Announcement from the Office for Sponsored Programs

Internal White Paper Competition

Date:  September 4, 2012
To:  Research Faculty

RE:  Major Research Instrumentation Program: Instrument Acquisition or Development
      NSF 11-503

The National Science Foundation has limited the number of proposals submitted by an organization for the above referenced announcement to three (3) per organization. From the program solicitation:

   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).

We are announcing the internal white paper competition in order to allow for sufficient time to prepare the proposal deadline which is Thursday, January 24, 2013. The due date is the fourth Thursday in January each year.


Please read the guidelines carefully. A program synopsis is below.

A white paper (2 page limit) is required to be submitted by email to Angie Shotts, OSP Coordinator of Research Support, by 5:00pm, Tuesday, September 25, 2012. Please address the major areas of the program announcement within these two pages. Please include a cover page that indicates all University of Alabama faculty involved in the project, the expected title of the proposal, and any special information that would relevant to the internal review process.

Please indicate on the cover page if the proposal is for Instrument Development or Acquisition.

A brief (not detailed) budget should be included and will not count toward the 2-page limit.

The subject line of the email should indicate "MRI." When sending the email to the Office for Sponsored Programs, please copy the Associate Dean for Research in your college and include a return receipt request to ensure email delivery and receipt.

You will be notified of the selections as soon as possible after submission. Should you have any questions, please contact the Office for Sponsored Programs or your respective Associate Dean for Research.

Contact Information
Angie Shotts, Office for Sponsored Programs
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Synopsis of Program:

The Major Research Instrumentation Program (MRI) serves to increase access to shared scientific and engineering instruments for research and research training in our Nation's institutions of higher education, museums, science centers, and not-for-profit organizations. This program especially seeks to improve the quality and expand the scope of research and research training in science and engineering, by providing shared instrumentation that fosters the integration of research and education in research-intensive learning environments. Development and acquisition of research instrumentation for shared inter- and/or intra-organizational use are encouraged, as are development efforts that leverage the strengths of private sector partners to build instrument development capacity at academic institutions.

To accomplish these goals, the MRI program assists with the acquisition or development of shared research instrumentation that is, in general, too costly and/or not appropriate for support through other NSF programs. Instruments are expected to be operational for regular research use by the end of the award period. For the purposes of the MRI program, proposals must be for either acquisition or development of a single instrument or for equipment that, when combined, serves as an integrated research instrument (physical or virtual). The MRI program does not support the acquisition or development of a suite of instruments to outfit research laboratories/facilities or to conduct independent research activities simultaneously. Further guidance on appropriate requests can be found in the MRI Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) at http://www.nsf.gov/od/oia/programs/mri.

Instrument acquisition or development 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.

Cost-sharing at the level of 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 the cost-sharing requirement.

Please see the solicitation text for definitions of organizational types used for the MRI program.