Office of Research Advancement

Budget Introduction

One of the most important steps in preparing a great proposal is building a strong budget. The primary consideration is to accurately portray what it will cost to execute your project. The Office of Research Advancement (ORA) team will help you determine costs for every budget item, as well as identify what is and is not allowed. Many of the most common budget issues you may encounter are addressed below.

- Create a descriptive list of everything your project will need to pay for, and work with the ORA team to create a complete budget.

- Faculty salary is typically based on a nine-month academic year. If academic year salary is requested, it is considered “buyout” and replaces regular pay (i.e., not additional). Summer salary may be requested, which will be in addition to regular academic year salary.

- A Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) is limited to working 20 hours per week during an academic year and 40 hours per week over the summer. Funding will usually include a stipend and tuition remission, based on the project’s needs and the availability of funds. ORA will provide the current amounts for your project.

- For any ASU personnel being paid on a project (faculty, staff, postdocs, GRA, or hourly), employee-related expenses (ERE; also known as fringe) must be included. ORA will include specific rates based on the job classification of the individual.

- Travel costs are often a key component of a project and an important part of the budget. Consider both local travel and conference attendance for the project.

- Materials and supplies must be “essential and allocable” to the project. You may not order supplies to stock your office for non-project activities. The items requested must have a specific use and be utilized exclusively for the project.

- Other expenses that are often allowed include computer software, consulting pay, publication charges/photocopying, and human subjects pay.

- Expenses that are almost never allowed include alcoholic beverages, entertainment expenses, memberships, lobbying, fines/penalties, and debts.

- Facilities & Administrative Costs (F&A; also known as indirect or overhead) are charged at federally-negotiated rates and support “real costs” that ASU incurs, such as general office supplies, staff wages, facilities maintenance, utilities, legal services, and printers. Rates differ based on the type of project and the sponsor’s policies.

- Cost sharing is the portion of the total project costs not paid for by the sponsor. This also may be called matching funds or in-kind contributions. When included, effort, goods, services, or cash will be contributed to the project by ASU, a third party, or both. ASU will rarely approve cost sharing unless it is required by the sponsor.

Always remember that the Office of Research Advancement is available to help. As soon as you consider writing a proposal, please reach out to our team. We are available to provide assistance in a variety of areas, from planning and preparation to budgeting and editing, to help you be successful in your efforts!