

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS LIMITED SUBMISSION – NSF MRI TRACK 2



APPLICATION DEADLINE: Monday, December 7th, 5pm

PURPOSE

The goal of the [NSF Major Research Instrumentation \(MRI\) Program](#) is to increase access to shared-use/multi-user instrumentation for scientific and engineering research and training. NSF MRI awards are intended to be a capacity-building program and to enhance research training of students who will become the next generation of instrument users, designers, and builders. The Program supports two different types of proposals: 1) acquisition and 2) development, as described here: [NSF 18-513](#). While acquisition and development proposals can be submitted as either “Track 1” proposals or “Track 2” proposals, the Office of Research has already confirmed nominees for both Track 1 slots. Therefore, we are announcing the Track 2 slot that remains open for this solicitation.

LIMIT ON NUMBER OF TRACK 2 NSF MRI PROPOSALS PER ORGANIZATION

Eligible institutions may submit no more than 1 proposal in Track 2. Track 2 proposals are defined as “proposals that request total funds from NSF between \$1,000,000 and \$4,000,000.”

ELIGIBILITY

NSF MRI PIs must be full-time faculty at USC; visiting and adjunct faculty are not eligible. The Program especially seeks broad representation of PIs, including women, underrepresented minorities, and persons with disabilities. Since demographic diversity may be greater among early-career researchers, the Program also encourages proposals by early-career PIs and those that benefit early-career researchers.

COST-SHARE

The NSF MRI Program requires 30% cost share by the proposing institution(s). USC’s Office of Research cost-share support for this Program is obtained through a competitive process. *Applicants may request cost-share of up to \$200,000 from the Office of Research* (to be made available after August 2021) for all types of proposals: acquisition, development, Track 1, and Track 2. Eligibility requirements include:

- a) Confirmation of external funding at least equal to the USC Office of Research contribution;
- b) All instrumentation supported by USC Office of Research cost-share must be made available to the entire university community and, *if user fees are charged*:
 - Fees must be set up and invoiced through the USC FBS invoicing system: <https://research.usc.edu/fbs/>.
 - The PI or relevant core lab director must endorse a Core/Laboratory Agreement, committing to support ongoing operation and maintenance costs of the infrastructure.

Please contact the Office of Research at vprsch@usc.edu if you are unsure whether your intended MRI instrumentation could/should go into an existing core facility; a list of shared core facilities is found [here](#).

INTERNAL PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS

The internal NSF MRI proposals will be reviewed by faculty and relevant Office of Research staff, who will provide reviews to the proposers and a prioritized list of recommendations to the Vice President of Research.

REVIEW CRITERIA

- a) *Impact*: The degree to which the proposed equipment will make a substantial difference in USC's research activities and fulfill an unmet need.
- b) *Strategic Importance*: The proposal should demonstrate how the equipment meets a strategic need.
- c) *Participation*: An indication of the faculty who would utilize the equipment and the degree to which the user base spans multiple schools and campuses.
- d) *Commitment*: Commitment for ongoing support and maintenance from the PI, PI's school, center, or department.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions about the award or the application submission process should be directed to Mike Yarsky at vprsch@usc.edu.

For submission instructions, see submission Guidelines.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS USC CORE INSTRUMENTATION FUND



GUIDELINES

PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

Proposals are submitted using the Office of Research application submission and reporting portal ([here](#))

Format: Proposal documents should be written using a standard font, 12 point, single-spaced, with one inch margins, and all documents should be uploaded as PDFs.

PROPOSAL COMPONENTS

Cover page information (to be filled out on line via the submission portal)

- a) PI (and co-PI, if relevant) name and contact information
- b) Proposal title
- c) Instrument name and manufacturer (if acquisition) or description (if development)
- d) If planned as part of an existing core: core name, URL, and core manager contact

If requesting cost-share:

- e) Amount requested from NSF
- f) Cost-share amount requested from the Office of Research
- g) Cost-share amount provided by other sources (school, external sources) and list of sources
- h) Core name, if intended as part of an existing core or a new core to be established
- i) Core facility URL, if applicable.

Sections to be uploaded: Please do not submit additional materials not requested by this RFP as those will be deleted. Please upload each of the sections below individually.

- a) **Abstract:** Not to exceed 30 lines of text; a succinct, stand-alone description of the proposed instrumentation.
- b) **Proposal Narrative:** Not to exceed 3 pages including figures and tables; include the following components with the headers below:
 - i. *Research Impact*
Describe the research that will be supported as a result of the proposed instrumentation. Explain the relationship of the proposed funding to PI's research and, if applicable, to the faculty who will utilize the core facility, providing evidence that the faculty have a strong track record of externally funded research and peer-reviewed publications.

- ii. *Need*
Identify the need for the proposed instrumentation. If related instrumentation exists at USC, describe why it is not sufficient to meet the research and training need. Explain if/how relevant researchers are currently conducting work in the absence of the proposed instrumentation.
 - iii. *Logistics*
Provide details (supported by price quotes) of the full cost of the proposed instrumentation, including installation, space renovation, and taxes. State where the equipment will be installed. If cost-share is requested from the Office of Research, provide a budget showing: the total request from NSF, portion of the required 30% cost-share from the Office of Research (up to \$200,000) and portion from other sources (list the sources). Describe how potential users will be made aware of and gain access to the instrumentation.
 - iv. *Sustainment*
If Office of Research cost-share is requested, describe the commitment from the PI, school, department, or center to support the installation and ongoing maintenance and operation of the instrumentation. Demonstrate the source of funding for ongoing maintenance and operation.
 - v. *Prior Support*
Describe any prior support received under the NSF MRI Program, and the outcomes of the prior support in terms of the infrastructure and the resulting research (NSF requires this.)
- c) **Budget Justification:** Provide a brief explanation of each of the components of the budget.
 - d) **Manufacturer Quote**
 - e) **List of Users:** Provide the name of expected users; identify those who have external research funding.
 - f) **References:** 1 page maximum
 - g) **Letter(s) of Support:** For applications from core facilities seeking Office of Research cost-share, provide a letter of support from the unit that is committing to ongoing maintenance and operation of the core. Newly proposed cores should include a letter from at least one dean describing commitment to create and support the new core.
 - h) **Curriculum Vitae:** Provide a brief (5 pages max) CV or biosketch of the PI (and Co-PI, if applicable). NSF bio sketch format is preferred (NSF requires it).

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Submit your proposal via the Office of Research application submission and reporting portal. Go to <https://research.usc.edu/usc-grants/> to log in (or create an account for yourself), using your USC email address.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Monday, December 7th, 5pm

Signatures: By submitting the online application, applicants indicate their agreement to comply with USC policies, and award terms and conditions.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions about the NSF MRI Track 2 competition or the application submission process can be directed to Mike Yarsky (vyprsch@usc.edu).