Plan a Proposal

The proposal process generally begins with the Principal Investigator’s (PI’s) desire to apply for extramural funding to support a research effort, training or career development, or other sponsored activities. RMS supports new, competing/renewal, continuations, supplemental and bridge funding. Go here to learn more about types of sponsored research proposals. Preparing a research proposal can be a major undertaking, so it is highly recommended to plan ahead and become familiar with the proposal process.

University policy defines "Principal Investigator (PI) Status" as the eligibility to submit proposals for research, training, or public service contracts or grants to extramural agencies, subject to approval of the appropriate department chair/Organized Research Unit (ORU) director or their appointed delegate. Go here to learn more about PI Status.

Please note:

- Time devoted to professional activities ? irrespective of total hours worked ? cannot exceed 100%.
- There is a maximum of 95% of effort on sponsored projects for Ladder-rank and In-Residence faculty.
  - To exceed 95% effort requires permission from the Assistant Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs.
- Adjunct faculty must have at least 5% effort from a non-contract or grant source in any quarter in which s/he submits a proposal.

Click here if you are a medical student or graduate student to determine where to go for assistance when applying for a fellowship

Planning a proposal includes the following steps:

- Step 1: Determine a possible funding source
- Step 2: Review instructions for eligibility, guidelines and deadlines
- Step 3: Find your Research Services Coordinator
- Step 4: Inform your RSC of intent to submit

What's Next? Build Your Proposal
Step 1: Determine a possible funding source

There are a wide variety of funding sources available to fund a research project. These funding sources can be divided into two distinct areas: public and private. The public sector is the federal, state, local government: federal makes the bulk of awards to UCSF. The private sector includes non-profit foundations, for-profit industry, University of California Office of the President (UCOP) and foreign sponsors.

The Find Funding Opportunities section can help you identify potential funding sources.

Note: If you plan to submit a proposal to a tobacco industry-related sponsor, please read the tobacco policy here.

Note: If funding for marijuana-related research comes directly from individuals or entities whose funding is derived from the marijuana industry (e.g., from a professional association of marijuana growers legally licensed in the State of California), click here for guidance.

Step 2: Review the instructions for eligibility, guidelines and deadlines

RMS is here to assist the PI through the grant proposal preparation and submission process. However, we recommend that the PI first take the time to review the sponsor's instructions themselves. There could be technical eligibility concerns ?possibly including educational degrees and/or PI career experience? that the PI are better equipped to recognize and address than are the RMS staff.

The sponsor's instructions may be stipulated in one of the following documents:

- Request for Application (RFA)
- Request for Proposal (RFP)
- Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) or
- Broad Agency Announcement (BAA)

Don't forget to also check any guidelines outlined on the agency's website.

These documents will help you understand the deadline(s) and requirements for submission, including submission method.

If one of the following requirements are in the Sponsor's instructions please follow the guidelines below:

1. If the submission is electronic, the PI may need to get access to the electronic systems. See the Electronic Systems guidance for further information.
2. If the Sponsor either limit the number of applications UCSF may put forward to a given sponsor or require another kind of internal coordination (i.e., to eliminate unnecessary duplication of equipment requests) please contact The Limited Submission Program
LSP. LSP is responsible for notifying the campus of these opportunities, coordinating the internal review and selection process, and notifying all applicants of outcomes. For more information, please visit the LSP website.

3. If the sponsor requires a Letter of Intent please note the following:

   a. If sponsor does not require Institutional signature, detailed budget or commitment of resources and/or sponsor’s terms and conditions for the Letter of Intent (LOI), PI submits Letter of Intent directly to sponsor.
   b. If sponsor requires Institutional signature, detailed budget or commitment of resources and/or sponsor’s terms and conditions for the Letter of Intent (LOI), Research Services Coordinator (RSC) submits Letter of Intent to sponsor. Please contact your RSC based on the timeline’s below.

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**Step 3: Find your Research Services Coordinator**

RMS offers high quality pre-award services to the UCSF community. Research Service Coordinators (RSCs) are the primary contact for researchers during proposal preparation, managing the process to ensure timely, compliant and accurate submissions. This includes:

- Budget development
- Interpretation of sponsor requirements
- Obtaining institutional review and approval

Find your RSC/OSR staff here.

*Note: If you are applying for state, or city and county funding, contact your GBC Contract Specialist.*

*Click here if you are a medical student or graduate student to determine where to go for assistance when applying for a fellowship*  

If you have a multi-disciplinary proposal or large program project, center grant, or other complex project, RDO can assist with drafting scientific content.

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**Step 4: Inform your RSC of intent to submit**

As noted in the RMS Service Partnership Agreement: RMS teams collaborate with the Principal Investigator (PI), his/her department and sponsors so that PIs may be successful in their research grants.
We expect the PI to notify the RSC of the intent to submit a proposal:

- **At least 30 calendar days** prior to sponsor submission deadline for standard solicitations such as R01, R03, R21 including fellowships.
- **At least 60 calendar days** prior to sponsor submission deadline for large proposals, such as proposals with subcontracts or international components and subcontracts to SBIRs/STTRs.
- **4-6 months** prior to sponsor submission deadline for complex proposals such as complex center grants, institutional training grants and cooperative agreements such as P01, T32, U54.

Additional notice is requested during holiday periods. To respond to last minute requests from the sponsor, we expect the PI to notify the RSC as soon as possible.

When notifying the RSC, please provide the following information:

1. Sponsor Name
2. Sponsor's Instructions (can be a link)
3. Sponsor Due Date
4. Identify participants

   - UCSF faculty, staff and/or students
   - External collaborators / subcontractors, including foreign subcontractors

The RSC will communicate initial proposal development task checklist/timeline to PI within 3 business days* and will collaborate with PI on developing final timeline. It is expected that the I will communicate any travel, clinic or work conflicts at this time.

*If RSC is notified further in advance than the timeframes outlined above, RSC and PI will agree upon a date for the RSC to provide a completed timeline