

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH**

**South Carolina STEM Equipment
Request for Proposals**

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| Announcement Release Date: | June 24, 2019 |
| Application Receipt Date: | August 1, 2019 |
| Award Announcement Date: | September 20, 2019 |

Purpose: The State of South Carolina, through the state lottery program, has provided UofSC with funds dedicated for the purchase of STEM equipment. These funds can help build state-of-the-art research infrastructure that can be used to sustain and develop interdisciplinary research. The proposed equipment should not be duplicative of other resources on campus.

Eligibility: Eligible applicants include all tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure track faculty who are UofSC employees and have independent research programs on the UofSC Columbia Campus. Up to two PIs can be designated, but proposals must come from teams. The proposed equipment must be accessible to a large potential group of users.

Funds Available: The total request may not exceed \$462,486, which must include all potential associated costs (shipping, taxes, maintenance, etc.) It is anticipated that only a single proposal will be funded through this competition. An applicant may request a project period of 15 months, beginning October 1, 2019 – December 31, 2020. Additional funds can be committed by the units to purchase a piece of equipment that costs more than \$462,486. A letter of commitment must be included with the application in these cases.

Because it is difficult to secure large equipment grants from internal or Federal Sources, priority will be given to fund 1-2 large pieces of equipment.

Budget Information: Budgets will be presented in general categories but require detailed explanation; quotes for equipment purchases are **required**.

Allowable Costs

- Equipment (The formal definition of “capital equipment” is any article of non-expendable, tangible property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition, or valuation cost of at least \$5,000).
- Equipment costs inclusive of service contracts for a limited number of years.

Unallowable Costs

- Project costs for work done by the UofSC facilities management office or external vendors or contractors
- Supplies and materials directly related to the equipment
- Limited travel *essential* to conduct the project (e.g. training to learn how to use equipment, or for a technician to come to USC to train users on equipment).
- Salary and fringe benefits

- Travel to professional or non-project-related meetings
- Laptop computers
- Food
- Tuition

Application Procedure

1. Develop a four-page proposal narrative that provides:
 - a. A brief discussion of the demonstrated need and significance of the proposed equipment in STEM research, including its projected future impact on a wide variety of research and scholarly activities, including the opportunity to secure external funding.
 - b. Where will the equipment be located? Are there remediation issues that need to be addressed for the instrument to work within its designed specifications?
 - c. Who will operate and maintain the equipment? Can the operation and maintenance be sustained? What funding sources currently support this or similar equipment/facilities?
 - d. Who will have access to the equipment? How will this access be guaranteed, supported and what type of cost recovery is envisioned? **Access to this equipment cannot be limited to a small research group.**
 - e. What is the proposed timeline for ordering and installing the equipment?
 - f. What is the projected lifespan of the equipment? What expansion and/or upgrade plans are being envisioned?
 - g. Why can this equipment not be purchased through competitive grants from NSF, NIH, and the like?
 - h. How many faculty members from how many different campuses, colleges, departments, centers and institutes will use this equipment/facility?
 - i. Proposal should be single-spaced with margins not less than one-half inch and using a font size not less than 11 pt.
 - j. Attach a cover sheet to your proposal (not included in the page limit) that includes the project title, the total budget request, the PIs' names, colleges/departments, and e-mail addresses, along with a brief summary of the proposed project.
2. Attach the following supporting documentation to the end of the proposal narrative:
 - a. Bibliography (should be included as appropriate but will not be counted in the narrative page limitation).
 - b. Two-page biographical sketch/cv of the principal investigator and other key personnel.
 1. Education
 2. Professional experience
 3. Evidence of scholarship: most significant refereed journal articles, books, and book chapters, etc.
 4. Significant accomplishments and contributions
 5. Other information as appropriate such as project management skills
 - c. A detailed budget and budget justification for total project costs consistent with the list of allowable costs shown above. Quotes for the equipment must be attached.
 - d. Letters of support from potential users of the equipment are allowable. If departments and colleges are pledging additional resources, a letter signed by a

Dean, department chair, or center director detailing these commitments must be included.

3. Submit the completed proposal packet:
 - a. Through USCeRA (<https://sam.research.sc.edu/uscera/>) before 5:00 pm on deadline date. Proposals submitted into USCeRA after 5:00 pm on the deadline date will be returned without review.
 - b. **Application Receipt Date: August 1, 2019.**
 - c. Select "Internal Request," "VP for Research" and choose the category type (STEM Equipment) from the USCeRA drop down menu to ensure proper proposal routing. Failure to check the box will result in your proposal NOT being reviewed.
 - d. The Internal Commit Form should be used to list the amount that you are requesting from the VPR. Do not enter an amount in the Start-Up box. Enter the total amount of your request in the Year 1 box.
 - e. **Upload your proposal following the directions in USCERA.** Use of PDF files is strongly encouraged.
 - f. Complete a certification form for your equipment in USCERA.
 - g. Questions about submission? Contact: Beth Herron, Research and Grant Development Office, bherron@mailbox.sc.edu, 777-2885.

Review Process: Applications that are complete and responsive to this announcement will be evaluated for merit by a committee. The Committee will then provide a prioritized list of recommendations for funding to the VPR based on the quality of the proposals per the review criteria (see below). It is anticipated that only one proposal will be funded.

Research Merit:

- Does the proposed equipment/facility have the potential to enable and strengthen existing and new disciplinary and interdisciplinary research? If so, how?
- Will the proposed equipment/facility help secure extramural funding?

Nature of Proposal:

- Does the proposal demonstrate a clear and demonstrated need of the proposed equipment? Will the equipment be accessible to a wide range of users, including students?
- Are the proposed methodologies appropriate and accurate?
- Does the proposal provide a sound justification with clear and specific budget information? Is there a timeline, and is it realistic? Are there quotes and other clear supporting information?
- Will the operation of this equipment be sustainable? Is there evidence that the equipment will be supported after the initial purchase?
- Is the text of the proposal well-written?
- Is there additional support for the equipment sustenance from the units?
- Is it difficult to obtain support for the purchase of this equipment from Federal sources (NSF, NIH)?

Leverage:

- Does the project significantly improve chances for additional external funding from existing and new sources?
- Does the project help sustain and build new interdisciplinary research networks within the university?

For More Information: Please contact Beth Herron, Research and Grant Development, bherron@mailbox.sc.edu/803-777-2885.