

**Writing Fundable Proposals:
Keys to Success for New Investigators
of Color**

Alflee M. Breland-Noble, Ph.D., MHSc.
AAKOMA Project Director & Associate Professor
Department of Psychiatry
Georgetown University Medical Center

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Why are you here?

- What drives you?
- What questions are you most interested in answering?
- Why apply for funding?

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Why are you here?

Answering these questions before you begin is an imperative.

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Overview in 3 Acts

Act I: Preparing

- What to know before you begin

Act II: Writing

- Help: Who? What? When? Where? and How?
- Tools of the Trade
- "When the going gets tough" (Example)

Act III: Applying (oneself)

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Act I: Preparing

Alflee M. Breland-Noble, Ph.D., MHSc.
 AAKOMA Project Director & Associate Professor
 Department of Psychiatry
 Georgetown University Medical Center

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Why are you here?

Success in external funding

- What do your fellow new investigators have to say about pursuing this type of career?
 - *Any initial thoughts from you?*
- Have you had the opportunity to consider what is required to be competitive?

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Speaker Background

- Ph.D. - Counseling Psychology - 1997
- MHSc. - Clinical Research - Duke SoM 2010
- Mentored Fellow on NIH R25
- 2 NIH Postdoctoral Fellowships
- NIH Diversity Supplement and NIH Career (K) award
- **PI on 3 awards currently and Co-I on 1 additional award**

Primary Research Area: CBPR, PCOR and CER clinical research for African American and diverse youth and families (Adolescent Mental Health Disparities)

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What to know before you begin
Ask Yourself...

- Are you fluent in “NIHese” “PCORlese”?
 - Institute mission
 - Institute funding priorities
 - Are you familiar with grants.gov?
 - Are you familiar with the NIH and PCORI forms?
 - Do you have a biosketch? Do you know what one looks like?
 - Are you registered in the eRA Commons or PCORI Fluxx?
 - Do you know what an LOI is?


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Funding Priorities

Do you know where to find the Strategic Priorities of NIMH, PCORI or the funder of your choice?



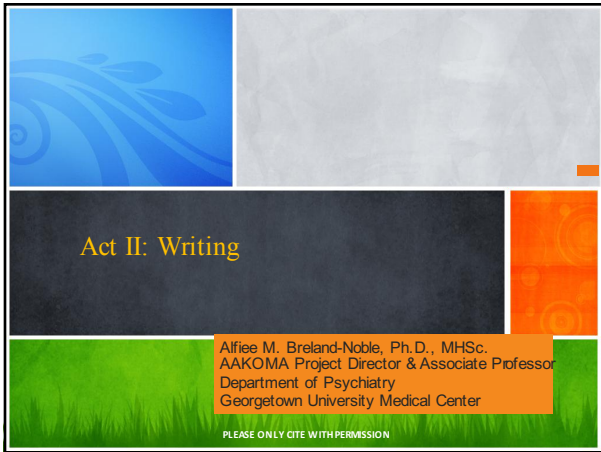
Where does your research fit within the mission and priorities of the funder?



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Act II: Writing

Alfiee M. Breland-Noble, Ph.D., MHSc.
AAKOMA Project Director & Associate Professor
Department of Psychiatry
Georgetown University Medical Center



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Help

- Who?
 - You and your mentors
 - You want concrete feedback in a timely manner from 2-3 **previously funded** investigators
 - You need a team of investigators
 - *Very little science occurs in isolation (Team Science)*
 - *Colleagues ideally have more experience with research and external funding*
 - Your Program Officer/Program Manager

You should truly enjoy working together!




Help

- What?
 - Organize your thoughts and create a theme for your work.


Can you pass the “elevator speech” test to describe

1. Your overall career research framework?
2. Your specific topic of interest with this proposal?



Help

- Where?
 - Mentors’ successful proposals
 - Colleagues’ successful proposals
- When?
 - At the outset of proposal development
- How?
 - Practice makes perfect
 - Anticipate rewrites, esp. for ESI and NI




Timelines

- How long does it take to write a proposal?

Time to Award at NIH


Time to Award at PCORI: Generally 4-9 months depending upon mechanism (includes submission of LOI)




Timelines

How long does it take to actually receive a Notice of Award?

- Anticipate **anywhere from 12-18 months** including resubmissions



Along the way, you want to remember...



Why are you here?


- What drives you?
- What questions are you most interested in answering?
- Why apply for external funding?



Tools of the Trade


Program Officer

- How many of you already have an identified PO?
- Are you in regular contact with him/her?
- Have you submitted a concept paper for feedback?
- Have you written a concept paper?



NIH RePORT


- Use RePORT to determine what funded investigators who share your interests are doing
 - From which institutes have they received their funding?
 - Which mechanisms have they used?
 - How similar is your work to theirs?



Practical Application

- My trajectory of funding (aka)

When the going gets tough...



When the going gets tough...

- First ever grant - internal faculty award in 2000 followed by second internal award in 2002
 - 10 fold award increase from first to second award.
- Next awards:
 - 2002 - 2005 NIH T32
 - 2005 - 2007 NIH diversity supplement
 - 2006 Foundation award
 - 2007 - 2011 NIH K award
 - 2012 *Almost 0 (7% on my mentee's NIH award)*
 - 2013 - 2014 NIH pilot award (rebuilding track record)
 - 2015 2 PCORI Awards, 1 NIH pilot award and Co-I on mentor's NIH award

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**Act III:
applying oneself**

Alflee M. Breland-Noble, Ph.D., M.H.Sc.
Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences
Duke University Medical Center

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Practical Application

Which funder is best aligned with your research?
There are alternatives to NIH


Have you determined if your area of research interest is aligned with the funder's priorities?

Who are your mentors?
Have they been funded previously?

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Take Home Messages

1. Brilliant preparation increases your chances for early success
2. Do your homework BEFORE you write
3. Assemble a great, collaborative team
4. Identify a guide for the journey



Take Home Messages


1. Know the language
2. Ask for help
3. Practice, Practice, Practice
4. Identify your support system and nurture it always



Take Home Messages

1. Stop comparing yourself to peers, especially for ECPS of color
 1. YOU WILL HAVE DIFFERENT TRAJECTORIES
 2. There are many mentors but few SPONSORS
 1. It is far more difficult to find the latter, but they provide so much more benefit to your career

Mentors provide guidance but sponsors open doors and walk you through.



Thank You

Dr. Alfiee M. Breland-Noble
Director, The AAKOMA Project
Department of Psychiatry
Georgetown University Medical Center
202.687.2392
www.aakomaproject.org
Alfiee.brelandnoble@georgetown.edu

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