Building Strong Proposal Budgets: A Panel Discussion

Office of Research Awareness Series
Wednesday, November 17, 2021
Introductions

Speaker

Stuart Taub, staub@syr.edu Director, Office of Sponsored Programs

Panel

Amy Graves, ajgraves@syr.edu Research Administrator, Office of Sponsored Programs
Biology, Chemistry, Communication Sciences & Disorders, Forensic & National Security Sciences Institute, Mathematics, Physics, Psychology, Science Teaching

Peg Austin, mmaustin@syr.edu Associate Director for Budget and Administration, Maxwell School Center for Policy Research

Sabina Redington, skreding@syr.edu Budget Manager, College of Engineering and Computer Science Biomedical and Chemical Engineering

Panel Moderator

Christina Leigh Docteur, cdocteur@syr.edu Director, Proposal Support Services, Office of Research
Agenda

• Proposal basics:
  – items to include,
  – tools to build your budget
  – questions to ask
• Panel discussion
• Q & A
Proposal Basics: What is a Budget?

• Financial expression of your work plan (a.k.a. statement of work)
  – Personnel costs
  – Other than personnel costs

• Best estimate of financial resources needed to perform the work proposed

• Guiding Principles – costs must be:
  – Reasonable, allowable, allocable, and consistently treated

• Scope of the project and the project budget should be in line with the costs available under the funder’s program
Proposal Basics: Items to Include in a Research Budget

• **The 3 T’s**: Time (faculty, postdocs, students, staff); travel (where, when, how long); tuition (does your school include?);

• **Equipment** ($5,000k +)

• **Materials and supplies** (any “stuff” under $5k)

• **Payments to or for other people**: Trainees (stipends, subsistence), research participants (human subject costs), consultants, purchased services (like transcriptionists or translators), and don’t forget subcontractors

• **Data and publication costs** (put them in there!)

• **Indirect costs** (also known as overhead or facilities and administrative costs [F&A])
Proposal Basics: Item Limitations

• Read sponsor guidance for budget preparation
  – Check for unallowable costs
  – Some costs may be required (e.g.- PI meetings)
  – Some cost items may have limitations or thresholds (e.g.- effort limits for NSF, salary caps for NIH)
  – Some may be prohibited (administrative costs for federal proposals, indirect costs for many foundations)

• Note: budget terminology may differ among sponsors
Proposal Basics: Tools

- Office of Sponsored Programs – Budget Template [https://sponsoredprograms.syr.edu](https://sponsoredprograms.syr.edu)
  - Quicklinks > OSP Budget Template (FY22), or
  - Tools and Resources > Forms, Checklists & Templates > Campus R&R Budget Template
Proposal Basics: Tools – OSP Budget Template

- Walk through of **OSP budget template**
  - Sheet 1: Directions for completing budget template
  - Introduces some of the “alphabet soup” in the budget template:
    - GA – graduate assistant
    - F&A – facilities and administrative costs
    - MTDC – modified total direct costs
Tools – OSP Budget Template: Personnel

- Sheets 2-6: Personnel Yrs 1 – 5
  - Red = required
  - Blue = fill in if using
  - Gray = locked (self calculates)
- Don’t forget to scroll down for Additional Senior/Key Personnel, and % Effort Calculator

%Effort/Effort Month Calculator

If you know the percent effort but not the corresponding months, please use cells below to calculate. Enter a percentage below (yellow field) and copy/paste the proper effort month (white) into the corresponding field.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Effort</th>
<th>Cal</th>
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<th>Sum</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.00%</td>
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Tools – OSP Budget Template: Non-personnel

- Sheet 7: Non-personnel
- A.k.a. “everything else”, incl. editable lines for other
- Don’t forget to scroll down to set correct indirect cost rate (IDC) in the MTDC field, and to complete subcontract amounts
Tools – Non-SU Personnel Worksheet

- Available on the OSP Forms, Checklists & Templates page
- Should be completed prior to a non-SU individual engaging in any work or activity to be paid by any SU funding source
- Helpful to determine what category your potential collaborator falls in, and thus how to budget for them

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For sponsored project charges to account 561101, please contact OSP for assistance in completing the Consultant Agreement. The Agreement should be executed prior to the initiation of work and consequently the submission of the Request for Payment of Professional Services Rendered by Non-Employees.
Tools – Sponsor Budget Forms & Rate Websites

• Always best to start with the OSP Budget Template, as this needs to be completed for submission. However...

• Some funders require/provide detailed templates for the further breakdown of costs. Example: Department of Energy detailed travel page

• Federal Per Diem (GSA)
Tools – Your Research Administrators

• Don’t know your Research Administrator? Check the OSP “Contact Us” page to find out!
Tools – Your Local Sources

• Check first to see if your department, center or institute, or dean’s office works on budget development

• Additional budget development support provided at college/school level for some schools and colleges:
  
  – iSchool (Meghan MacBlane mtmacbla@syr.edu)
  
  – Maxwell (Jill Ferguson jsfergus@maxwell.syr.edu)
  
  – Falk (Amy Dumas adumas@syr.edu)
  
  – A&S science departments (Melissa Whipps mjwhipps@syr.edu)
  
  – Humanities departments (Sarah Workman srworkma@syr.edu)
  
  – Dean’s office budget directors in Newhouse, VPA, School of Ed …

• Large, interdisciplinary proposal development support and schools and colleges with no departmental resources supported by Proposal Support Services (Chetna and Christina)
Proposal Basics: Questions to Ask

• Who is going to work on the project/activity?
• What will you do for the project/activity?
  – Which of those things will require paid time (salary, stipends, honoraria)
  – Will you need any equipment or supplies you don’t already have
  – Will you need to feed, house, transport, or reimburse anyone for anything
• Where will you have to go?
• Who will you need to work with outside of the institution?
• Is any cost sharing required?
• Are indirect costs allowed? If so, what is the appropriate rate to use
• Are any costs limited or prohibited by the sponsor?
Panel Discussion
Questions

• How and when do you use the OSP Budget Template? Budget first or narrative?
• What questions should faculty ask their departmental budget administrators? And in turn what questions do administrators commonly ask faculty?
• What is cost share? How is it handled and approved?
• What do you look for first in a request for proposals (RFP) to help start the budget process?
• What are the most common mistakes you see when reviewing a budget (and which cause the biggest post-award headaches?)
• Other rules to follow? Other tools to use?
Thank you