REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
USC CORE INSTRUMENTATION FUND
SPECIAL SOLICITATION FOR CORES-LITE

APPLICATION DEADLINES:
Letter of intent: 5 pm., Friday, April 24, 2020
Full Proposal: 5 pm, Friday, May 29, 2020

PURPOSE
This Core Instrumentation Fund – Cores-Lite Special Solicitation aims to provide USC researchers with greater access to shared equipment and key resources, including datasets and repositories, in addition to core instrumentation already available through existing core facilities. The solicitation invites proposals from core facilities with expanded invitation to USC faculty members for the acquisition of equipment, datasets, and repositories (existing or to be obtained) located in the PI’s laboratory. (The fund is not intended for purchase of computing equipment.)

Awards are made through a competitive peer-review process. All infrastructure supported under this announcement must be made available to the entire USC research community; proposals must include a list of users / user base to be competitive.

ELIGIBILITY
Applicants must be permanent, full-time tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty with research profiles at USC. Because of the nature of the opportunity, adjunct and visiting faculty are not eligible.

The faculty recipients of the funding, along with an associated research center, department, or school, must commit to using the FBS recharge system and to providing ongoing support and maintenance of the awarded infrastructure.

The awarded infrastructure cannot be renewed/supported by the Office of Research after the original award; therefore proposals need to include a commitment letter for ongoing support and maintenance from the relevant USC school(s), center, or department.

NOTIFICATION AND TERM OF AWARD
The Core Instrumentation Fund – Cores-Lite Special Solicitation program will consider requests up to $95,000. The total number of awards is dependent on the outcomes of the peer review and the proposed budgets; program total of up to $293,000 may be awarded in this cycle.

All recipients will be required to endorse a Shared Equipment Agreement, signed by the PI and research dean of the submitting school. Provisions include commitments to:
• Support for ongoing operation and maintenance costs;
• Ensuring the infrastructure is available to the entire USC research community;
• Working with the University to set up a reasonable and competitive fee structure;
• Establishing a recharge center account and using FBS software for invoicing.

PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS
A faculty committee will review proposals and provide a prioritized list of investments to the Vice President of Research.

REVIEW CRITERIA

a) Impact: Degree to which the proposed infrastructure fulfills an unmet need and will make a substantial difference in USC’s research activities.

b) Participation: Number of faculty who would utilize the proposed infrastructure, and the degree to which the user base spans multiple USC schools.

c) Leverage and Cost: Priority will be given to requests that are leverage cost-share and/or against other funding sources.

d) Commitment: Commitment for ongoing support and maintenance from the relevant USC school(s), center, or department.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION
Questions about the Core Instrumentation – Cores-Lite Special Solicitation or the application submission process can be directed to Melody Pham at vprsch@usc.edu.
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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 4).

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.

LETTER OF INTENT COMPONENTS (to be filled out online, click here)

a) PI contact information
b) Requested instrument, dataset or repository
c) Where would the instrument be located (or how will dataset be accessed)?
d) Total amount requested (Estimated cost - vendor quote to be submitted with full proposal)
e) Total matching funds and source (if applicable)
f) Name and email (First, Last, email) of interested PI users (with funded grants) for which the proposed instrument/dataset/repository will support research?
g) Abstract: (may not exceed one page) Briefly describe the nature of research that will be supported as a result of the proposed funding; the relationship of the proposed funding to the research of the faculty who will utilize the laboratory; the commitment from a school, department or center to support the ongoing maintenance and operation of the equipment and/or service provided in a shared-use environment.

PROPOSAL COMPONENTS

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

a) Contact information: Principal Investigator;
b) Proposal title and type;
c) Instrument name and manufacturer;
d) Amount requested;

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.

a) Abstract: (may not exceed 20 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 and how it will enable expansion of research in new directions. Explain the relationship of the proposed funding to the research of the faculty who will utilize the laboratory.

ii. Need
    Provide information on the current condition of USC’s equipment (if any). Explain how faculty are currently conducting experiments in the absence of the proposed equipment.

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 (if applicable). 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 equipment and/or service provided in a shared-use environment, available to the entire university community, as well as source of funding for technical staff (if applicable).

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 (and awarded grant information, as applicable) of at least five potential 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 support of the proposed equipment and/or service provided.

h) Curriculum Vitae: Provide a brief CV or biosketch of the PI

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 vprsch@usc.edu or 213-821-8163.