Medford AAPLS Session 2 - Budget Preparation Tips

Review Program Announcement for Budgetary Limitations and Requirements:

- What is the budget cap? Can your research (or an aspect of your research) be completed with the funds available?
- Is there a cap on the recovery of indirect costs (facilities and administrative (F&A) costs)? If the allowable F&A rate is below Tufts' current F&A rate, please discuss this with your Department Administrator and start the internal approval process.
- Is there a cost-sharing requirement? If so, contact your Department Administrator to start the internal approval process.
- Is there a maximum or minimum time commitment for the PI and other project staff? (i.e., how many person-months/percent effort?)
- Is there a salary cap?
- Does the agency require inclusion of any specific costs (e.g., travel costs to attend a required meeting, special reporting requirements)?
- Are there any normally allowable costs that are not allowed under this FOA?
- Are there caps or constraints on the allocation of specific funds or line items? (e.g., line item X must not exceed 10% of total direct costs).
- What requirements are in place for sub-awards? If sub-awards will be requested, speak to your research administrator well in advance of your deadline.
- What are the requirements for the budget justification?
- Are there page limits on the budget justification?
- What sponsor forms/format does your budget require? For example, a modular budget form vs. a fully-itemized budget form at NIH.

Special Document Requirements:

- What documents other than the budget and justification are required? (Examples include - Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, evidence of IRS Tax Status, Official Institutional Cost Sharing Commitment, or Vendor Quotes.)

Final Budget/Justification Checklist:

- Are funds requested consistent with proposed project objectives/scope of work (not too high; not too low)?
- Is the justification clear and convincing? Link budget justification to project objectives, scope of work, and schedule.
- Is the budget presented in the format and forms required by sponsor?
- Check for spreadsheet errors?
- Do the costs on all the budget forms, justification and supporting documentation agree?
- Does the budget cover all the allowable project costs and funding sources (sponsor funds and institutional cost sharing, if required)?
- Is there adequate explanation for unusual budget items?
- Have justification and cost detail been provided for exceptions to CAS costs: administrative/clerical staff, postage, office supplies and local telephone costs (justification).
- Have future year budgets been computed with appropriate escalation factors (salaries, fringe, equipment, travel & other costs)?
- Have the appropriate fringe and indirect cost rates been used?
- Has subcontractor’s commitment letter, proposal been reviewed, budget checked, and PI confirmed scope of work?
- Does subcontractor's proposal apply consistent cost sharing requirements and indirect cost limitations?
- Is the Tufts Internal Sponsorship Coordination Form consistent with the final budget?
- Is the budget Realistic, Reasonable, credible, and self-explanatory?
- If you have questions about the preparing your budget/justification:
  Contact your Research Administrator and proposaldevelopment@tufts.edu
It is not uncommon to find ambiguities or apparent contradictions within the funding opportunity instructions. If, after re-reading the announcement, you are still in doubt, ask questions! Some funders have a deadline for the submission of questions.