Pre-Award Overview

Office for Sponsored Research
The Sponsored Project Life Cycle

Pre-Award Administration

Preparing Proposals

Award Negotiation and Acceptance

Award Set-Up

Award Management

Award Closeout

Identifying Funding Opportunities

Post-Award Administration

Proposal Development and Submission
What is a Proposal?

- A **proposal** is the document submitted to a prospective sponsor outlining and requesting support for a specific project. Proposals typically include a description of the project’s goals, methods, timelines, personnel, and budget. The terms “proposal” and “application” are often used synonymously.

- **Reasons faculty submit proposals:**
  - Research (Basic & Applied)
  - Instruction
  - Training
  - Construction
  - Public Service
How do sponsors request proposals?

• **Sponsored Project Solicitation**: Request from a sponsor for project proposals, outlining application requirements, submission information, review criteria, and in certain instances award terms and conditions.

• **Variety of names**:
  - Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)
  - Program Announcement (PA)
  - Request for Applications (RFA)
  - Request for Proposals (RFP)

• The solicitation contains vital information and serves as the **roadmap for proposal development**.
PART I: OVERVIEW INFORMATION

- **Federal Agency Name** – Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), Biological Technologies Office
- **Funding Opportunity Title** – Neural Engineering System Design (NESD)
- **Announcement Type** – Initial Announcement
- **Funding Opportunity Number** – DARPA-BAA-16-09
- **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Numbers (CFDA)** – 12.910 Research and Technology Development
- **Dates**
  - Posting Date – January 21, 2016
  - Proposal Abstract Due Date – February 25, 2016
  - Proposal Due Date – April 14, 2016
  - BAA Closing Date – April 14, 2016
  - Proposers Days – February 2-3, 2016

- **Concise description of the funding opportunity** – DARPA seeks proposals to design, build, demonstrate, and validate a neural interface system capable of recording from more than one million neurons and stimulating more than one hundred thousand neurons in proposer-defined regions of the human sensory cortex (e.g., visual cortex or auditory cortex). The complete system must demonstrate high-precision detection, transduction, and encoding of neural activity.

- **Total amount of money to be awarded** – Total funding up to approximately $60M will be awarded. The actual amount of resources available will depend on the quality of proposals received, successful achievement of milestones and availability of funds.

- **Anticipated individual awards** – Multiple awards are anticipated.

- **Types of instruments that may be awarded** – Procurement contract, cooperative agreement, or Other Transaction.

- **Any cost sharing requirements** – None
Solicitation Example #2

The project narrative file must also include the following appendices, following the formatting guidelines prescribed above. Do not attach these appendices as separate files – they should be part of the file named “ProjectNarrative.pdf”. Note that these appendices will NOT count towards the project narrative page limitation.

- **Appendix 1: Biographical Sketch**
  Provide a biographical sketch for the Consortium Director, each Topic Lead, and other senior/key personnel. The biographical information for each person must not exceed three pages. Include the following sections in each biographical sketch:

  - **Name, Contact Information (phone, e-mail), and Organization**
  
  - **Education and Training**: Undergraduate, graduate and postdoctoral training, provide institution, major/area, degree, and year.

  - **Research and Professional Experience**: Beginning with the current position, list professional/academic positions with a brief description in chronological order.

  - **Publications**: Provide a list of up to 10 publications most closely related to the proposed work. For each publication, identify the names of all authors (in the same sequence in which they appear in the publication), the article title, book or journal title, volume number, page numbers, year of publication, and website address if available electronically. Patents, copyrights, and software systems developed may be provided in addition to or substituted for publications.

  - **Synergistic Activities**: List no more than five professional and scholarly activities related to the effort proposed.
Technical Components

Technical Narrative
- Statement of need/impact (why is this work important?)
- Objectives/Goals (what are the researchers hoping to accomplished?)
- Research Plan (how will these goals be accomplished?)
- Specific sections vary from sponsor to sponsor

Statement of Work (SOW)
The SOW briefly describes the work being performed, and is often captured in sections referred to as “abstract” or “summary”

Other Technical Components
- References cited
- Schedule/Milestones
- Appendices

*not an exhaustive list, examples of common items
Administrative Components

Facilities and Other Resources
A description of the resources available to perform the proposed project

Budget and Budget Justification

Biographical Sketches
An abbreviated C.V. detailing an individual’s professional/education background as well research background (publications, contributions to science, synergistic activities etc.)

Current and Pending Support
Information pertaining to current and pending support for the individual from other sponsored projects
Let’s put the components together…

Proposal
Budget

• Itemization of the costs required to complete the proposed project
  – The funding requested must be based on a realistic and reasonable estimate of the cost to complete the work
  – All budgeted costs must be allowable on, and allocable to the project
  – Understanding the SOW is an important piece of budget development

• A large portion of the budget will be devoted to personnel costs (salary and fringe benefits) for most projects

• Other costs might include supplies, services, consulting costs, travel, subawards, etc.
Budget Justification

• A detailed description and justification of the requested funding by line item
• Use categories developed by agency
• Relate line items to program objectives
• Ensure level of detail meets sponsor requirements
• Follow sponsor formatting guidelines
• Provide any required backup documentation
• **No budget can be adequately reviewed without a justification**
Budgeting for Faculty Effort

• Salary costs for faculty are budgeted based on a percentage of effort and an individual’s institutional base salary

• **Maintaining the integrity of institutional base salaries when budgeting for faculty is extremely important**

• Effort percentages are calculated based on calendar, or academic and summer months depending on the contract period of the faculty
  – 9 month vs. 12 month appointments
  – 1.00 academic month, 1.00 summer month – what’s the effort percentage?

• For faculty with 9 month appointments the academic base salary is used
Calculating Academic Base Salary (ABS) for Faculty with 9 and 12 Month Appointments

Professor X | Base Salary  
---|---
9 month | $160,000  
12 month | $45,000  
9 month | $35,000  

To calculate the ABS for Professor X:
• Add the base salaries for the 9 month appointments together = $195,000  
• Divide the 12 month appointment by 12 to get the monthly rate = $3,750  
• Multiply the 12 month appointment monthly rate by 9 = $33,750  
• Add this number to the 9 month base salaries = $228,750

ABS = $228,750
Budgeting for Other Personnel

• Non-faculty personnel working on a project
  – Project Coordinators
  – Laboratory staff (e.g. lab managers, technicians)
  – Clinical staff

• Postdoctoral fellows & graduate students
  – Stipend vs salary/wages
  – Tuition and Research Assistant Scholarships (RAS)

• Resources
  – OSR Website: Resources-Federal Policies
  – The Graduate School (TGS): Funding
Subcontractors vs. Vendor

**Subcontractor**
- Has responsibility for programmatic decision making
- Has its performance measured in relation to whether objectives of a Federal program were met
- Is responsible for adherence to applicable Federal program requirements specified in the Federal award
- In accordance with its agreement, uses the Federal funds to carry out a program for a public purpose specified in authorizing statute, as opposed to providing goods or services for the benefit of the pass-through entity.
- Subcontractor must provide an approved and detailed budget for each year of the project, as well as any relevant administrative documents
- Affects F&A base

**Vendor**
- Provides the goods and services within normal business operations
- Provides similar goods or services to many different purchasers
- Normally operates in a competitive environment
- Provides goods or services that are ancillary to the operation of the Federal program
- Is not subject to compliance requirements of the Federal program as a result of the agreement, though similar requirements may apply for other reasons
- Does not affect F&A base

*Use of judgment in making determination:* the substance of the relationship is more important than the form of the agreement.

For Additional Information:
http://www.research.northwestern.edu/osr/Subrecipient_or_Contractor_Involvement_Checklist/
Budget: Special Considerations

• Equipment
  – Capital Equipment
  – Equipment maintenance and service contracts
• Computer Charges (server use, cloud computing, supercomputer time)
• Consultants
• Rental/lease charges
• Research subjects / participants costs
  – Animal care
  – Patient travel
  – Human research participant payments
Understanding Direct vs. Indirect Costs

- **Direct costs**: Directly assignable to the project, common examples include personnel costs, materials and supplies, and travel costs.

- **Indirect or Facilities and Administrative (F&A) Costs**: Incurred for common or joint objectives and cannot be assigned to a specific sponsored project.
  - Facilities: buildings, maintenance/utilities, library
  - Administrative: general university / departmental admin and services
## Budget: Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) vs. Total Direct Cost (TDC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modified Total Direct Cost</th>
<th>Total Direct Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Used for federal awards that provide F&amp;A at our full overhead rate</td>
<td>• Used for industry clinical trial awards and other non-federal sponsors that limit their rate of F&amp;A recovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Also used if legislatively mandated by a federal agency or specific program</td>
<td>• No exclusions from the F&amp;A base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Removes certain line items from the F&amp;A base</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Budgets: The Big Picture

- Base Salary
- Fringe
- Personnel
- Materials & Supplies
- Subcontracts
- Travel
- Direct Costs
- Indirect (F&A) Costs
- F&A Rate Calculation

Equal to Budget
How are Proposals submitted?

• Two general submission methods:
  – **System to System**: Submitted electronically directly from InfoEd to grants.gov
  – **Non-System to System**: Submitted outside of InfoEd to the sponsor (e.g. over email or using an external submission platform like the National Science Foundation’s system FastLane)

• **ALL proposals require an InfoEd record**

• **OSR submission deadlines**
  • 5 days before sponsor deadline: Complete admin shell submitted to OSR
  • 2 days before sponsor deadline: Complete FULL proposal (admin and technical) submitted to OSR
InfoEd Proposal Workflow
Best Practices

• Consistent and clear communication is a must:
  PI  ↔  RA  ↔  GA/GO

• **START EARLY** and establish a timeline to minimize last minute rushes; this will help ensure the best possible proposal goes out the door

• Review proposal guidelines and instructions carefully and thoroughly

• All sponsored projects **must** go through OSR for review and signature

• Adhere to all internal deadlines
Questions?