

## **What Should I Avoid When Writing PCT Grant Applications?**

Wendy Weber:

So a couple of suggestions of application don'ts. Don't skip any steps. Don't assume that the reviewers on the panel will be completely familiar with the area of science. They're generally reviewing a lot of different areas of science, and so you do want to give them a good literature review in your application stating both the supporting and the contradicting evidence, and giving a real critical evaluation of where things are and why you're proposing the work that you are.

One thing to keep in mind is that our reviewers are essentially volunteers. We do pay them a little bit to do the work that they're doing, but it's often on top of the job that they already have. And so the more concise you can be, the more clear you can be in your writing style and in the way the application looks, the easier it is for reviewers to get through the application and comprehend what it is you're proposing to do.

Don't include materials that aren't allowed in the appendix. That is something that can result in your application not getting reviewed. So be sure you check to make sure if you're including in any appendix materials, that those are actually allowed.

One thing I always point out to folks is that if you list something as a aim, it's anticipated that you are fully powered to test that aim. And so don't include an aim if you're not able to actually do a test on it and have an analytic plan to address that aim.

The words that we don't like to hear from reviewers are, this looks like a fishing expedition. They're just collecting everything they can think of. And certainly in a pragmatic type of study design where we want really streamlined trial designs, it's really helpful to narrow that down and not include every measure that you could include. Burden is a really big problem in a lot of these studies, and so really making sure you have the data you need to test your hypotheses, and as be tight as possible in that particular area.

Don't forget something really important that you do need as a co-founder in your analysis plan, which is why it's so important to have that bio statistician working with you from the very beginning.