

Addressing Broader Impacts in your Grant Applications

Questions for Consideration

A. What makes a good Broader Impact Statement?¹

1. The project has to fit with the research. Proposing something totally separate from the research doesn't make sense.
2. Take advantage of your local strengths. If you have a long-running program of science lectures for the public, see if you can get involved in that instead of starting your own program -- just make sure you make it clear that you are contributing something, not freeloading.
3. If you're going to propose something for the classroom, be aware of the literature in research on teaching and learning. We know a lot more about what works and what doesn't than we used to.
4. Don't make a laundry list of activities trying to impress people with how much you're doing. The list of activities NSF put out is not a menu where you choose one from each column. Quality over quantity.
5. Reviewers more and more want to see that you're making an effort to determine whether what you are doing works. You need to have some way to assess your activity and determine whether it is making an impact. (You ought to want to know this anyway so you don't waste your time doing something that is useless.)
6. Have a goal -- state clearly what you want to happen as a result of the activity (besides getting your research funding)
7. It is important to have a manageable BI plan - even one proposed quality activity can be all encompassing in terms of time, and reviewers will see through that and question whether it can be accomplished, alongside solid research.

B. Questions to consider in preparing your statement

1. What will the overall theme for your BI statement be?
 - Advancing discovery while promoting teaching, training and learning
 - Broadening participation
 - Enhancing research and education infrastructure
 - Broadly disseminating results
 - Benefits to society
2. Who is your target audience?
 - Diversity
 - Undergrads
 - Grad students
 - K-12
 - Researchers
 - The community / broader public
 - Policymakers
3. What have you initiated or accomplished thus far that related to BI? (e.g. K-12 outreach; idea for a partnership with the community; idea for an interdisciplinary course; etc)
4. What resources / help do you need to develop a solid BI plan?

¹ From The Broader Impacts Toolbox: <http://broaderimpacts.info/index.php>