

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS USC CORE/SHARED INSTRUMENTATION FUND



APPLICATION DEADLINES

Type A: 5 pm, Monday, September 20, 2021

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

PURPOSE

The Core/Shared Instrumentation Fund supports acquisition of shared instrumentation—including equipment, datasets, and repositories—that enables major research endeavors in the sciences, medicine and engineering and provides USC researchers with greater access to shared equipment and key resources.

The solicitation invites proposals from [core facilities](#) and USC faculty members for the acquisition of equipment, datasets, computing resources and repositories (existing or to be obtained) located in the PI's laboratory. The fund is not intended for purchase of computers unless they are integrated with other types of instrumentation.

Awards under this program are made through a competitive peer-reviewed process. All equipment supported under this announcement must be made available to the entire university community and proposals must include a list of users/user base to be competitive.

WHO SHOULD APPLY TO THIS ANNOUNCEMENT

This Request for Proposals is for USC faculty members and core laboratory directors:

Type A: Proposal requesting funding for acquisition of equipment to be located at a core facility or PI lab.

Type B: Proposal submitted by those seeking external funding where a match is required (e.g., NIH S10, NSF MRI, DoD DURIP).

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

List of previous awardees can be found [here](#).

ELIGIBILITY

- Applicants must be permanent, full-time tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty; adjunct and visiting faculty are not eligible.
- The proposal must be submitted by the core director (or appointee) or the faculty PI in whose laboratory the equipment will be installed.

- The core facility director or faculty PI commit to using Priority Software FBS software. Priority Software FBS facilitates compliance to federal regulations and supports reservation, tracking, billing and payment for services and share equipment. For more information on FBS, go to: <https://orif.usc.edu/shared-resources/fbs/>.
- The faculty PI and core director recipients of the funding, along with an associated center, department or school (as applicable), are required to commit to the ongoing support and maintenance of the equipment as a condition of the award (Core Lab Agreement).
- The core facility director or faculty PI commit to creating a website (or maintaining updated an existing website) providing information on reservation, training and costs (as applicable) associated with use of equipment.
- Eligible requests for funding include computing resources (such as GPUs).
- Eligible requests for funding include equipment/infrastructure upgrades/refurbishment/repair to core infrastructure (only eligible for Type A proposals from core facilities).

GRANT CONDITIONS – BUDGET

The Core/Shared Instrumentation Fund program will consider:

Type A: requests of up to **\$300,000**.

Type B: requests of up to **\$200,000** for cost-share on equipment proposals submitted to external sponsors. Cost-share requests must be submitted at least six weeks prior to the external proposal due date to enable peer review and are required to obtain external funding at least equal to USC's contribution for acquisition of equipment. 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 or core facility.

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

All recipients will be required to endorse a Core Laboratory Agreement, signed by the faculty member or core lab director and research dean of the submitting school, or center/institute director (as applicable). Provisions include commitments to:

- Supporting ongoing operation and maintenance costs;
- Ensuring equipment is available to the entire university community;
- Ensuring continued use of FBS software for invoicing.

NOTIFICATION AND TERM OF AWARD

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.

PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS

A faculty committee will review all annual requests and provide a prioritized list of recommendations to the Vice President of Research and the ORIF Director. In addition, potential users may be surveyed to ascertain the actual

impact of the equipment on their research programs.

REVIEW CRITERIA

- a) *Impact:* Degree to which the proposed equipment will make a substantial difference in USC's research activities.
- b) *Strategic Importance:* 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 existing core facilities 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.
- e) *Commitment:* Commitment for ongoing support and maintenance from a university school, center or department or other sources, such as recharge costs (with demonstration calculation) and/or from splitting costs with all participating PIs, is required.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions about the Core/Shared Instrumentation Fund or the application submission process can be directed to Melody Pham at ORIF@usc.edu.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS USC CORE INSTRUMENTATION FUND



GUIDELINES

PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

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

Proposals must be submitted using the Office of Research application portal ([here](#)).

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

PROPOSAL COMPONENTS

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

- a) Principal Investigator contact information and 10-digit USC ID number.
- b) Proposal title and type;
- c) Instrument/equipment/dataset name and manufacturer/provider;
- d) Amount requested to the Office of Research;
- e) Amount requested to external sponsor (Type B proposals);
- f) Link to external sponsor Request for Proposals (Type B proposals);
- g) Core name, URL, and Core Manager contact information and 10-digit USC ID number (as applicable)
- h) Co-PI information and 10-digit USC ID number (as 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 20 lines of text*) A stand-alone succinct description of the proposed work.
- b) **Proposal Narrative:** (*may not exceed 4 pages*) Page limits are inclusive of figures and tables; headers (below) should be included in the narrative:
 - 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 the need for equipment/infrastructure upgrades/refurbishment/repair to core infrastructure (Type A proposals from core facilities only).

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 equipment.

iv. *Sustainment*

Describe the commitment from a school, department or center or other sources, such as recharge costs (with demonstration calculation) 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 or laboratory in a format consistent with USC's policy on [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 and/or administrative staff (as applicable).

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 requested equipment.

h) **Curriculum Vitae: (no more than 5 pages):** Provide a brief CV or biosketch of the PI (and Co-PI, as applicable).

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Submit your proposal application utilizing the Office of Research application submission portal. Go [here](#) to log in (or create an account for yourself), using your USC email address.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

Type A: 5 pm, Monday, September 20, 2021

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

Signatures: By submitting the online application, applicants indicate their agreement to comply with the terms and conditions of the Core/Shared 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/Shared Instrumentation Fund Program, please contact Melody Pham at ORIF@usc.edu.