**Tips on What to Say to a Program Officer**

**Before contacting the Program Officer**

* Identify the grant program(s): Ensure that it aligns with the core themes of your research and the mission of the program office.
* Look up recent awards.
* Read the guidance thoroughly and write deliberate questions.
* Look for upcoming or archived webinars in support of your program solicitation. These often answer questions or provide time for Q&A.
* Write a brief (no more than 1 page) abstract of your idea/project. Include your main objective, methods, expected outcomes, and how the outcomes will address societal problems or contribute to the field.
* Email the abstract to the PO and include the program that you’re considering, ask if this is the kind of program they might consider funding.
* After an email exchange, request a telephone appointment.

**Some** potential questions:

* Am I speaking with the correct PO?
* Does my project fall with the current priorities?
* Does the project design use the right approach?
* Are there certain types of projects that are currently “trending” that are more likely to be funded?
* What do you recommend to improve my chances?
* What is the anticipated proposal success ratio?
* Do you expect last year’s average award amount to change this year?
* Are there any alternative funding tracks for the project?
* What are some of the common reasons for proposal rejections?

**Follow up with**

* A personal thank you email.
* Continue the relationship regardless of the result.