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Ernesto Chávez, Miroslava Chávez-García and Luis Alvarez

Navigating academia successfully requires a network of reliable mentors, colleagues, and friends who can provide sound advice and support. Nowhere is mentorship more valuable than in the process of writing a grant proposal. The process is challenging and competitive, yet it serves as a tremendous learning experience in shaping one's research trajectory. Equally important, applying opens the possibility of landing a coveted prize and promises to provide valuable resources for one's career. Knowing how to identify appropriate grants and fellowships, address all components

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Before starting the application process, give yourself at least a week, ideally two or more, to pull together a project proposal. It needs to be written for a longer period of time and should develop over the course of a few weeks, even months, and should be updated throughout the life of the project. What you want to do, make the appropriate changes based on existing literature, methodological approaches, and timeline for completion. The more precise you are about your project, the stronger the proposal.

Getting Started

Soon after embarking on the fellowship application process you will learn that most are composed of multiple sections, underscoring the need to start early. Most fellowship applications are online. Before you begin, look over the entire application and its requirements so that you can complete them before the deadline. This will also ensure that each component of the application serves a purpose—

Fellowships and grants form an invaluable component of our dossiers and are critical to providing the knowledge and bring further opportunities down the road. Equally important, receiving an award signals to others that you have something important to contribute. Although the odds may be against you, if you do not apply, you will never give yourself the opportunity to test the competition and potentially obtain the prize. This is, after all, part of our business and we are not awarded a grant or fellowship, the process of thinking about an application inevitably strengthens the project. Thus, grant and fellowship applications are an opportunity to assess, grow, and further develop your work.

the applications were not designed to annoy. Rather, each component has been thought out and likely is meant for you to link your project with the interests of the organization sponsoring the fellowship and to facilitate the review and evaluation of your project. Your job is not to challenge or refute the requirements of the application—doing so would be a waste of time. You take advantage of every component to demonstrate the strengths of your project, experience, and approach in answering a set of questions furthering our knowledge of your project. Think of the application as a recycling of your main points. The sum of the parts should come together to form a bigger

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Grant and fellowship opportunities, though diminishing in troubled economic times, are available and not difficult to find. Begin by asking mentors, advisors, and peers and by checking online sources periodically, like the [National Science Foundation](#) and [National Endowment for the Humanities](#). Some are for research or travel only, while others are for extended periods of writing. Note deadlines and requirements as well.

based on the quality of the proposal, whether the project include secondary works, but also primary sources. This shows the reviewers that you are aware of and familiar with these materials.

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It is important to convince them of that fact. The most important component of the application for its ability to ship applications is that they essentially ask you to convey

after many hours of reading proposals, many of which are unclear and uninspiring, we are left bleary-eyed, bored, and starved for some excitement. Your goal is to develop present the major contours of your study, your main ar-

Many times we came away from reading an application er, sends a message to the reviewers that you do not know exactly what you want to do. More important, it says that you are not equipped (at the present moment) to carry out the study and the proposal does not merit funding.

should also point out the main themes and questions being asked, theoretical framework methodology and sources, scholarly contribution, and, if required, a timeline to com-

quired, do not say you will because the reader will know—