Proposal Checklists

The following is the list of necessary information for various types of proposals:

If USC is the Subcontractor or Subawardee:

☐ Start date from the Lead Organization
☐ Duration of the project from the Lead Organization
☐ Funding Level from Lead Organization
☐ Title of the Proposal from Lead Organization
☐ Administrative contact at the Lead Organization
☐ Who to send the USC final documents to at the Lead Organization

NSF Collaborative Proposals:

☐ Start date from the Lead Organization
☐ Duration of the project from the Lead Organization
☐ Funding Level from Lead Organization
☐ Title of the Proposal from Lead Organization
☐ Who to send our NSF Proposal ID and PIN to
☐ Anticipated submission date and the contact of who to coordinate the submission of USC’s section so the submissions are in sync

For all proposals in order for your administrator to complete the TARA routing package:

☐ RFP or at least the agency announcement number so it can be downloaded
☐ Title of the proposal
☐ Budget
☐ Budget Justification/Narrative (if required)
☐ Draft of at least the Project Summary
☐ If you have subcontractors you will need to provide contact information to your administrators so they can obtain the needed documents and sign-off

Finally, this is the complete list of needed materials for starting the proposal approval process:

☐ RFP
☐ USC routing document through TARA
☐ Cover Page (Either the required from agency or one of the templates for signature if USC is a subcontract or subawardee; unless submitting System 2 System via Grants.gov tab in TARA)
☐ Budget
☐ Budget Justification/Narrative (if required)
☐ Draft of at least the Project Summary

PLEASE NOTE: If there is a change to the Budget once the proposal has been approved by the Viterbi Business Affairs Research Administration Office it will need to be rerouted through the approval process in TARA.

Revised 07/28/2016
BASIC ACCOUNTING PRACTICES FOR SPONSORED PROJECTS
A quick guide for Faculty and Staff

As a rule of thumb, a faculty member and his/her research administrator should meet at a minimum once per fiscal quarter to review account balances, spending rates, and project end dates, in order to help formulate a plan for the fiscal and academic calendars. The level of communication and the number of meetings may need to increase at particular times during a sponsored project, such as at the beginning of a project, around annual report time (if applicable), and in the last 90 days of an award.

Holding such regular meetings is crucial to: keep on a consistent spending path to alleviate a high carryover from occurring; communicate any upcoming expenditure and/or travel plans; and ensure proactively that the account is budgeted properly. Such meetings should include planning for no-cost extensions or advance funding options so as to ensure that these steps are processed in time, per the agency guidelines.

For Federal Awards, USC is governed by the Federal Government in OMB Circulars A-81 and A-21 for spending practices. (The URL for the Federal Circulars is found below.) There are four key factors for evaluating whether a cost can be charged to an award:

1) The cost must be Reasonable (e.g., equipment usually needs sole-source justification or competitive bidding to ensure this, which can delay large purchases)
2) The cost must be Allocable to the project
   a. It is incurred solely to advance the work under the sponsored agreement
   b. If splitting with one or more projects it must be done in proportions that can be approximated through use of reasonable methods
   c. Is deemed assignable in whole or part to the sponsored project
3) The cost must be Allowable
4) The cost must be given Consistent treatment
   (Think RAAC when remembering the basic principles)

Some key items that are unallowable on federal awards are alcoholic beverages, alumni activities, general office supplies, and first/business class travel; a comprehensive list of expenditures and whether they are allowable can be found in the OMB Circular A-21 section J.

Budget Reallocations on Federal Awards are governed by OMB Circulars A-81 and A-110 and agency requirements. In addition to these requirements, there are also instances when an award may have additional restrictions for re-budgeting. It is important to review the award document carefully when received. Below is a list of the general restrictions:

- Any changes to the scope of work require sponsor approval.
- Any Reduction of the PIs effort by more than 25%. Sponsor approval is needed for such reductions and can usually be obtained from the Program Director at the agency.
- Both NIH and NSF require preapproval prior to reallocation of funds that are directed for Participant or Trainee Support Costs.

The following link takes you to where both OMB Circulars covering the policies mentioned above are located: [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_default](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_default)
### Viterbi Contracts & Grants Approval/Submission Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>30 Business Days Prior to Submission Date</th>
<th>7-9 Business Days Prior to Submission Date</th>
<th>3 Business Days Prior to Submission Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Notification of Intent to Apply: Notify your department's business manager and/or research administrator of your intent to apply for a funding opportunity. This is done so to ensure that all compliance (internal and external) requirements are met in time. <strong>For solicited awards</strong>, forward a copy of the funding solicitation. <strong>For unsolicited awards</strong>, please advise the contact that it is an unsolicited award, and forward any available correspondence with the sponsor regarding the parameters of the award. Administrators should then notify the Viterbi Research Administration Office and send links and/or pdfs of funding solicitations, if applicable.</td>
<td><strong>To the Viterbi Business Affairs - Research Administration (VBA-RA) Office:</strong> The on-line TARA Pre-Award routing packet should be received by the VBA-RA Office. The routing Packet consisting of the completed on-line information; Cover Page (if applicable), Budget, Budget Justification (if applicable) and Scope of Work/Technical Justification, if Grants.gov (tab needs to be partially completed with administrative information). Once approved, the application packet will be forwarded to the University's Department of Contracts and Grants for final review and approval. In addition, you or your department administrator should begin the process of uploading all sponsor required documentation onto the electronic submission platform (Fastlane, System 2 System (Grants.Gov), NSPIRES, etc.) to enable the Office of Contracts and Grants to begin the review process. <strong>For All Contract and Grant Submissions:</strong> All sponsor required documentation, including the final <strong>Scope of Work/Technical Justification</strong>, must be uploaded onto the electronic submission platform (Fastlane, System 2 System (Grants.Gov), NSPIRES, etc.) for final review and approval by the University's Department of Contracts and Grants. The Department of Contracts and Grants will contact you or your research administrator if any changes or corrections are needed prior to submission.</td>
<td><strong>To the Viterbi Business Affairs - Research Administration Office:</strong> Any changes to the approved budget or cost sharing agreement, prior to or after the submission date requires re-approval by Viterbi.</td>
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<td><strong>Cost Sharing Approval for Center Proposals:</strong> Please submit a request via the on-line cost sharing request form found at <a href="http://viterbi.usc.edu/intranet/vba/contracts_grants/">http://viterbi.usc.edu/intranet/vba/contracts_grants/</a>. A draft budget is required when the request is submitted. <strong>Note:</strong> Please refer to the Viterbi Cost Sharing policy found at the website.</td>
<td><strong>Cost Sharing Approval for Regular Proposals:</strong> Please submit a request via the on-line cost sharing request form found at <a href="http://viterbi.usc.edu/intranet/vba/contracts_grants/">http://viterbi.usc.edu/intranet/vba/contracts_grants/</a>. A draft budget is required when the request is submitted. <strong>Note:</strong> Please refer to the Viterbi Cost Sharing policy found at the website.</td>
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**Note:** Please refer to the Viterbi Cost Sharing policy found at the website.

**The standard TARA Routing Packet** is the completed University application documents that consists of the TARA Proposal application tabs completed, Cover Page, Budget, Budget Justification, Scope of Work/Technical Justification and Sponsor Funding Solicitation (solicited awards only).

**TARA (Total Access to Research for Research Administration)** is the University's official record to document all contract and grant submissions. Prior to submission for University review and approval, on-line approvals must be obtained from the Principal Investigator, Co-Principal Investigators, and Dean designee. If interdisciplinary then will need the need Dean's signature from the other school.

Any Space/Facilities Requests need to be either approved by the department chairman or submitted to Linda Rock, Vice Dean for Administration. This should be done following the minimum dates set for cost sharing and uploaded in the appropriate section of the TARA on-line proposal document.

The **Budget** documents the direct and indirect costs associated with a contract or grant application. Typically, these cost include: salaries of personnel who will be supported full or part time on the project, fringe benefits, materials and supplies, equipment, student tuition and travel. The **Scope of Work/Technical Justification** outlines the work to be performed. A draft copy of this document is acceptable when submitting as part of the TARA routing packet.

Please note the dates given are minimum dates and earlier submission of requests and proposals is preferred.

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*Revised 07/28/2016*