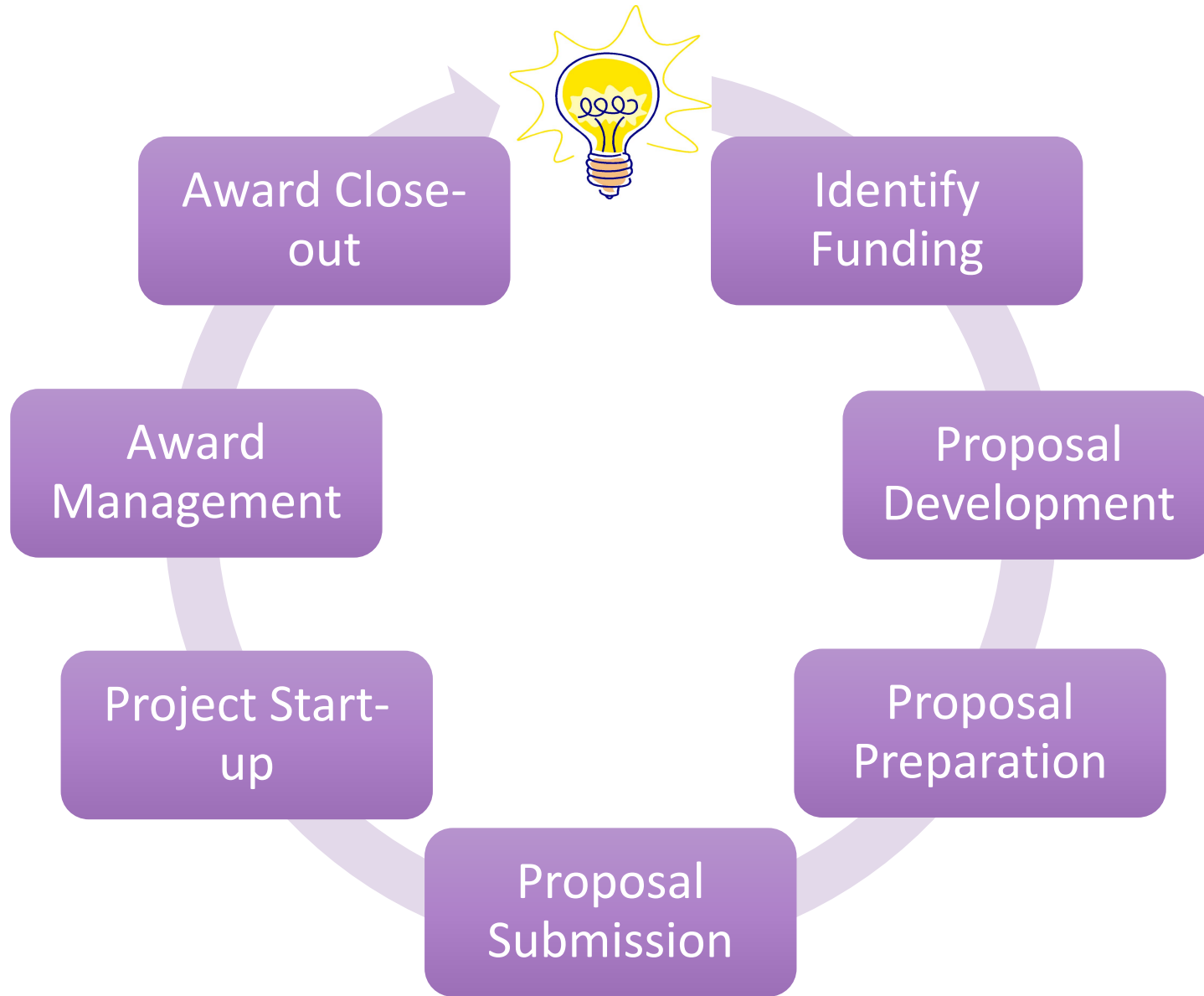
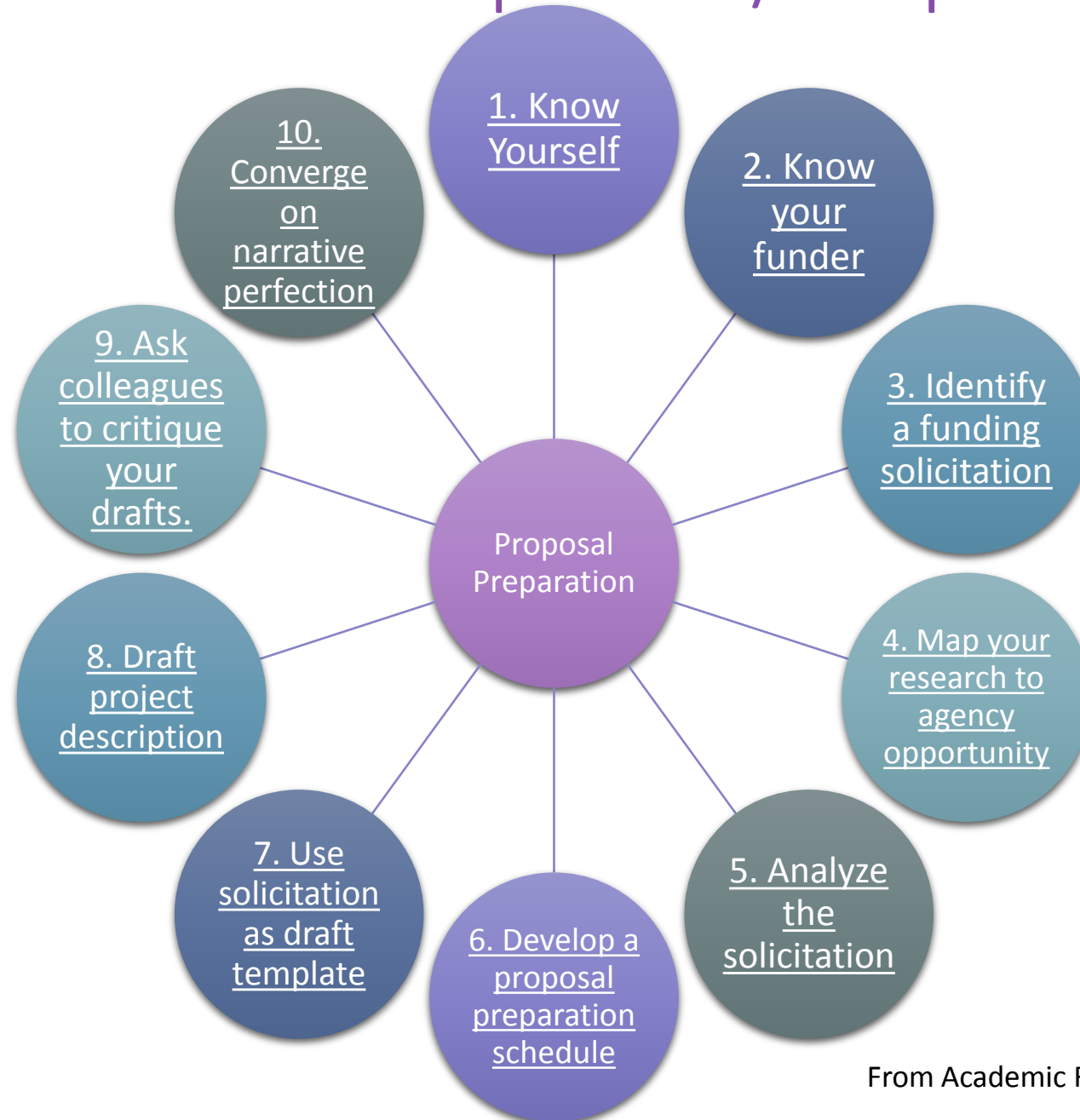


Life Cycle of a Grant



Proposal Development/Preparation



Proposal Development/Preparation

- 1. Know yourself:** Understand your research strengths and weaknesses, be able to clearly explain your research interests, begin to identify funding agencies whose mission, strategic plan, and investment strategies are aligned with your research interests and expertise, etc.
- 2. Know your funder:** Learn their mission, find out what kind of research they fund, how they review proposals, who makes the funding decisions, etc.

Proposal Development/Preparation

3. **Identify a funding solicitation:** Learn about grant program funding cycles, read abstracts of active funded proposals under the program.
4. **Map your research to agency opportunity:** Make sure your interests fit the funding priorities of the funding agency, talk to colleagues funded by the agency or who have served as rotating program officers. Contact the program officer (but only after you have carefully reviewed the agency website and solicitation). You are not asking about the likelihood of being funded but rather about how your research idea aligns with the programs priorities.

Proposal Development/Preparation

- 5. Analyze the solicitation:** Does your research fit the goals and objects of the solicitation? Can you make a compelling case for the significance of your research to the solicitation?
- 6. Develop a proposal preparation schedule:** Using the proposal deadline as an end point and your decision to submit as a beginning point, schedule all proposal tasks including preparing multiple drafts of the narrative, developing the budget, writing the budget justification, managing the collection of documents such as biosketches, current and pending support, cost sharing documents, etc.

Proposal Development/Preparation

7. **Use solicitation as a draft proposal template:** Copy and paste the solicitation's key sections, research objectives, and review criteria in the beginning of a draft narrative as an organizational template. Be aware of what criteria will be used for review.
8. **Draft project description:** Use solicitation as a template. Make sure all research team members have read and understand the expectations laid out in the solicitation. Answer in narrative all questions asked by the solicitation in the order they are asked. Use graphics, visuals, and milestone charts to complement the narrative text. Clearly state your research idea including its importance in advancing the field or the agency funding priorities.

Proposal Development/Preparation

- 9. Ask colleagues to critique your drafts:** Ask them to be brutal, frank, and honest. Allow plenty of time for this part of the process. They need time to fully review the document and you need time to make narrative changes to respond to their feedback. Too often the first, substantive review of the proposal happens at the funding agency and this is too late in the process!
- 10. Converge on narrative perfection:** The key to a successful proposal represents the outcome of a process of continuous iteration and improvement of the project narrative that, over a sufficient amount of time, converges on perfection.

[Return to Home](#)

Best Practices

- Collaborate with other departments on campus and other institutions.
- Ensure your research aligns with the priorities of the funding program.
- Carefully review the solicitation.
- Look at abstracts of successfully funding projects under this program.
- Talk to the Program Director and colleagues funded by the agency.

Best Practices continued

- Develop a preparation schedule working back from the submission deadline.
- Follow solicitation guidelines.
- Use language from the RFP in your project description.
- Understand the review criteria that will be used to evaluate your project.
- If proposal is unfunded, address reviewer's comments and resubmit!