Specific Aims Template

**<1 sentence>** Name a big picture, central challenge of your field that lots of people are interested in solving.

**<2-3 sentences>** Elaborate on the problem and what is going on in your field towards solving it.

**<1 sentence>** Concisely name a single, critical gap, hurdle, or bottleneck that is slowing or stopping progress toward solving the big picture names in the first sentence. **THIS IS THE MOST CRITICAL PART OF YOUR SPECIFIC AIMS!** You must have a single, clear problem that needs solving in order to have a good proposal.

**<1-2 sentences>** (Optional) Elaborate on problem/hurdle/roadblock

**<1-2 sentences>** Propose an approach to solving the problem /roadblock.

**<1-2 sentences>** (Optional) Explain why the approach has not been implemented yet

**<1-2 sentences>** Explain why you and your team are the right people to implement this solution/approach. **THIS IS THE SECOND MOST IMPORTANT PART.** You need to point out why not just anyone can do this, why you are qualified and ready to jump in and solve the problem. The best thing is to cite one or more previous papers of yours on the subjects, or point to unpublished work: “It will be shown in the Preliminary Studies that we are uniquely able to...that we have begun to solve....”

**<1 sentence>** Recap the hurdle and how the field advances by clearing it.

**<1 sentence>** “We are proposing to test the hypothesis that [state solution to gap/problem from above] with the following specific aims:”

**For the aims, repeat the following 1-4 times, as required:**

“Aim # : To X, we will Y.” This forces you to clearly state WHAT you will do (X) and HOW you will do it (Y). Divide the (Y) into sub-steps in a numbered/lettered list as needed.

**<1-4 sentences>** State how clearing the hurdle fits into the big picture. For the NIH, the big picture needs to be tied to improving health or curing a disease. The more people afflicted, the deadlier the disease, the easier it is to establish the importance of the project.