

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS LIMITED SUBMISSION – NSF MRI



APPLICATION DEADLINE: Monday, November 22, 2021, 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, as described here: [NSF 18-513](#).

LIMIT ON NUMBER OF NSF MRI PROPOSALS PER ORGANIZATION

The NSF MRI program is an institutionally limited funding opportunity. Eligible institutions may submit up to 3 proposals total (no more than 2 in Track 1 and no more than 1 in Track 2).

- **Track 1:** Proposals that request total funds from NSF between \$100,000 and \$1,000,000.
- **Track 2:** Proposals that request total funds from NSF between \$1,000,000 and \$4,000,000.

ELIGIBILITY

Applicants to the NSF MRI program 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.

As this is a limited submission competition, all proposals must be submitted for review by the Office of Research Initiatives and Facilities (ORIF) for selection of final candidates, whether or not the PI is requesting cost share from the Office of Research.

COST SHARE

The NSF MRI program requires 30% cost share by the proposing institution. Cost share may be provided by the School/Center, the PI, the Office of Research or other sources. However, in order to be eligible to apply for cost share from the Office of Research, the applicant must be a core director or his/her designee, or proposing to establish a new core facility. A list of shared core facilities is found [here](#). Please contact ORIF (orif@usc.edu) if you have additional questions.

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 2022) for all types of proposals: Track 1, and Track 2. Eligibility requirements also include:

- a) All instrumentation supported by USC Office of Research cost share must be housed at a core facility and made available to the entire university community;
 - o The PI or relevant core lab director must endorse a Core Laboratory Agreement, committing to support ongoing operation and maintenance costs of the infrastructure.
 - o Core facilities are required to use USC FBS software for invoicing (*if user fees are charged*) as well as to promote core services and instrumentation available to USC researchers (<https://orif.usc.edu/shared-resources/fbs/>).

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 orif@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 (including 10-digit USC ID)
- b) Proposal title
- c) Instrument name and manufacturer

Cost share:

- a) Total cost of instrument
- b) Amount requested from NSF
- c) Is cost share requested from the Office of Research?
- d) Is cost share provided by other sources (school, external sources)?
- e) Is this a new core (Y/N)

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 20 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 (required by the NSF).
- c) **Budget Justification:** Not to exceed one page. 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://provost.sma.usc.edu/prog/nsf-mri/> 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 USC policies, and award terms and conditions.

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