical Grant Application

- Not centered on a single research project
- Requires coordinated input across faculty and units
- Includes program design, not just research aims
- Must address training, mentoring, and trainee outcomes

Training grants are programs—not projects

What Makes Training Grant Applications Complex?

Faculty & Stakeholders

Multiple contributors across departments

Different roles, priorities, and expectations

Program Design

Training plan, curriculum, and mentoring structure

Aligned with program goals and trainee experience

Data & Evaluation

Outcomes tracking and evaluation strategy

Coordination with data and evaluation support

Institutional Inputs

Leadership support, resources, and commitments

Coordination across multiple offices

What This Means for Proposal Development

Multiple components require different expertise
PIs cannot develop every section independently

Key inputs must come from the right sources
Evaluation, data, training, and institutional support

Delays often stem from missing connections
Not knowing who to engage, or engaging too late

Early coordination shapes proposal quality
Connecting the right people early improves outcomes

Knowing who to involve—and when—is critical to a strong proposal

Core Components of a T32 Application

Data and Training Tables

Department / Program-Level

Table 1: Current faculty and trainee composition
Table 3: Overlapping training grants and participating faculty
Table 6: Admissions and enrollment over the past 5 years
Table 7: Slot utilization (for renewal applications)

Faculty-Level

Table 2: Faculty training and research experience
Table 4: Faculty research support and grant funding

Trainee-Level

Table 5: Trainee publications
Table 8: Trainee outcomes and career progression

Data spans multiple levels and reflects both current and historical program activity

Building Data Tables Requires Coordination

Where Data Comes From

- Institutional systems (HR, student, finance)
- Department and program records
- Faculty-provided data
- Central data or reporting teams (if available)

Common Challenges

- Data is incomplete or inconsistently tracked
- Definitions vary across sources
- Information is identified too late
- Significant time spent reconciling data

RA Role

Ask early if there is a plan for data collection: Does the PI know how each table will be populated?
Identify and connect to data sources: Recommend offices or individuals who can provide the data
Surface gaps before they become delays: Highlight missing or unclear data early

Training Activities and Program Structure

This Is the Core of the Proposal

The strength of the program is defined here

This is where PIs must invest the most time and effort

Requires coordination across multiple areas

Programs, departments, and institutional resources

Often depends on existing structures

Graduate programs, courses, and mentoring frameworks

New elements require intentional development

Time, effort, and input from multiple stakeholders

RA Role

Ask how the program will be built: Is the PI leveraging existing structures or creating new ones?
Identify where coordination is needed: Who needs to be involved?
Help initiate connections early: Ensure the right conversations happen before development stalls

Faculty Participation and Program Composition

Faculty mentors define the program

Their participation shapes the program's focus, strength, and outcomes.

Mentors Drive the Program

- Define the scientific and training focus
- Shape the trainee experience
- Influence program direction and strength

Mentors Drive the Data

- Faculty inclusion impacts multiple data tables
- Changes in mentors affect reported metrics
- Participation must be consistent across the application

Mentor Materials Must Align

- Biosketches should reflect training experience
- Not just recent research activity or funding
- Research and mentoring should align with program focus

Managing Faculty Participation Requires Coordination

Faculty participation must be intentional and consistent

Changes in mentors affect the program, data, and overall narrative

Participation often evolves

Faculty may be added, removed, or redefined

Roles are not always clearly defined

Mentor expectations and contributions may vary

Maintain alignment across the application

Mentors, biosketches, and data tables must remain consistent

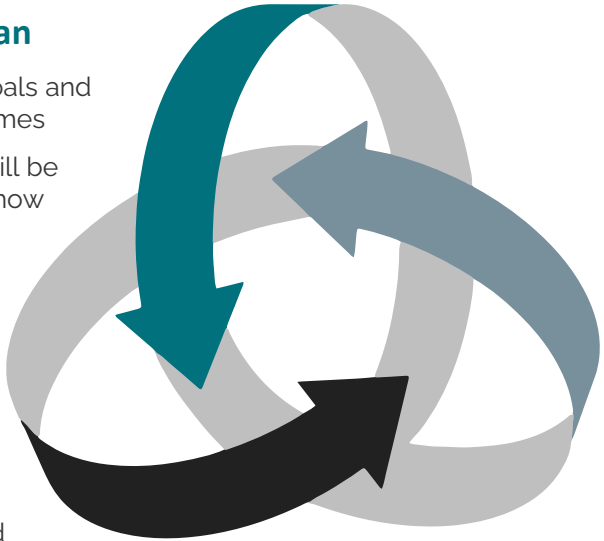
RA Role

Track participating faculty throughout development: Ensure changes are reflected across propsal
Encourage clear definition of roles: How is each faculty member contributing to the program?
Flag inconsistencies early: Align mentors, biosketches, and data tables

Evaluation and Outcomes

Evaluation Plan

- Defines program goals and intended outcomes
- Identifies what will be measured and how



Metrics and Data

- Quantitative and qualitative measures
- Aligned with program goals

Tracking Outcomes

- Trainee progression and career outcomes
- Longitudinal tracking beyond the training period

Evaluation requires intentional design—it cannot be added at the end

Evaluation Requires Planning and Feasible Scope

Evaluation often breaks down in development

Plans are overly ambitious or added too late in the process

- **Evaluation must be feasible**
  - Proposed approaches should align with the program's capacity and available expertise
- **Some evaluation is better than none**
  - Even simple, well-defined approaches can demonstrate program effectiveness
- **Data collection must start early**
  - Programs need to collect data from day one to support future reporting and renewal

Resource Alert

- Evaluation training modules (R25, NIGMS)
- Designed to help programs develop practical, feasible evaluation plans
- Available later this year as a resource for faculty and administrators

RA Role

Connect to evaluation support or resources: Identify available expertise, tools, or training opportunities

Encourage early planning for data collection: What data will be needed, and how will it be tracked?

Institutional Support and Commitments

Institutional Support Letter

A critical requirement that takes time and coordination

Broad Institutional Commitments Required

Describes institutional commitment across multiple areas, including resources, infrastructure, and support for trainees and the program.

Senior-Level Signatures Required

Must be signed by an authorized institutional official (e.g., Provost, Dean, or Equivalent).

Requires Lead Time

Gathering the required information, securing commitments, and obtaining signatures takes time—plan early.

Often requires coordination across multiple offices and leadership levels.

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Financial Gaps and Supports

T32s provide important support, but do not cover all program needs

Stipend and Trainee Support Gaps

Additional funds may be needed for stipend supplements and tuition and fees.

Faculty and Staff Effort

Protected time and roles to deliver training, mentoring, and program oversight.

Program Infrastructure

Space, equipment, administrative support, and other resources to sustain the program.

Coordinating Institutional Support Takes Planning

Institutional support is not automatic

It must be identified, coordinated, and documented early

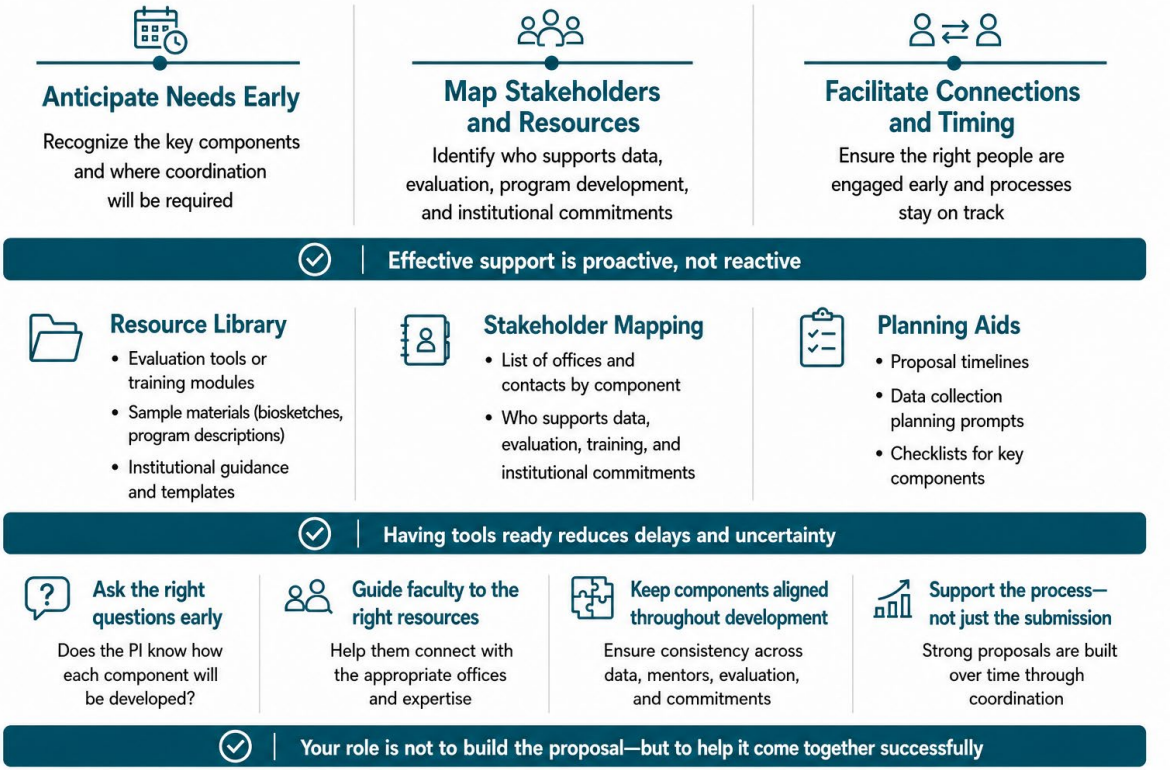
Multiple stakeholders are involved	Commitments must be clearly defined	Timing matters
Departments, schools, finance, and institutional leadership	Financial support, effort, and program resources	Securing commitments and signatures takes time

RA Role

Help identify where gaps will exist: Often during budget planning and proposal development
Connect faculty to the right people: Who should be engaged to address gaps?
Plan early for institutional letters: Allow time for drafting, coordination, and signatures

Putting It Into Practice

Operationalizing Pre-Award Support for Training Grants



Key Takeaways

Training grants are complex and multi-component
No single person owns every part of the proposal

Successful proposals require early coordination
Engaging the right people at the right time is critical

Faculty cannot build these proposals alone
Strong applications depend on institutional input and support

Research administrators play a critical role
By connecting people, resources, and timing across components

Your role is not to build the proposal—but to help it come together successfully

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Questions?