Leadership PreAward Proposal Checklist

This checklist is designed to assist leadership in reviewing grant proposal information for grant submission record in UFIRST. This checklist is a resource document, not an official research form.

FOR DIVISION LEADS: The suggested use for this document is to review and critique the junior faculty required core grant submission documents. In an effort to catalyze and facilitate the junior faculty member's academic activities and career direction in a positive fashion.

The budget justification is a categorical description of the proposed costs. Generally, it explains staffing and supply/service consumption patterns, the methods used to estimate/calculate (including escalation or inflation factors) and other details such as lists of items that make up the total costs for a category. The budget justification should address each of major cost categories (salaries, fringe benefits, equipment, travel, supplies, other direct costs and indirect costs), as well as any additional categories required by the sponsor.

A thoroughly written justification that explains both the necessity and the basis for the proposed costs must accompany the budget. The justification section is critical as it enables the principal investigator to emphasize the importance of essential project costs. A budget that is adequately and appropriately justified is the best way to assure a positive cost analysis by the sponsor.

Below are some helpful tips:

1. Organize the budget justification listing items in the same order and format as the sponsor's budget categories.
2. Only include budgeted items. **Some sponsors like NSF will disqualify a proposal if cost share contributed items are listed.** Do not list cost-shared items unless cost-sharing is mandated by the sponsor.
3. Budget narrative must match the budget in terms of dollar amounts and language – double check everything.
4. Explain why items are essential in relation to the aims and methodology of the project as well as meeting the goals of the project.
5. Explain all of the line items. Do not merely restate the proposed expenditures.
6. Provide detail sufficient to justify the rationale for acquiring the item under the proposed project.
7. Ensure the grant guideline monetary threshold(s) been adhered to? (Are the budget or specific categories under/over?)

Leadership Reviewer must review the following information:

Salaries and Wages

- ☐ List all personnel and positions to be paid with project funds and briefly describe their role in the project.
- ☐ Only list paid personnel unless cost-sharing is mandated by the sponsor.
- ☐ In addition to how the sponsor requires effort to be shown, also **always list effort in person months** for faculty and staff. For Graduate Research Assistants, list number of months and hours per week.
- ☐ When listing effort, do not use approximations. Show effort out to two decimal points (e.g. 1.52 months) as applicable.
- ☐ Include a COLA of 3% to 5%. Verify any sponsor-driven limitations on COLAs. Currently for example, UF budgets only 3% with the NIH.

Consultants

- ☐ List consultant name and describe in detail the services to be performed.
- ☐ Include number of days, rate of compensation, and total amount per year. This must be corroborated in a letter provided by the consultant.
  - CTSI IDR Auxiliary Data Services ($90 per hour)
  - Shands Data Services (Gigi Lipori) ($138 per hour)
  - UF Health IT Services (Kari Cassel)

Equipment (Definition of Equipment: a unit cost of $5,000 or more and a useful life of at least one year)

- ☐ Get accurate price quotes
- ☐ Explain why the equipment is needed in support of the project aims.
- ☐ Confirm equipment is dedicated to the project. If equipment is shared with other projects, budget an amount that corresponds to expected project use and verify the rationale. Split funding of equipment should only generally occur with large equipment purchases.

Materials and Supplies (Only request supplies directly relevant (allocable) to the research plan)

- ☐ Explain in detail why specific supplies are needed.
- ☐ Request general office supplies (if applicable).
- ☐ Budgeting should be based on actual experience or quotes (reasonableness).
- ☐ Use an inflation factor (COLA) for future years (verify any sponsor limits).
- ☐ The breakdown should be more detailed when the total supplies cost is substantial. Where large amounts of supplies or expensive items are budgeted, specify items and justify their necessity.

Travel (Budgeting should be based on actual experience or quotes)

- ☐ Ask for reasonable amounts.

- ☐ Indicate basis of cost (historical, quotes, etc.)
- ☐ State exactly which relevant meeting/conference you plan to attend. If not known, provide examples.
- ☐ Include breakdown of costs for airfare, meals, lodging, and ground transportation. **Some sponsors like PCORI and NSF will reject a proposal if insufficient details are provided.**
- ☐ Include number of people, number of days, purpose and location of travel.
- ☐ Avoid partial financing of travel requirements.

Other Direct Costs

- ☐ Fee-for-service: Justify use; show the University approved rate, or if an external vendor, their published rate.
- ☐ Equipment, server, maintenance and service contract (justify need) and verify that the covered equipment is dedicated to the project; If proportional use on the covered equipment is anticipated, provide the proportional cost/use rationale; Cost/usage should not generally fall below 50%; Note the basis of the cost (quotes, etc.)
- ☐ Software should be identified by brand, type, and unit cost; verify in the justification that it is dedicated to the project; and provide a strong justification for why it is needed especially emphasizing what aspect of the project will benefit from its use; the software should not be general purpose software but rather specialized in a manner that supports the specific technical aims of the project; verify basis of cost (quotes, catalog prices, etc.)
- ☐ Human Subject Payments (breakdown # of subjects and cost to each)
- ☐ Provide details for publication costs. (Give detailed breakdown of each cost)
- ☐ Tuition – provide details. See department Academic Services Coordinator for internal/cross college pricing

Subcontractors/Subrecipients

- ☐ Clearly identify subcontracting organizations and their key personnel.
- ☐ Provide details scope of work, including timelines and deliverables as necessary.
- ☐ Explain the need to contract with a particular organization, expertise of subcontractor PI, institutional facilities.
- ☐ Keep in mind that subcontractors will provide their own detailed budgets and corresponding budget justifications. These should be separate and distinct from the UF budget and budget justification and follow the UF budget and budget justification.

Cost Share (COST SHARE BUDGET AND JUSTIFICATION MUST BE APPROVED BY LEADERSHIP – prior to submitting to department chair for approval)

- ☐ Provided detailed budget and budget justification, as per instructions above.
  - o Clearly identify all personnel (key/support staff) and expense needs.
- ☐ Utilize department/Institute resources to the fullest extent possible.
- ☐ Provide detailed scope of work, including timelines and deliverables as necessary when requesting cost share cross-department/college, and outside institutions.