

Viterbi School of Engineering

Policy on Cost Sharing Requests

Mandatory cost sharing (or matching) is the University's contribution to a sponsored project that is required by the sponsor under the terms of the sponsored project's Request for Proposal or Application (RFP/RFA). The cost share contribution may be a fixed amount of money or percentage of the total project costs. In either case, the obligation must be met using non-sponsored funds.

As a general rule, the University and the Viterbi School of Engineering (Viterbi) strongly discourage cost share commitments that are not sponsor-required. On federally sponsored projects, the University has been assured by the Federal government that University-initiated (voluntary) cost share contributions will not affect the scientific merit decision on the proposal.

All cost sharing requests and "institutional support" requests must be approved prior to submission of the proposal (see timeline below) via the Viterbi cost sharing on-line form found at <https://viterbibusinessaffairs.usc.edu/research-administration/>

The on-line form is a two page process and includes uploading the proposal budget and sponsor guidelines prior to submitting. Failure to provide the necessary information could cause a delay in processing and possible rejection of the cost sharing request.

Timeline:

For center and center-scale proposals, and proposals with multiple schools, cost sharing requests need to be made at least **30** business days prior to the due date of the proposal.

For salary cap, young investigator, or other smaller, Viterbi-only proposals, cost sharing requests need to be made at least **14** business days prior to the due date of the proposal.

Earlier submission of cost sharing requests is appreciated. Failure to adhere to these dates could cause a rejection of the request due to the lack of time to address the complexities of cost sharing negotiations.

Proposals with Sponsor-Mandated Salary Caps:

Salaries that are over a sponsor-mandated (e.g., NIH) cap must complete the on-line cost sharing form. There is a specific check box for this type of request; the form must indicate whether the salary will be taken during the academic year or summer. Please note that Viterbi does not support summer salary that is over the sponsor-mandated salary cap, so summer salary over the cap needs to be supported by the faculty member's own discretionary and/or unrestricted funds. If the faculty member does not have such funds, then it is advised to move the effort to the academic months where the Viterbi School covers the salary above the cap.

Mandatory Cost Sharing:

When a funding opportunity has a sponsor-required cost sharing percentage of the "Total Project Costs", the Viterbi preference is to use in-kind support for meeting that requirement, such as through faculty academic effort that would be utilized in supervising and overseeing the project.

When doing so, the fringe and facilities and administration (indirect costs) are included as part of the cost sharing amount.

Cost Sharing of Tuition:

It is the policy of Viterbi not to use Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) tuition as a cost sharing line item due to uncertainty of enrollment and number of units by GRAs.

Institutionally Limited Programs with Cost Sharing Requirements:

Some programs, such as the NSF MRI, are institutionally limited, and therefore must be pursued through the established USC internal review process coordinated by the USC Office of Research. Cost sharing should be discussed and negotiated at the time of the internal proposal submission.