Proposal & Budget: Responding to the RFP
Agenda

• RFP Overview
• 3-Day Proposal Deadline Policy
• Large Proposal Policy
• RFP Example
• Tips and Suggestions
• Questions
RFP Overview

• RFP = Request for Proposal (aka RFA, FOA)

• Review it closely for the following:
  – Eligibility
  – Limit on submissions per Institution (ORD must approve)
  – Due date and method of submission
  – Allowable/unallowable costs
  – Indirect cost rate stipulated (other than our Federally negotiated)
  – Matching requirements
  – Other restrictions and compliance items
  – 501c3 requirement (UA is tax exempt under Section 115 of IRS code)
  – Overall instructions on proposal content requirements and format (page limits, margins, etc.)
RFP Overview cont.

• Prepare proposal and budget based on the RFP instructions

• Create and route proposal in UAccess Research
  – Further information on the new system (including training videos, user guides, and training dates):
    [http://rgw.arizona.edu/administration/UAccess-Research](http://rgw.arizona.edu/administration/UAccess-Research)
  – Need help interpreting RFP please contact SPS at 626-6000 or sponsor@email.arizona.edu
3-Day Proposal Deadline Policy

• SPS reviews and approves proposals for entire University
  – 3,244 proposals processed in FY2015
  – Already at 711 proposals for FY2016

• Need adequate time to review/approve the proposal (and submit if electronic submission by SPS required)

• **3 Day Proposal Deadline**: Requires finalized UAR proposal document and ready to submit Grants.gov Adobe file or access to other sponsor electronic system 3 business days prior to deadline
Large Proposal Policy

- **Large Proposal policy**: If proposal is estimated to be $15M or greater, ORD needs to arrange a large proposal meeting at least 6 weeks prior to the deadline. Meeting will include both the scientific team and compliance units: PI, SPS, ORD, CRS, College/Department business officials, Export Control, COI.

- Notify SPS of intent to submit as soon as announcement is available if large proposal or RFP has specific requirements.

- If a large proposal, a single point of contact will be assigned in SPS to review and approve the budget.

- Determine timeline for review of budget.
NSF RFP 15-504: a recent RFP that had many limitations and restrictions. It’s a succinct 22 pages, some can be hundreds of pages and not as clear or organized as what NSF/NIH provides.
RFP Example

• Matching requirement (pg. 2):

  Cost-sharing of precisely 30% of the total project cost is required for Ph.D.-granting institutions of higher education and for non-degree-granting organizations. Non-Ph.D.-granting institutions of higher education are exempt from cost-sharing and cannot include it. National Science Board policy is that voluntary committed cost sharing is prohibited.

• Eligible applicants (pg. 2):

  Proposals may only be submitted by the following:
  
  • Organizations that may apply for the MRI program:
    
    Submission Eligibility

    Proposals may only be submitted by domestic (United States) organizations located in the United States, its territories or possessions, as follows:

    1. Institutions of higher education (Ph.D.-granting and non-Ph.D.-granting), acting on behalf of their faculty members, that are accredited in and have a campus in the United States, its territories or possessions. Distinct academic campuses (e.g., that award their own degrees, have independent administrative structures, admissions policies, alumni associations, etc.) within multi-campus systems qualify as separate submission-eligible institutions.
RFP Example cont.

• Limited Submission (pg. 3&4):

  PI Limit:
  None Specified

  Limit on Number of Proposals per Organization:
  Three (3) as described below.

  If three proposals are submitted, at least one of the proposals must be for instrument development (i.e., no more than two proposals may be for instrument acquisition).

  To ensure a balanced instrumentation award portfolio at diverse organizations, across varied research topics, and in support of a broadly inclusive science and engineering workforce across the entire Nation, the MRI program requires that an MRI-eligible organization may, as a performing organization, submit or be included as a significantly funded subcontractee in no more than three MRI proposals. To promote instrumentation development, the program requires that if an organization submits or is included as a significantly funded subcontractee in three MRI proposals, at least one of the three proposals must be for (Track 2) instrument development.

  NSF reserves the right to carefully examine development (Track 2) proposals to ensure that they meet the requirements for this proposal type (see Section II). If a proposal submitted as development is deemed to be an acquisition proposal either before or during the review, the proposal is subject to return without review or decline.

  An unfunded collaboration does not count against the submission limit. Inclusion as a funded subcontractee on a development (Track 2) proposal at a level in excess of 20% of the total budget request from NSF, or as a funded subcontractee on any acquisition (Track 1) proposal, will be counted against an organization’s proposal submission limit. Separately submitted linked collaborative proposals of either type (Track 1 or Track 2) count against the submission limit of each of the submitting organizations. However, if a subcontract to an organization in a development (Track 2) proposal is 20% or less of the proposal’s total budget request from NSF, the subcontractee’s submission limit will not be affected. For subawards within a linked collaborative proposal, the 20% threshold applies to the budget request from NSF in the proposal containing the subaward(s), not to the combined budget request from NSF for the collaborative project.

  Note: The 30% cost-sharing requirement applies to only the portion of the total project cost budgeted to non-exempt organization(s), including those participating through subawards. When required, cost-sharing must be precisely 30%. Cost sharing is required for Ph.D.-granting institutions of higher education and for non-degree-granting organizations. Non-Ph.D.-granting institutions of higher education are exempt from cost-sharing and cannot provide it. National Science Board policy is that voluntary committed cost sharing is prohibited. See section V.B. for specific information on cost-sharing calculations and the solicitation text for definitions of organizational types used for the MRI program.
RFP Example cont.

• Budget instructions/restrictions (pg. 4):

  **B. Budgetary Information**
  - **Cost Sharing Requirements:** Cost Sharing is required. Please see the full text of this solicitation for further information.
  - **Indirect Cost (F&A) Limitations:** Not Applicable
  - **Other Budgetary Limitations:** Other budgetary limitations apply. Please see the full text of this solicitation for further information.

• Areas of research wanted (pg. 6 & 7):

  **B. Eligible Fields of Science and Engineering**
  Proposals for a major research instrument will be considered for all NSF-supported fields of science, mathematics, and engineering. Researchers using this instrument need not be supported by NSF or the Federal government.

  The program will not provide support for instrumentation to be used in medical education (such as medical school courses) or instrumentation intended for research with disease-related goals, including work on the etiology, diagnosis or treatment of physical or mental disease, abnormality, or malfunction in human beings or animals, is normally not supported. Instrumentation for research on animal models of such conditions or the development or testing of drugs or other procedures for their treatment also is not eligible for support. However, instrumentation for bioengineering research, with diagnosis- or treatment-related goals that applies engineering principles to problems in biology and medicine, while also advancing engineering knowledge, is eligible for support. Instrumentation for bioinformatics, biocomputing and bioengineering research to aid persons with disabilities also is eligible.
RFP Example cont.

• Funding levels (pg. 7):

**III. AWARD INFORMATION**

Proposals submitted in response to this program solicitation will be competing for about $75 million, depending on availability of funds and quality of proposals.

Proposals that request funds from NSF in the range $100,000-$4 million will be accepted from all eligible organizations. Proposals that request funds from NSF less than $100,000 will also be accepted from all eligible organizations for the disciplines of mathematics or social, behavioral and economic sciences and from non-Ph.D.-granting institutions of higher education for all NSF-supported disciplines.

Proposers may request an award period up to three years for acquisition proposals and up to five years for development proposals. The anticipated earliest starting date is August 01 in the year of the proposal’s submission.

• Restricted to domestic organizations (pg. 7):

**IV. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

Organization Limit:

Proposals may only be submitted by the following:

- Organizations that may apply for the MRI program:

  **Submission Eligibility**

  Proposals may only be submitted by domestic (United States) organizations located in the United States, its territories or possessions, as follows.
RFP Example cont.

• Format of matching in budget/justification (pg. 12):

**6. Budget and Budget Justification.** Provide yearly and cumulative budget pages, listing those eligible project costs that NSF is being asked to fund. The cumulative amount requested represents NSF’s contribution to the total project cost (TPC) and does not include the organization’s cost sharing (when required). The total project cost should be clearly stated in the budget justification (which must not exceed three pages) and must be itemized in table form using the following template (with the number of entries utilized as appropriate) that, as appropriate, assigns funding to the request from NSF or (when necessary) the organization’s MRI-eligible cost-sharing.

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The Total Project Cost (TPC) is the sum of the last two cells in the last two columns in the last row.

All budget items (including those for operations and maintenance in acquisition proposals and personnel support in development proposals) must be well-justified and commensurate with the scale and complexity of the instrument and/or development effort.
• Cover letter requirements (pg. 13):

**Required:**

a. **For all proposals:** For each organization receiving funds, provide *on institutional letterhead from each sponsored research office*, the following statement classifying the organization(s) as either non-Ph.D.-granting, Ph.D.-granting, or non-degree-granting (as defined in Section IV). Statements *must* follow *only* the format indicated below.

b. **When applicable:** Proposals that include subawards (except for development proposals with subawards to institutions that do not exceed 20% of the total amount requested from NSF), must include statements from subawardee sponsored research offices, acknowledging that this proposal is included as part of their submission limit. Otherwise, an organization may exceed its submission limit, with the result that the proposal including the subaward will be returned without review.

c. **When applicable:** Each proposal that requests funding to support postdoctoral researchers must include, as a supplementary document, a description of the mentoring activities that will be provided for such individuals. The mentoring plan must not exceed one page.

d. **When applicable:** A letter (one-page maximum) documenting the organization's commitment for required cost-sharing, if applicable, must be included.
RFP Example cont.

• What they don’t want (pg. 14):

```plaintext
Not Allowed:

a. Statements of collaboration beyond that specified above, including letters of support/endorsement, are not allowed.
b. Impact Statements and Eligibility Statements from the NSF “Research in Undergraduate Institutions” (RUI) program are not allowed; the certification statement indicating the type of performing organization, as defined by the MRI program, is instead required for MRI proposals.
c. Documentation that refers to other proposals being submitted by an organization (e.g., letters indicating which projects were selected through an internal competition) are not allowed.
d. Other documentation not specifically required or encouraged above is not allowed.
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• Placement of matching information (pg. 13):

```plaintext
Cost Sharing: Cost Sharing is required
See full proposal for details.

The proposed cost sharing must be shown on Line M on the proposal budget. Documentation of the availability of cost sharing must be included in the proposal. Only items which would be allowable under the applicable cost principles, if charged to the project, may be included as the awardee’s contribution to cost sharing. Contributions may be made from any non-Federal source, including non-Federal grants or contracts, and may be cash or in-kind (2 CFR § 215.23). It should be noted that contributions counted as cost-sharing toward projects of another Federal agency may not be counted towards meeting the specific cost-sharing requirements of the NSF award. All cost-sharing amounts are subject to audit. Failure to provide the level of cost-sharing required by the NSF solicitation and reflected in the approved award budget may result in termination of the NSF award, disallowance of award costs and/or refund of award funds to NSF.
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RFP Example cont.

• Checklist of proposal requirements (pg.15):

  ____ Is the subject matter appropriate for the MRI program? Refer to Section II.A for General Information on the MRI program.
  ____ Is the subject matter appropriate for NSF? Refer to Section II.B: Eligible Fields of Science and Engineering.
  ____ Is the performing organization adhering to the proposal submission limit? Refer to Section IV.
  ____ Are font sizes and margins consistent with the Grant Proposal Guide?

  ____ Cover Sheet (Refer to Section V.A: Full Proposal Preparation Instructions):
    ____ Is the proposal properly identified as “MRI: Acquisition”, “MRI: Development”, “MRI Consortium: Acquisition”, or “MRI Consortium: Development” on the Cover Sheet?
    ____ If the instrument is to be placed at a facility of another Federal agency or one of their FFRDCs, has the proposal been properly structured and identified as a Consortium proposal?

  ____ Project Summary (Refer to Section V.A: Full Proposal Preparation Instructions):
    ____ Is the Project Summary 1 page or less in length?
Tips and Suggestions

• Start early!
• Read the RFP thoroughly
• Organization and time management key
• If large proposal contact SPS/ORD/RDS ASAP
  – Often visually mapping of the RFP and proposal for large submissions can be helpful
• Contact SPS if you have questions or need help interpreting RFP
• Start early!
Research Development Services

Help UA researchers and scholars identify funding opportunities, form effective teams, and craft winning proposals, with the ultimate goal of increasing the quality and quantity of externally-funded research and scholarly activity at UA.

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- Training
QUESTIONS???

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