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Preface

This Sponsored Programs Pre-Award Manual is intended to assist faculty and staff in preparing and processing successful proposals. The information included in this manual is a combination of University policy, State rules and statutes, Federal regulations, as well as general sponsor policies and procedures.

This manual is a living document that will continue to grow and change as new processes and procedures evolve. Faculty and staff suggestions for the continued improvement of this document are most welcome.
INTRODUCTION

Authority
Chapter 63-534, Laws of Florida provided for the establishment of a Division of Sponsored Research at any university in the State University System. Florida Statutes 240.241 currently governs sponsored research divisions.

Office of Sponsored Programs
The Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) is an administrative unit under the Vice President for Research and under the direct supervision of the Director of Sponsored Programs. The staff assists faculty and administrators in the acquisition and management of external funds, principally from governmental agencies, to support research training and other sponsored projects.

The staff assists principal investigators in the acquisition of external funds by:

- Providing up-to-date information of funding opportunities that may be available through grant alerts and the Division’s Challenger newsletter;
- Assisting in the development of proposals to potential sponsoring agencies;
- Providing for administrative review of proposals prior to submission to funding agencies;
- Negotiating awards and preparing subcontracts to other institutions and organizations;
- Serving as liaison between the faculty and other administrative units in the University and between the faculty and funding agencies; and
- Assuring compliance with federal and state and regulations.

The Office of Sponsored Programs is located in 400 Foote-Hilyer Administration Center. The Office can be reached at (850)599-3531 or by fax at (850)599-3952. Principal Investigators (PI) and staff are encouraged to contact the OSP at any time in regards to questions concerning proposal development, administrative procedures and agency guidelines.
General Information

Principal Investigator Eligibility

The principal investigator (PI) must be a tenured or tenure-earning faculty member employed at Florida A&M University. Faculty at the FAMU-FSU College of Engineering, who are employed by Florida State University, must also be tenured or tenure-earning and have a courtesy appointment with Florida A&M University to be considered a PI of a Florida A&M University project.

Any exceptions must have prior written approval from the Vice President for Research at Florida A&M University. The request for an exception should be in writing from the Dean to the Vice President for Research. The request should be submitted to the OSP and should include the following:

- Recommended person’s name;
- Recommended person’s title;
- Number of years employed at Florida A&M University;
- Commitment to or assurance of longevity at Florida A&M University;
- Grant/contract experience;
- Rationale as to why the recommended person should be a PI;
- Other information as appropriate.

A notification will be sent to the Dean advising of approval or disapproval.

Proposal Submission Time Frames

Effective July 1, 2004, new submission time frames were implemented. Full proposals with only a single budget (including the proposal, agency guidelines, if any, and the Proposal Review Transmittal Form) must be submitted to the OSP at least six days prior to the proposal submission deadline. If the proposal consists of several budgets, a consortium, or multiple years funding, the proposal must be submitted to the OSP 10 days prior to the submission deadline. These new time frames will allow for more effective reviews, including allowing time for the Provost’s Office to review and approve release time and cost sharing commitments made by the schools and colleges.

Intent to Submit Proposal

Once a faculty or staff member has decided to either submit a proposal or to respond to a Request for Proposal (RFP), they should submit an Intent to Submit Proposal Form to OSP. The Intent to Submit should include the principal investigator’s name, title of the proposal, funding agency, submission deadline,
whether the proposal is a collaborative or institutional proposal, and whether match/cost-sharing is required. Any funding agency guidelines should be submitted as soon as available. OSP staff will follow up with the prospective PI. Staff will be aware of any special forms or application procedures required by the respective agencies. They will also be knowledgeable of such things as deadlines, number of copies and any pertinent data on the agency and/or contact person.

Submission of Proposal to Sponsors

Effective July 1, 2004, the OSP is responsible for mailing/transmitting all proposals to the prospective sponsors directly after the Vice President for Research has signed as the authorized representative for the University. This includes new and continuing proposals. The OSP will make all copies and mail/transmit the proposal to the funding agency. A copy of the signed proposal will be returned to the PI.

Proposals are normally mailed through the use of a commercial service, such as Federal Express or through the U.S. Postal Service using Express Mail. OSP maintain records of guaranteed overnight delivery.

White Papers

White papers or preliminary proposals may be developed to communicate an idea to a prospective sponsor to determine if a funding agency is interested in the project. A brief letter of inquiry or a telephone call to the agency is recommended prior to sending preliminary proposals. This establishes whether or not there is sufficient interest and gives an interested agency the opportunity to offer suggestions that may prove helpful. Additionally, it gives the agency an opportunity to provide specific guidelines for the proposal, if there are any. Although white papers do not require regular University review, they should be coordinated with the department and college, as well as with the OSP. If a white paper include a budget, it is advisable to have OSP review it.

A copy of the white paper should always be sent to the OSP. Very often, the OSP staff is contacted by a potential sponsor for answers to questions for administrative purposes. If staff has no knowledge of the white paper, unnecessary confusion may result.

Cooperative Research/Training with Other Institutions

Faculty are sometimes invited by colleagues at other institutions to participate in programs which have been, or will be, funded by grant or contract awards to other institutions. Such participation usually is a subcontract between the awarding institution and this University.

Should a faculty member wish to participate in inter-institutional programs under these circumstances, a proposal outlining the extent of participation in the funding and facilities commitment necessary to carry out the participation should be prepared. The proposal should include a statement of work, budget, budget justification, and letter of commitment signed by the authorized official. This should be submitted
through the University’s regular routing procedures to OSP. The OSP will prepare a transmittal letter, including the University’s applicable Facilities and Administrative costs and fringe benefit rates. This will assure the awarding institution of official University approval of the proposed collaboration.

Institutional Proposals

Institutional proposals are proposals submitted by Florida A&M University to a funding sponsor that limits the number of proposals the sponsor will receive by any one institution. When the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) is made aware of institutional proposals, the OSP webpage will be updated with information specific to the proposal, such as the proposal’s due date and the number of proposals the sponsor will accept. The information will also be sent in an e-mail to all faculty. The Division of Research’s web page is http://research.famu.edu.

Any faculty member who is interested in responding to a Request for Proposal (RFP) should immediately complete the “Intent to Submit” form on the OSP webpage and send a white paper (one page) to the Vice President for Research within the time specified.

The white paper for institutional proposals must include the following information:

- A statement regarding the ability of the proposed Principal Investigator and each member of the project team to successfully secure and complete the project;
- A description of project team’s track record with the Division of Research in securing and managing grants;
- An indication of whether the proposal requires institutional costs, such as cash or in-kind match (If so, identify the funding source);
- A description of how the project will benefit FAMU; and
- The goals and objectives of the project (Link these to the RFP);
- A description of the project’s planned collaborative effort.

The PI should send this information to OSP at least 30 days before the proposal is due, if possible. However, if the OSP finds that the proposal is due within a short time-frame, the Vice President for Research will decide which proposal to submit to the sponsor.

If the number of white papers received by OSP is greater than the number of proposals allowed by funding sponsor, the Vice President for Research will convene an Ad Hoc Subcommittee of the Faculty Research Advisory Committee (FRAC). The Vice President for Research will appoint members to the Ad Hoc Subcommittee according to the scope of the RFP. The subcommittee will review the white papers and make recommendations to the Vice President for Research on which proposals to submit for funding.
The following evaluation criteria will be used by subcommittee members to assist in evaluating institutional proposal white papers.

Within five days after the white papers are received and evaluated, the PIs will be informed in writing by the Vice President for Research as to which white papers(s) was/were selected to be submitted to the funding sponsor.

**General Review and Approval Process**

Before a proposal can be submitted to a funding agency, the principal investigator must obtain all the required approvals as appropriate. The Proposal Review Transmittal Form is the document used to secure these signatures and to assist in the orderly routing of proposals. It is an internal document and is not submitted to the sponsor. The PI should submit the original proposal, sponsor guidelines, and any applicable compliance approvals, along with the Transmittal Form after all signatures have been obtained. Signatures must be received from all department chairs, directors and deans of all investigators involved in the project. If the Dean is the PI, signatures must be obtained from the President or Provost, as appropriate. After the proposal has been approved by the Vice President for Research, the proposal will be transmitted to the sponsor either electronically or by commercial carrier, such as Federal Express or the U.S. Postal Service using Express Mail. A copy of the signed proposal will be returned to the PI.
FUNDING SOURCES

The proposal developer will probably need some assistance in locating suitable funding sources. With this thought in mind, the Office of Sponsored Programs maintains current data on ongoing and proposed research and training programs. Our library consists of the following types of materials:

a. Information gathering: A large number of informational resources regarding federal, State and local governmental funding resources are available in the Sponsored Research Office. This library includes the following: Major reference works: The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, The Guide to Federal Assistance for Education, The Research Monitor, The Director of NSF Programs, The Foundation Grants Index, The Foundation Center Source Book Profiles and The Annual Register of Grant Support and many others.


c. Occasional bulletins, notices, program announcements: The Office of Sponsored Programs attempts to acquire most program announcements, etc. so that application packets are available for prospective proposal writers. The Office is on the mailing list of most relevant Federal and State research and training agencies.

d. Data concerning educational associations is included in the Annual Register of Grant Support (published by Marquis Academic Media). The Taft Corporate Directory (published by the Taft Corporation) and the National Directory of Corporate Charity (published by the Regional Young Adult Project) provide information about company-sponsored foundations.

e. Information concerning private foundations can be found in The Foundation Directory and The Foundation Grants Index and The Source Book Profiles (published annually by The Foundation Center, which has offices in New York City and Washington, D.C.). Bear in mind, however, that all proposals to be submitted to private foundations must be routed through the FAMU Foundation.

While we advise interested faculty and staff to utilize our library resources, the Office of Research Services disseminates current Requests for Proposal (RFP) data in the monthly newsletter - THE CHALLENGER.

By way of a “Profile” questionnaire, the staff is aware of the area(s) of interest of all interested faculty/staff members. This enables OSP to refer related RFPs to faculty/staff for proposal development consideration. Further, when appropriate, the Office also assists faculty members in making direct contact with officials at the prospective funding agencies.
10 Steps in Proposal Development

It is important, in the preparation of proposals, that certain steps be followed in the proposal preparation process:

1. The proposal developer should be familiar with the priorities of the funding sources per the RFP and submit the proposal(s) accordingly.
2. The need for the significance of the project should be justified.
3. The specific objectives of the proposal should be clearly stated.
4. The research/training procedures should be matched with the objectives.
5. The proposal should emphasize the competencies of the personnel.
6. The budget should be in sufficient detail to support the proposal.
7. The proposal writer should stress the evaluation and dissemination of results.
8. The principal investigator (P.I.) should effectively communicate his ideas — use all available tools (pictures, diagrams, charts, etc.).
9. The principal investigator should use concise, standard English. Avoid obscure jargon and educational platitudes.
10. The writer should review the RFP to determine the procedures by which the proposal will be evaluated by the funding agency.

Plan the Details of the Project

Make certain that the proposal is not distorted by errors in grammar or spelling, varied writing styles, missing pages, incomplete attachments or unreadable copy. State the case positively and support your position with evidence. Precisely identify the research problem/needs and carefully document and substantiate them.

Keep the audience (usually a review panel composed of peers) in mind. The language and style should be suited to the audience. For example, the National Science Foundation notes that proposals submitted to the Foundation should be written in a language and style that is “intelligible to the scientifically literate community.”

The people who will make decisions about the proposal will, in all likelihood, know nothing about the PI or the institution other than what information is provided in 20-25 typewritten pages. Persuade those individuals, within a limited space, that your concept, ability to accomplish the task, and the institutional capacity are superior to those of others competing for the same grant funds.
In addition to starting with a quality idea, the presentation of it must be concise, logical, and jargon-free. The intent of any proposal is to create, in the reader’s mind, a multi-dimensional image of what will be accomplished, its importance, and the soundness of the plan.

Most funding agencies will require basically the same type of format or design. However, some agencies have prescribed formats for proposal preparation, including the required forms for text, biographical data, and budget.

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT FORMAT

For agencies which do not have specific formats, the following format may be utilized:

1. Proposal Review/Transmittal Form
2. Letter of Transmittal
3. Title Page
4. Technical Abstract
5. Table of Contents
6. List of Tables (Optional)
7. List of Figures (Optional)
8. Introduction (Optional)
9. Objectives
10. Procedures
11. Evaluation
12. Dissemination
13. Equipment & Facilities
14. Personnel
15. Budget
16. Biographical Data
17. References (literature cited)
18. Appendices
Brief descriptions of the above items are indicated below:

**Transmittal Form**

The Proposal Review/Transmittal Form provides the Office of Sponsored Programs with the necessary data concerning the proposal and should include an abstract which clearly describes the proposed research. It also indicates possible problem areas in preparing the proposal or performing the research if funded.

For example, the transmittal form reminds faculty members that they must get the approval of the Animal Care and Human Subjects faculty before they can be used for research. It also identifies unusual space or physical requirements. Sign-off on the transmittal form (by the Principal Investigator, the Department Chairperson, and the Dean) indicates, at the time the proposal is submitted, the commitment of each to the proposal. The OSP receives and processes proposals only after the transmittal form has been reviewed and signed by the appropriate personnel.

The Proposal Review/Transmittal forms may be obtained in our office or it can be downloaded from our website at [http://research.famu.edu](http://research.famu.edu). Proposals which do not have a properly completed transmittal form will be returned to the principal investigator for correction before sign-off and mailing. Appropriately signed transmittal forms must be provided to OSP prior to proposal transmission to the funding source.

**Letter of Transmittal**

The letter of transmittal will be prepared by the OSP from data provided by the proposal developer. The letter of transmittal serves two distinct purposes: (a) it identifies, for the use of the sponsor, the name and telephone number of the principal investigator and the University contracting officer so that questions concerning technical or fiscal details can be answered by telephone by the proper person quickly and easily; and (b) for many agencies, the inclusion in the letter of transmittal of a brief abstract in layman’s language helps the agency’s processing office.

**Title Page**

Some agencies include in their application packages a specific title page which should be used. In the absence of a formal title page supplied by the agency, use the format prepared by OSP or a format that includes: the title of the project (many agencies limit the title to a specific number of letters), the principal investigator’s name and affiliation, other co-investigators and their affiliation, the agency to which the proposal is being submitted, the duration of the project, the funds requested from the agency, the signature of the principal investigators, and the signature of the official authorized to commit the University (Vice President for Research), the legal name of the University (Florida A&M University, acting for and on behalf of the FAMU Board of Trustees), and the date submitted.
Technical Abstract

The technical abstract should be a condensed version of the proposal, usually no more than 200 to 250 words. State concisely the significance of the research, what is to be accomplished and how, and the anticipated time span of the project. Underlining key words may aid in assignment to a particular area of an agency. The abstract is important in creating a favorable first impression of the proposal.

Table of Contents (This is necessary only if proposal has more than three (3) sections). The Table of Contents should list major sections of the proposal and give the specific page location where each section begins in the narrative. It need not include all subheadings, but should be detailed enough to allow reviewers to find the section(s) in which they are interested, without having to leaf through the entire proposal.

List of Tables and List of Figures

Some proposals include specific technical data presented in tabular or graphic form. Although a List of Tables and a List of Figures is not required, there are proposals in which the quality and presentation of the proposal would be significantly enhanced by their inclusion. In the case of an extremely long proposal, the inclusion of such lists is often quite advantageous.

Introduction

The introduction, or statement of need, should emphasize the importance of the project, both locally and nationally and summarize previous research in the field, including that of the principal investigator. The relationship of the project to the interests of the funding agency may be tactfully stressed. The introduction sets forth the major focus of the proposal.

Objectives

The objectives should state the intended outcomes of the project. This may be presented as general and specific accomplishments. It is of the utmost importance that your objectives, both general and specific, be well thought out.

Procedures

The procedures section sets forth the details of how the proposal developer will carry out the project. Procedures may be organized in several different ways: by activities tied to specific procedures, by functional categories such as planning, development, and implementation, or by major time blocks.

If the PI intends to include participants in the project, describe how they are to be chosen and exactly what they are to do. If the project is a large one, the PI may also include an explanation of how it will be administered. Define the responsibilities of any advisory groups or organizations participating. A proposal can be greatly strengthened if letters of agreement to participate from cooperating organizations or consultants are included in an appendix.

If appropriate, a time frame may be included as part of the procedures section or may be written up separately. In either case, the PI should set forth clearly the sequence and timing for each part of the project. Be sure to leave time at the end of the project
for the preparation of the final report for the agency. Be realistic about how much can be accomplish in the period of time set aside for each part of the project. The persons reviewing the proposal will easily recognize an overly optimistic timetable.

If the procedures section takes up an undue number of pages or if there are page limitation, the judicious use of appendices, tables, and illustrations may be particularly useful. Remember, however, that all material necessary for review should be included in the body of the proposal. Only supplementary material should be placed in an appendix.

Although requests for equipment are usually set forth in a separate section, additional justification for unusually expensive or specialized equipment can be stated in the procedures section to reinforce the budget request.

Evaluation

If the project is one which will require an evaluation of its accomplishments, a description of the evaluation techniques will usually follow the procedures section. The evaluation, which is usually carried out both during the project and after its conclusion, can be done in a number of ways. Its basic intent is to determine whether or not the project was successful in carrying out its objectives. A concise description of the evaluation design is essential.

Dissemination

While projects generally result in published papers in professional journals, many agencies often require additional means of disseminating the results. A statement of how this is to be done should be included at this point. Dissemination of results may take the form of a conference or workshop, project newsletter, production of audiovisual material, travel to a meeting to report results to potential users, or other means. For obvious reasons, agency officials welcome understandable reports on successful projects.

Equipment and Facilities

Most proposals should include a section on equipment and facilities to be used on the research project. These may be items of equipment which the PI is requesting the agency to purchase, or they may be items currently at the University which are going to be made available to this research project. It is extremely critical that major items of equipment and facilities, either requested or being supplied by the University, be clearly identified here so that reviewers will not question whether or not the institution have the items necessary to do the research described in the proposal. In addition, some federal agencies require certification as to the non-availability of capital equipment at the time of proposal submission.

Personnel

The section on personnel should include the curriculum vitae of all professional staff, together with a full list of the support staff. An introductory statement indicating the name of the principal investigator, the names of other researchers, and the number of students and support staff available to the project should be included in the personnel section. In addition, it is often wise to indicate here the full range of University staff
available in your department/school/college (laboratory technicians, glass blowers, and machine operators, for example) as further indication of your ability to carry out the proposed research.

**Budget**

The budget included in the proposal should estimate the costs necessary to carry out the research described in the body of the proposal. The PI needs to estimate, with reasonable accuracy, the major costs associated with doing the research. Personnel in the OSP are available to aid the PI in preparing the budget. (A more detailed discussion of the project budget is presented later in this manual.).

**Biographical Data**

Biographical data should be submitted with every proposal to indicate the background, areas of interest, research capabilities, and publications of the proposed principal investigator as well as any co-investigators.

**References** (literature cited)

Certain proposals should include a list of references to pertinent literature in the field. This list should be as current as possible at the time the proposal is prepared, citing the most recent advances in the field. If the PI has an idea of who is to review the proposal, the judicious use of pertinent literature citations of the referee can be valuable.

**Appendices**

Appendices may be used to indicate data of peripheral benefit to the research (such as preprints of articles, subcontract data, letters of support, tabular data, and graphs). The use of appendices is recommended, particularly when a sponsor limits the length of the proposal to a specified number of pages.

**Review Considerations**

As the PI reviews the proposal prior to submitting it to OSP for funding consideration, consider the following questions:

1. Is the proposal prepared according to the agency’s guidelines?
2. Have you talked with your Department Chair and Dean about release time and cost sharing commitments?
3. Does the project involve human subjects, laboratory animals or a patentable product? If so, have the necessary institutional clearances been obtained?
4. Is the document well organized and easy to read? Is it free from misspellings and typographical errors?
5. Has the budget been reviewed to ensure that enough funds have been requested in each expense category so that the project can be properly executed? Have appropriate fringe benefit rates and facilities and administrative costs been included in the total costs?
PROJECT BUDGET

It is important that the budget section of the proposal reflects, as accurately as possible, the funding needed to carry out the proposed research. The budget should not seek to overestimate the funds requested or to underestimate budgetary needs. Either of these strategies may lead to proposal rejection. However, a carefully prepared budget which reflects as accurately as possible the funds necessary to carry out the project described in the technical section of the proposal can be of major advantage in strengthening the total research proposal and can substantially increase the likelihood of funding. Furthermore, a carefully thought-out budget can often identify weak areas in the proposal narrative and result in improvement of the technical proposal. Estimates should be prepared for the total cost of the project with a breakdown of cost per year. Allowances for cost increases in future years should be made for personnel as well as for equipment and supplies. Contributions from other sources should be listed in similar categories. All match/cost sharing must be approved by the dean prior to submission to OSP. Additionally, since employee fringe benefits and indirect costs normally change annually, it is advisable to contact OSP when preparing project budgets or check the website at http://research.famu.edu.

Unless the funding agency specifies the format for the proposal budget, the PI can use discretion in choosing a style. However, ensure that the budget contains adequate information to judge its validity.

Elements of the Budget

A. Personnel
B. Fringe Benefits
C. Consultants
D. Travel
E. Equipment
F. Supplies
G. Subcontractual
H. Renovations
I. Other
J. Total Direct Costs
K. Indirect Costs/Overhead
Personnel

The proposal budget should list the title of each position - faculty, professional, support staff and students to be employed by the project. Indicate the overall amount of time each person is expected to devote to the project as a percentage of full-time equivalency (FTE). Do not include persons without obtaining their permission.

To determine total salaries and wages, list the amount of time to be spent by each, person, including secretaries and clerical assistants who will be working on the project. Time should normally be shown in terms of man-months or as percent of full-time effort. Show breakdown between summer and regular academic year.

Faculty may not schedule activities in excess of 100% of effort. For current faculty members, we have adopted a minimum 12-hour workload policy, which means that a normal full-time load is considered to allow up to 25% of time for research.

According to OMB Circular A-21, attachment J.,10 (Salary rates for faculty members), sponsored activities may not result in any employees receiving compensation at a rate in excess of their authorized salaries.

Compensation levels and new job classifications must conform with the University Compensation Plan and, if unusual, should be cleared with the Personnel Relations office or Academic Affairs.

For multi-year projects, the PI should budget for possible salary increases. If specific increment figures are not available, estimate at 3-5% per year.

The maximum use of students is encouraged. The student payments should be consistent with those customarily paid within the department/school/college and should not exceed the allowable rates established by the University. Part-time employees should be identified either as student or non-student.

According to both state and Federal guidelines, no regular employee should be able to receive compensation in excess of their regular contractual salary by merely switching to a sponsored contract or grant. In other words, a person’s salary on a grant should be the same as if it were paid from regular state funds.

When salaries of current employees are indicated in a project proposal, they should be based on current rates, not anticipated rates. In all instances, salary compensation levels and new job classification must be in conformity with established compensation levels for job classifications relative to FAMU’s personnel polices.

If the PI or other currently employed faculty is going to be employed to work on the project, this should be stated in the project budget as indicated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person(s) to be Hired on Grant</th>
<th>Percentage Time</th>
<th>Salary Requested</th>
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<tr>
<td>________________</td>
<td>_____%</td>
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This grouping becomes important when calculating fringe benefits.
Fringe Benefits

Fringe benefits are direct costs for the project and must be included in the proposal budget. The calculation of fringe benefits should be readily apparent. Fringe benefit rates change periodically. Please contact the OSP for current rates or refer to our website at http://research.famu.edu.

Consultants

The use of consultants must be justified when the project calls for expertise of a highly defined nature for specified periods of time. Consultants should not be “regular” employees of the project but should only be budgeted for tasks where University expertise does not exist or where such is not readily available. Under normal circumstances, consultants are paid a “consulting fee,” plus travel and housing expenses. In all instances, consultant travel and housing expenses are limited to those approved for regular State employees. Where consultant fees are allowed for the project, it is normally limited. As a precaution, the funding agency’s program guidelines should be reviewed if there are plans to employ outside consultants.

Under some circumstances, the PI may want to collaborate with regular University faculty. Please note that **faculty generally cannot be paid as consultants**. However, according to OMB A-21, “in unusual cases where consultation is across departmental lines or involves a separate or remote operation, and the work performed by the consultant is in addition to his regular departmental load, any charges for such work representing extra compensation above the base salary are allowable provided that such consulting arrangements are specifically provided for in the agreement or approved in writing by the sponsoring agency.”

It should be noted that Federal agencies specifically prohibit the payment of consultant fees from contracts and grants to persons employed by the Federal government in any capacity. Refer to Purchasing Procedures regarding how to execute the OPS Service Contract forms when hiring consultants.

Travel

In developing the proposal budget, particular attention should be paid to the travel section. Travel must be tied to achieving the tasks indicated in the proposal. For instance, local mileage should not be requested when the research is to be conducted in a laboratory on campus. On the other hand, it would be proper to request funds to attend a professional meeting where the results of the research will be shared with other scientists.

Generally, travel funds may be requested for the following objectives:

1. To collect research samples.
2. To perform research at off-campus laboratories/sites.
3. To attend professional conferences.
4. To attend professional meetings with some bearing on the related research.
5. To confer with and/or supervise personnel in the field.
6. Other related travel that can be justified by project tasks.
Supporting documentation for travel should include: destination of requested trip, purpose of each trip, number of individuals on each trip, per diem costs and rates, and the mode and estimated cost of transportation.

The PI should be aware of the rules and procedures of the University, State and the prospective funding agency concerning travel. This is especially true in terms of foreign travel. The Agency for International Development (AID), for instance, requires that specific prior approval for each foreign trip be obtained even when such travel has been approved in the grant budget.

The project writer should use the following information when developing the travel section of his budget:

**Per diem** — $50 per day (includes meals and lodging) or $21 meal allowance plus lodging and other allowable expenses supported by receipts.

**Foreign Per Diem**

Foreign per diem rates change frequently. Please check with the Travel Desk.

**Incidental Travel Expenses**

- Reasonable taxi fares
- Ferry fares
- Road and bridge tolls
- Storage or parking fees
- Telephone/telegraph fees
- Convention/conference registration fee
- Other business travel related expenses

**Mileage**

Mileage is reimbursed at the rate of $.29 per mile.

**Airfare**

Check with the Travel Desk to get current rates. Once the project is funded, every effort must be made to purchase tickets under the State contract.

**Rental Car**

Each year, the State enters into a contract with an auto rental agency. The selected vendor must be used.

For more information on travel, please contact the Travel Desk.
**Equipment**

Most research grants permit the acquisition of technical property for the conduct of research provided it is included in the approved proposal budget. Normally, if the item is not included in the budget, you must obtain permission from the funding agency before making the purchase. All equipment should be itemized and priced. An item is considered to be equipment if it has a useful life of one year or more and has an acquisition cost of $1,000 or more.

The PI should be aware that most funding agencies specify that research funds are not to be used to purchase items such as office furniture, or equipment of a non-technical nature. If you have questions in this regard, please contact OSP.

**Supplies/Other Expense**

Indicate by general categories, the type of expendable supplies/services needed with estimated costs.

It should be pointed out here that some research grants are student oriented and certain funds must be used on their behalf. If this is the situation, group such costs under the category of student or trainee costs.

**Subcontracts**

Before proposing the subcontracting of project activities to outside sources, make certain that such is in accord with the policies of the funding agency.

Proposals which contemplate subcontracts to named subcontractors must be accompanied by a statement from the subcontractor on letterhead of his intent to participate in the program if it is funded and signed by an authorized official. This offer should include a statement of work, an estimate of the time required to complete the work, and a proposed budget/justification (including applicable indirect costs and fringe benefit rates). The Principal Investigator(s) must submit a statement disclosing any direct or indirect financial interest in the subcontractor organization. In the technical section of the proposal, the PI should include a statement concerning the need for a subcontract and the method(s) to be used to select the subcontractor.

As the primary contractor, the PI cannot subcontract away their responsibility/accountability to the collaborating agency. Normally, subcontractors deliver a product according to some predetermined criteria for payment; it is the responsibility of the researcher to make certain that the quality and quantity of the services are in accord with the agreement.

All subcontracts should be discussed with OSP before a formal offer is submitted for consideration.
Renovations
Most granting agencies do not allow funds for renovation purposes without specific prior approval. Please check with OSP before including a renovation line item in the proposal budget.

Other Direct Costs
This category would include costs not itemized elsewhere in the proposal, but are necessary for the accomplishment of the project. Telephone service is allowable as a direct cost if it is a dedicated line required for the project. Office supplies are allowable if they are for a new or established research center or for off campus offices. They should be listed by general type with estimated costs.

Postage, local telephone service and office supplies are normally treated as indirect costs and should not be included as direct costs unless there are exceptional circumstances. Exceptions will be allowable when a project requires a high demand for a particular item and the sponsor has approved the proposed item for inclusion.

Facilities and Administrative (F&A/Indirect) Costs
F&A costs, formally known as indirect costs, are defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-21, Cost Principals for Educational Institutions, as costs “that are incurred for common or joint objectives and therefore cannot be readily and specifically identified with a particular sponsored project, an instructional activity, or any other institutional activity.” Indirect costs are designed to reimburse the University for laboratory and office space, utilities, administrative services (e.g. purchasing, business, research, personnel, and security), custodial services, accounting, grounds, street and parking lot maintenance, etc. This includes those things essential to support sponsored activities, but which cannot readily be directly charged to a specific research grant or contract.

Indirect cost percentages are determined annually from actual cost records through detailed cost accounting procedures and are audited and approved by the University’s cognizant audit agency. Some sponsors limit the amount of indirect cost recovery. When this occurs, FAMU adheres to the sponsor’s mandated indirect cost rate.

All research proposals must contain the applicable indirect rate, unless it is not allowed by the funding agency.

Contact OSP or check our website at http://research.famu.edu to find the most current rates.
**Match/Cost Sharing**

Cost sharing is the portion of the grant or contract not borne by the sponsor. Cost sharing commitments should be made only when required by the sponsor, and then to cost share only to the extent necessary to meet the specific requirements of the sponsor. Cost sharing is subject to the same documentation standards as the sponsor funded costs. The PI is responsible for ensuring that all required cost sharing is met.

Additionally, cost sharing must meet the following criteria as outlined in 2 CFR Part 215 (OMB Circular A-110): 1) must be verifiable from the contributor’s accounting records; 2) may not be included as contributions for any other federally assisted project in either the current or any prior period; 3) must be necessary and reasonable for proper accomplishment of project objectives; 4) must be allowable under the applicable cost principals (OMB Circular A-21). A matching contribution must be for something for which the institution could have spent federal funds; 5) may not consist of federal funds, unless specifically allowed; and 6) must be provided for in the approved budget.

**CONCLUDING NOTES**

**Meet the Deadlines**

Most federal agencies and many foundations have fixed, specific deadlines for proposals. These may be postmark deadlines or receipt deadlines. It is critical that proposals are received by the deadline in order to receive consideration by the sponsor.

**Unsuccessful Proposals**

There will be unsuccessful proposals. However, continuing to write proposals will eventually meet with success. Always write to the agency for the reviewers’ comments. These comments will be of great assistance in identifying where improvements may be made for the next submission.

In some instances, if the proposal was a “near miss,” it may be worth rewriting and submitting in the next round of competition. In other instances, the development of a different project may be more appropriate.

But in any event, we hope that the generation of new ideas, the identification of appropriate funding sources, and the development of proposals will become another one of your important professional activities.