REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
USC CORE INSTRUMENTATION FUND

SPECIAL SOLICITATION – SMALL EQUIPMENT

APPLICATION DEADLINES: 5 pm, Monday, September 5, 2022

PURPOSE

The Core Instrumentation Fund Special Solicitation – Small Equipment 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 will consider requests up to $30,000 (smaller budgets welcomed) and invites proposals from core facilities for the acquisition of small equipment, datasets, and/or repositories.

Applications proposing acquisition or licensing of datasets or repositories not associated with a core facility must be made by the school research dean (or designee). All equipment/datasets/repositories supported under this announcement must be advertised and made available to the entire USC research community. The fund is not intended for purchase of computing equipment, unless it is integrated with other types of instrumentation.

ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must be permanent, full-time tenured, tenure-track or RTPC faculty (with a research profile) at USC. Adjunct or visiting faculty are not eligible.

Faculty recipients of the funding, along with an associated school or core facility, must commit to using the FBS recharge system, as applicable, and to provide ongoing support and maintenance of the awarded infrastructure.

The awarded equipment/datasets/repositories cannot be supported by the Office of Research after the original award; therefore, proposals should include a commitment letter for ongoing support and maintenance (as applicable) from the relevant USC school or core facility beyond the one year period of the award.

NOTIFICATION AND TERM OF AWARD

The total number of awards is dependent on the outcomes of the peer review and the proposed budgets; program total of up to $100,000 may be awarded in this cycle.

All recipients will be required to endorse a Core Lab / Shared Equipment Agreement, signed by the PI/core director and research dean of the submitting school. Provisions include commitments to:

- Support for ongoing operation and maintenance costs;
- Ensure the infrastructure is available to the entire USC research community;
- Work with the University to set up a reasonable and competitive fee structure (as applicable);
- Use FBS software for invoicing (as applicable).
GRANT CONDITIONS

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 within the same grant cycle.

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.
- Infrastructure upgrades/refurbishment/repair to core or lab infrastructure.

PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS

Awards are made through a competitive peer-review process. A faculty committee will review proposals and provide a prioritized list of investments to the Vice President of Research and the Director of Research Initiatives & Facilities, who will make the final determination of awards.

REVIEW CRITERIA

a) **Impact**: Degree to which the proposed equipment/dataset/repository 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 equipment/dataset/repository, 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 against other funding sources.

d) **Commitment**: Commitment for ongoing support and maintenance from the relevant USC school or core facility.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions about the Core Instrumentation Fund Special Solicitation – Small Equipment or the application submission process can be directed to Amy Wood at orif@usc.edu.
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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.

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) PI/co-PI(s) name, contact information and 10-digit USCID number
b) Proposal title
c) Equipment (and manufacturer) or dataset/repository name
d) Amount requested from the Office of Research
e) Matching funds committed toward purchase (if applicable)
f) Core name and URL
g) Core Manager name and email
h) Core Director name and email

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. Upload all sections as PDFs.

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, inclusive of figures and tables) Must include the following components (use headers below):

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.

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.
State where the equipment will be installed and how potential users will be made aware of and gain access to the facility. Degree to which the proposed equipment, dataset, or repository fulfills an unmet need and will make a substantial difference in USC’s research activities.

iii. Participation:
Number of faculty who would utilize the proposed equipment, dataset or repository, and the degree to which the user base spans multiple USC schools.

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) Acquisition/Budget Justification: Provide details (supported by quotes) on the full cost of equipment acquisition. Provide a brief explanation of each of the components of the budget. Priority will be given to requests that are leverage cost-share against other funding sources.

c) Manufacturer Quote

d) List of Core Users: provide the name and email address (and awarded grant information, as applicable) of potential users of the proposed equipment.

e) References: 1 page maximum

f) 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.

g) Curriculum Vitae: Provide a brief CV of the PI and co-PI(s), if applicable. CVs of co-PIs can be uploaded individually.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Submit your proposal application utilizing the 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 Amy Wood at orif@usc.edu or 213-821-8163.