Wisconsin Idea Undergraduate Fellowship Application

Tips for Success
(for additional resources, see: http://morgridge.wisc.edu/students/wif.html)

Planning

Think about possible local community/campus connections:

- Find out if research in your prospective area exists on campus (a good way to find a potential faculty/instructional staff mentor if you haven’t approached one yet). Once partners have been identified, discuss your project proposal with your faculty/instructional staff mentor and community partner organization.

- The selection committee awards innovation, and contributions of new/useful knowledge. Research other WIF efforts that have been made in your area by consulting past project descriptions at http://morgridge.wisc.edu/students/wif.html.

The Proposal

In no more than 5 double-spaced pages, explain: (1) the purpose of your project; (2) a summary of major activities; (3) the timeline for these activities; (4) the benefits to your community partner organization, your faculty/instructional staff mentor, and you.

Presentation matters. It helps if the proposal looks appealing and professional (but remember, there’s no “one right way” to achieve this—see available application examples to get an idea of the range of formats your application may encompass).

The selection committee reviewing your proposal will be interdisciplinary. Keep this audience in mind when composing your proposal—keep jargon to a minimum and explain any discipline-specific terms you use. Remember that the committee will be asking themselves the following questions:

- Does this project meet a real community need? What is the potential for actually making a measurable impact in the community?

- Is the proposal well-written? Is the proposal detailed, thorough, and comprehensive? Is it original and innovative? Did the applicant discuss issues relative to finances, responsibilities, and timelines with their faculty/instructional staff mentor and community partner organization prior to submitting the proposal?

- Is the project truly a three-way collaboration? To what extent will faculty/instructional staff mentors and community partners engage? (Letters of support are a method of gauging this).

- Are project evaluation (benefits, impacts, etc.) and goals clearly discussed in the proposal?

- Can the project be completed within the allotted time frame? (Be critically realistic about what you can accomplish in a given time period—students often overestimate what is realistic).

- Is the budget clear and accurate? Are all expenses accounted for? See examples at: http://morgridge.wisc.edu/students/documents/Sample_WIF_Budgets_WIF_application_tips.pdf. Remember: The student stipend is yours to spend as you see fit. The project
Implementation Budget of up to $2000 ($1000 for summer projects) can ONLY be used for supplies, community partner stipends, travel or other project expenses.

- What is the overall ‘learning potential’ for the applicant—does the project integrate service and learning?
- Other questions the selection committee will consider:
  - Does the project require that the student learn more about the work of the community agency and the people it serves?
  - Does the project focus on an underserved population?

Choose a topic you are interested in, and don’t be afraid to show your passion for it!

**THE ABSTRACT**

In a concise, 250 word synopsis of your project, explain: (1) WHAT the project seeks to accomplish (purpose); (2) WHY you have chosen to pursue this particular study or question (rationale); (3) HOW you are proceeding (methods); (4) WHAT you hope to accomplish (outcome or results).

Make your abstract self-contained: skip references to figures and tables; no cited sources.

If you have space, include some BACKGROUND about your project.

**Suggestion:** write the abstract after you write your five-page proposal.

**FINAL TIPS**

The WIF homepage provides numerous resources to assist you in the development of your proposal, including examples of proposals, budgets, past project abstracts, frequently-asked questions, and application materials. Visit [http://morgridge.wisc.edu/students/wif.html](http://morgridge.wisc.edu/students/wif.html).

Show your proposal to other readers, including those involved in your project (faculty/instructional staff mentor, community partner organization), as well as readers who aren’t involved in your project. Remember, while others can give you feedback and ideas, it is you who must compose the proposal!

- The Writing Center is an excellent resource to assist with composing your proposal!
  Location: 6171 H.C. White Hall; [www.wisc.edu/writing](http://www.wisc.edu/writing); (608-263-1992).

Choose an accurate, straightforward title that captures the reader’s attention.

If your project will involve working with and collecting data from human subjects, it is likely that you will need to complete an application for human subjects research approval via a UW-Madison Institutional Review Board (IRB). Contact the IRB that houses the department or school through which you will be awarded credit for your WIF (your faculty/instructional staff mentor should assist you). Information on the IRB process may be found at [http://www.grad.wisc.edu/hrpp/10007.htm](http://www.grad.wisc.edu/hrpp/10007.htm).

**FOLLOW DIRECTIONS!!!** The selection committee is looking for a professional proposal that is well-written and COMPLETE. Make sure you have all necessary signatures and materials, as well as original copies where specified in the instructions. And turn your application in early!!! If you have any questions, contact the Morgridge Center (608-263-2432) or Elizabeth Tryon, at tryon@wisc.edu