

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE EDUCATION**

**ASPIRE-III
Request for Proposals**

Announcement Release Date:	October 19, 2011
Application Receipt Date:	Feb 15, 2012
Award Announcement Date:	April 6, 2012

Purpose: ASPIRE-III (Advanced Support Program for Infrastructure in Research Excellence-III) funding is provided by the Office of the Vice President for Research to develop infrastructure such as multi-user equipment and facilities with cutting edge-technology that is critical to the growth and competitiveness of USC's research portfolio. To pursue interdisciplinary research, it is critical that we have a state-of-the-art research infrastructure that can be used to sustain existing and develop new interdisciplinary Centers of Excellence. This internal grant program is aimed at providing support for such ventures. Funds also may be used to complement extramural support for purchase of major equipment.

Eligibility: Eligible applicants include all tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure track faculty who have independent research programs on the USC Columbia Campus and USC Senior/Regional Campuses. Faculty who have a current PIRA award or who are awarded a Provost's Internal Grant are not eligible for ASPIRE funding.

Faculty serving on the ASPIRE review committee are not eligible to apply for funds during the funding cycle in which they serve.

Funds Available: ASPIRE-III grants may be funded up to **\$100,000**. An applicant may request a project period of 15 months beginning May 16, 2012 and ending August 15, 2013. Under certain conditions, exceptions to these dates may be requested. Proposals may be submitted by more than one investigator, but *only one investigator can be designated as project lead*. The number of awards will be based on the innovative character and quality of applications received.

Budget Information: Budgets will be presented in general categories and require detailed explanation. For facilities work a project manager/responsible person must be identified. Although the ASPIRE Review Committee intends to fund projects as closely as possible to the requested amount, it reserves the right to alter the amount depending on the number of proposals received and funds available. Cost share is not encouraged.

Allowable Costs

- Project costs for work done by the USC facilities management office or external vendors or contractors
- 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)
- Project supplies and materials
- Limited travel *essential* to conduct the project. Justification needs to be provided.

Unallowable Costs

- Costs in connection with faculty degree requirements
- Travel to professional or non-project-related meetings
- Tuition
- Salary, summer salary, and fringe for PI's, Co-PI's or Technicians except USC facilities management staff/external contractors

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/facility, 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/facility be located? Are there remediation issues that need to be addressed for the instrument/facility to work within its designed specifications?
 - c. Who will operate and maintain the equipment/facility? 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/facility? How will this access be guaranteed, supported and what type of cost recovery is envisioned?
 - e. What is the projected life time of the equipment/facility? What expansion and/or upgrade plans are being envisioned?
 - f. How many faculty members from how many different campuses, colleges, departments, centers and institutes will use this equipment/facility?
 - g. Proposal should be single-spaced with margins not less than one-half inch and using a font size not less than 11 pt.
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 of the principal investigator and each of the co-investigator(s) that includes:
 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. Current and pending support. Include current grant funding and pending grant funding using the form provided on the ASPIRE Program web site.
 - d. If you have received support from the Vice President's Office for Research in the past, include a short paragraph on each award which includes the funding amount and the benefits of the funds to your research/creative activity program.
 - e. A detailed budget on the form provided on the ASPIRE Program web site and budget justification for total project costs consistent with the list of allowable costs shown above. Please see the information regarding the budget justification provided on the ASPIRE Program web site.

3. Submit the completed proposal packet:
 - a. Through USCeRA (<https://sam.research.sc.edu/uscera/>) and APPROVED by your chair, dean and/or chancellor before 5:00 pm on deadline date.
 - b. Application Receipt Date: Wednesday, February 15, 2012.**
 - c. Select "Internal Request VP for Research" and choose the category type (ASPIRE III) 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 in the amount that you are requesting for each year in the corresponding box. The total will calculate automatically for you. Do NOT use the Internal Commit Form to enter cost share. Use the Cost Share form to enter cost share. For more detailed instructions, please go to the ASPIRE Program web site.
 - e. Upload your proposal as ONE file using Adobe PDF or MSWord formats.
 - f. Questions about submission? Contact: Beth Herron, Office of Research Development, bherron@mailbox.sc.edu, 777-2885.

Review Process: Applications that are complete and responsive to this announcement will be evaluated for merit by the Peer Review 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). The VPR will make awards based on the Committee's recommendations and available funds.

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/facility?
- Are the proposed methodologies appropriate and accurate?
- Does the proposal provide a sound justification with clear and specific budget information? Is the timeline realistic?
- Will the operation of this equipment/facility be sustainable?
- Is the text of the proposal well-written?
- In case of facility design/upgrade: has facilities been contacted and involved in design and budgeting?

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?

Reporting:

- If the investigator(s) has received previous funding from the Vice President's Office for Research, have all required reports been appropriately completed?

For More Information: Please contact Beth Herron, Research Development, bherron@mailbox.sc.edu/803-777-2885 and/or Dr. Tom Vogt; tvogt@mailbox.sc.edu.