

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS USC CORE INSTRUMENTATION FUND



APPLICATION DEADLINES

Type A: 5 pm, Monday, April 20, 2020

Type B: Open: proposals will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

PURPOSE

The Core Instrumentation Fund supports acquisition of shared instrumentation that enables major research endeavors in the sciences, medicine and engineering. Example areas of interest include, but are not limited to: Microscopy, Genomics, Imaging and Biophysics. The fund is not intended for purchase of computers unless they are integrated with other types of instrumentation. The proposal must address a need stated in the [USC Plan for Science and Technology Facilities](#) to be considered for funding.

Awards under this program are made through a competitive process. All equipment supported under this announcement must be made available to the entire university community through a shared-use facility, and evidence must be provided to demonstrate that the user-base spans multiple schools. The faculty recipients of the funding, along with an associated center, department or school, are required to commit to the ongoing support and maintenance of the equipment as a condition of the award. A “core laboratory” is defined as *a shared-use facility that offers specialized instruments and is open to the entire USC research community*.

WHO SHOULD APPLY TO THIS ANNOUNCEMENT

This Request for Proposals is for *core laboratory directors*, who would like to:

Type A: Request full funding, from the university, for acquisition of equipment

Type B: Proposals will be reviewed on a rolling basis only for those seeking external funding where a match is required (e.g., NIH S10, NSF-MRI, DURIP).

All requests must be made in advance of equipment acquisition and in advance of submitting equipment proposals to external sponsors.

ELIGIBILITY

To be considered for selection:

- a) The proposal must be submitted by the *faculty member who directs the core laboratory* in which the equipment will be installed, following the guidelines below.

- b) **The core facility must be a current user of Priority Software FBS invoicing software and must demonstrate significant billing activity to be eligible.** For more information on FBS, go to: <https://research.usc.edu/fbs/>
- c) The core facility must already have a URL.
- d) The instrumentation and core must be represented in [USC's Plan for Science and Technology Facilities](#).
- e) A school commitment to at least one full-time staff member devoted to serving core users is required.

Applications seeking to establish a new core facility must obtain pre-approval to apply. Contact the Office of Research at vprsch@usc.edu or 213-821-8163 for more information.

List of previous awardees can be found here: <https://research.usc.edu/centers/collaboration-fund-groups/>

NOTIFICATION AND TERM OF AWARD

The Core Instrumentation Fund program will consider requests up to **\$300,000** for **Type A** proposals. Faculty may also submit requests for **cost-share** on equipment proposals (**Type B**) on an as-needed basis throughout the year, for example, cost share on NSF-MRI awards. Such proposals may request up to **\$200,000** for support. Cost-share requests must be submitted at least six weeks prior to the external proposal due date to enable peer review. Type B proposals are required to obtain external funding at least equal to USC's contribution, for acquisition of equipment after **August, 2020**. All awards made for proposal cost-share are conditional, and depend on success in receiving external support.

Applicants are permitted to submit multiple proposals, which will be reviewed individually. However, the program is unlikely to fund multiple proposals originating from the same laboratory.

All recipients will be required to endorse a Core Laboratory Agreement, signed by the lab director and research dean of the submitting school. Provisions include commitments to:

- Support for ongoing operation and maintenance costs;
- Ensure equipment is available to the entire university community;
- Ensure continued use of FBS software for invoicing;
- Provide a website that specifies capabilities and how to gain access to equipment.

GRANT CONDITIONS – BUDGET

Costs eligible for reimbursement include equipment purchase, transportation, and installation. The award **does not** reimburse for lab or core facility renovation or ongoing operating costs, such as maintenance, service agreements and staffing, which are considered school obligations.

PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS

A faculty committee will review all annual requests and provide a prioritized list of investments to the Vice President of Research. In addition, potential users will be surveyed to ascertain the actual impact of the equipment on their research programs. The survey, combined with the prioritized investments, will be the basis for the final award decisions.

Awards may be made at different times throughout the year, depending on the outcome of externally

submitted proposals. Investigators will be notified as funds become available.

REVIEW CRITERIA

- a) *Impact:* Degree to which the proposed equipment will make a substantial difference in USC's research activities and fulfill an unmet need.
- b) *Strategic Importance:* Proposed equipment meets a need stated in the [USC Plan for Science and Technology Facilities](#). The proposal should demonstrate how the equipment meets a strategic need.
- c) *Participation:* Number of faculty who would utilize the laboratory, and the degree to which the user-base spans multiple schools and campuses. The annual research expenditure activity of the key users will also be a consideration. ***Applicants must demonstrate that the core has attracted a large user base, as reflected in billing through FBS software***
- d) *Leverage and Cost:* Priority will be given to requests that are leveraged against other funding sources, thereby minimizing the need for provost office support. Priority will also be given to cases where cost-share is required or expected under the competition.
- e) *Commitment:* Commitment for ongoing support and maintenance from a university school, center or department is required.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions about the Core Instrumentation Fund or the application submission process can be directed to Melody Pham at yprsch@usc.edu or 213-821-8163.

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GUIDELINES

PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

Before preparing a proposal, applicants should read closely the program description, including the sections on eligibility and review criteria.

Proposals must be submitted using the Office of Research application submission and reporting portal (see page 6).

Format: Proposal documents should be written using a standard font (e.g., Arial or Times New Roman), **12 point, single-spaced, with one inch margins.** Documents should be uploaded as PDFs.

PROPOSAL COMPONENTS

Cover page information (*to be filled out on-line*)

- a) Contact information: Principal Investigator ;
- b) Proposal title and type;
- c) Name of Center of Excellence, as specified in the [USC Plan for Science and Technology Facilities](#);
- d) Instrument name and manufacturer;
- e) Amount requested;
- f) Core name and Core Manager contact, URL;
- g) Co-PI information, *if applicable*.

Sections to be uploaded: It is requested that applicants follow instructions carefully and ***do not submit*** additional materials not requested by this RFP. Information that is uploaded beyond what is requested ***will not*** be included in the proposal package provided to reviewers. Please upload each of the sections below individually.

- a) **Abstract: (may not exceed 30 lines of text)** The project abstract is meant to serve as a succinct and accurate description of the proposed work when separated from the application.
- b) **Proposal Narrative: (may not exceed four pages)** Must include the following components (use headers below), inclusive of figures and tables.
 - i. *Research Impact*
Describe the nature of research that will be supported as a result of the proposed funding.

Explain the relationship of the proposed funding to the research of the faculty who will utilize the laboratory. Provide evidence that the faculty have a strong track record of externally funded research, as well as publications. Describe how the funding will enable expansion of research in new directions, and, if relevant, recruitment of new faculty.

ii. Need

Describe the current state of related core laboratories at USC, as well as at other nearby institutions. Provide information on the current condition of USC's equipment (if any), and the degree to which USC's equipment is being used at or near capacity. Explain how faculty are currently conducting experiments in the absence of the proposed equipment. Explain how the proposal meets a need specified in [USC's Plan for Science and Technology Facilities](#).

iii. Acquisition

Provide details (supported by quotes) on the full cost of equipment acquisition, including installation, space renovation and taxes. Provide a budget to show the portion of this cost that will be covered by the core instrumentation fund, and the portion that will be covered by other sources, such as federal programs. For external sources, provide details on any cost-share requirements of the sponsor, along with the program from which support will be sought. State where the equipment will be installed and how potential users will be made aware of and gain access to the facility.

iv. Sustainment

Describe the commitment from a school, department or center to support the ongoing maintenance and operation of the laboratory in a shared-use environment, available to the entire university community. Provide the annual budget for the core laboratory in a format consistent with USC's policy on recharge centers (<http://policy.usc.edu/recharge-centers/>). Demonstrate the source of funding for ongoing maintenance and operation of any newly acquired equipment and demonstrate the source of funding for technical staff. **A school's commitment to at least one full-time staff member devoted to serving core users is required.**

v. Prior Support

Describe any prior support received under this program, and the outcomes of the prior support, in terms of the equipment acquired and the resulting research.

c) **Budget Justification:** provide a brief explanation of each of the components of the budget.

d) **Manufacturer Quote**

e) **List of Core Users:** provide the name and email address of at least five expected users of the proposed equipment.

f) **References:** 1 page maximum

g) **Letter(s) of Support:** Provide a letter of support from the unit that has committed to ongoing maintenance and operation of the core laboratory, including a minimum of **one full-time staff** member, and stating any cost-share equipment. **Additionally, any newly proposed core must include a letter from at least one dean describing his or her commitment to create and support the new core in future years.**

h) **Curriculum Vitae: (no more than 5 pages):** Provide a brief CV or biosketch of the PI (and

Co-PI, if applicable).

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Submit your proposal application utilizing the new Office of Research application submission and reporting portal.

Go to <https://app.wizehive.com/webform/USCgrants> to log in (or create an account for yourself), using your USC email address.

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Signatures: By submitting the online application, applicants indicate their agreement to comply with the terms and conditions of the Core Instrumentation Fund program as well as all other applicable USC policies.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions about the application submission process or the Core Instrumentation Fund Program, please contact Melody Pham at yprsch@usc.edu or 213-821-8163.