

# Principal Investigator Tool Kit



MARSHALL UNIVERSITY  
RESEARCH CORPORATION

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## History

The Marshall University Research Corporation (MURC) was incorporated as a 501c3 non-profit and legislatively enabled in 1987. MURC works under an affiliation agreement with the university and is **the only entity** authorized to enter into research contracts on behalf of the university. MURC has an independent board of directors, chaired by the University president.

## Responsibility and Purpose

Marshall University Research Corporation (MURC) is charged to serve as fiscal agent for sponsored projects conducted by faculty, staff and students of Marshall University. All external funding is accepted by MURC *on behalf of* Marshall University for fiscal management. MURC is also responsible to:

- Facilitate the growth of the research enterprise at Marshall
- Serve as fiscal agent for the university:
  - Apply for, receive and distribute grants/contract on behalf of Marshall University
  - Distribute Facilities & Administrative costs (F & A) back to the university
  - Ensure compliance for federal, state, and institutional regulations
  - Ensure that the funding agency's fiscal requirements are fulfilled
  - Purchase, hold, lease, use, sell and dispose of real and personal property acquired by grant funds.
- Ensure research integrity:
  - Oversee the university's Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) for human subject research
  - Maintain the University's *Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection* (AAHRP) accreditation
  - Oversee the *Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee* (IACUC)
  - Oversee and manage any Conflict of Interest (COI)
  - Oversee the University's biosafety program
- Manage the University's intellectual property:
  - Provide evaluation, development, patenting, licensing, management and marketing services for inventions, processes, trademarks...copyrights or any other intellectual property developed by faculty, staff and students.
  - Determine the application of the proceeds of the intellectual property.
  - Utilize the university's intellectual property in technology transfer to promote economic development

## Introduction

The *Principal Investigator's Tool Kit* has been designed as a resource to help the researchers navigate the process involved with external funding at Marshall University. The *Tool Kit* is intended to be used as source of information for MU researchers and contains links to various university policies and contacts; however, if you have questions or cannot find the resource you need as related to sponsored programs, please feel free to contact us.

We look forward to working with you!

### **Marshall University Research Corporation**

Arthur Weisberg Applied Engineering Complex, Fourth Floor

One John Marshall Drive, Huntington, WV 25755-0002

[www.marshall.edu/murc](http://www.marshall.edu/murc)

**EVERY grant and contract is a legal agreement between the sponsor/funding agency and the Marshall University Research Corporation, acting on behalf of Marshall University. The agreement stipulates that the Principal Investigator will perform the work described in the Statement of Work for the stipulated budget in compliance with relevant terms and conditions.**

# 1. GETTING STARTED

## 1.1 Opportunity Identification

### Finding an Agency:

Several ways to locate possible external funding agencies are as follows:

Agency Websites	<a href="#">Federal Government</a>
<a href="#">MURC listserve</a>	Industry or Local Businesses
<a href="#">Proposal Central</a>	<a href="#">Grant Forward</a>

### Look for:

Program mission/goals: *Is my project a good fit?*

Eligibility Requirements

Funding amounts

Deadline: *Is there enough time?*

**1.2 Agency Contact:** Most (not all) funding agencies encourage you to contact them to discuss your proposal with them before you submit in order to determine whether or not your project fits the mission of the agency. If your project does not fit that agency's parameters, it is possible the program officer could suggest some funding alternatives.

**1.3 Assignment of MURC Pre-Award Grants Officer:** Contact your assigned MURC Pre-Award Grants officer with your intent to apply as soon as possible – don't know who you are assigned to? No worries, email the team at [murcpreaward@marshall.edu](mailto:murcpreaward@marshall.edu)

- **Have the following information ready:**

Link to solicitation/agency website

Deadline information

- **Your MURC Pre-Award Grants Officer will:**

Review guidelines/solicitation to determine PI/institutional eligibility

**Need Help with Funding Searches?**

**Grant Forward is free for Marshall  
faculty and staff!**

[grantforward.com](http://grantforward.com)

## 2. PROPOSAL PREPARATION

### 2.1 Basic Guidance:

You are ultimately responsible for proposal content. You must read the proposal instructions thoroughly. Funding agencies have prescribed formats (*i.e.* font, page limits, etc.) and failure to comply with the agency's format requirements will result in a proposal rejection without review. Your MURC Pre-Award Grants Officer will help you navigate the proposal guidelines; however, the PI always bears final responsibility for proposal content and format.

### 2.2 Proposal Components: Most proposals contain the following components:

- **Abstract:** Brief overview of the entire project and is usually the first thing the reviewer reads (and scores). Typically, there are two types required:
  - Technical:** generally written to the reviewers
  - Layperson:** written for a non-expert in your field
- **Research Plan:** This is the *main body* of your proposal, usually consisting of:
  - Preliminary Studies/Needs Assessment:** *Why:* Urgency and need to solve the problem.
  - Goals/Objectives:** *What:* Plan to solve problem with measurement indicator and performance standard. **Be realistic, not overly ambitious**
  - Implementation:** *How* you plan to solve the problem
  - Evaluation:** *Anticipated Results:* Measurement of the project (test scores, attendance rates, surveys, opinions, etc. Publication/result dissemination plan
- **PI Information (biosketch):** This is to show reviewers that you have what it takes to complete the work. Many agencies follow the NIH Biosketch Format. The form and an example biosketch are located on the [NIH Forms Page](#).
- **Support Letters:** Include statements of how others intend to support your work. These can be from collaborators, chair, dean, and other partners.
- **Management Plan:** This describes who is responsible for what and when.
- **Facilities and Other Resources:** This is a description and listing of the resources readily available to you to complete the proposed work (institutional information, laboratory, equipment, etc.)
- **Other Research information:**
  - Animals:** All training (federal and institutional) must be completed. For further info: [Animal Resources](#)
  - Human Subjects:** All training (federal and institutional) must be completed. For further info: [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#)
- **Budget and Budget Justification** (see below)

### 2.3 Budget:

Develop a budget consistent with the agency guidelines. Your assigned Grants Officer will assist you with this. The budget *must be reviewed and approved* by your MURC Grants Officer prior to submission.

Budget items may include:

- **Personnel:** *This should include, name, percent of effort, amount requested, and project role; release time must be coordinated with college dean prior to submission*
- **Fringe benefits change every fiscal year**, for the most updated rates, contact your pre-award officer and ask for the institutional data sheet, or visit: <https://www.marshall.edu/murc/policies-procedures-and-guidelines/>
- **Travel:** *must be: allowed by the agency, follow current university & MURC travel policies, use current GSA rates: [www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov)*
- **Supplies:** *These are items valued at less than \$5,000. The researcher must demonstrate that listed supplies are necessary for the completion of the proposed project. General office supplies are typically not allowed as direct costs*
- **Equipment:** *items valued at \$5,000 with a useful life of more than one year*
- **Contractual:** consultants, evaluators, contracts for service and subawards/subcontracts
- **Other costs:** *postage, printing, meeting costs outside of travel, etc.*
- **Cost sharing/Matching:** *Include only when explicitly required by the agency.*

**Facilities & Administrative (F & A):** Costs that are incurred by a grantee for Facilities and Administration (F&A) Rates. The direct costs of a research project reflect only a portion of what it actually costs the university to carry out your project. Indirect, or Facilities and Administration (F&A), rates are not a tax or a fee. They are an allowed, rigorously audited provision for the university to recapture the costs of conducting, administering, and facilitating grant and contract activity.

These F&A rates are established by a rigorously documented, zero-based process approved by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In some cases, F&A rates are limited by sponsors, but may be negotiable. All grants and contracts must include the appropriate sponsor-allowed F&A rate in addition to the direct costs.

**Under no circumstances should the PI enter into discussions with a sponsor over F&A rates or waivers. In cases where the agency sponsor communicates F&A costs below the university's federally approved rate but cannot provide a policy or regulation as a defense for such limitation, MURC may negotiate a rate acceptable to both parties.**

### 3. CONTRACT PROCESS

The contract/subaward process at Marshall begins with your Pre-Award Grants Officer. You will be responsible for providing the following:

*Budget*  
*Statement of Work*  
*Agency contact information*

MURC will then negotiate the specific terms and conditions of the contract. The MURC Authorization to Submit (ATS) form (see next section) must be completed by the PI.

Once the contract has been successfully negotiated by MURC Pre-Award and the agency, the PI will be notified.

## 4. INSTITUTIONAL APPROVAL AND CLEARANCES

### Securing Approvals

MU requires institutional approval for financial commitments before your *proposal can be submitted*. These commitments include: *cash, facility use, cost-sharing, and faculty release time*.

**Your proposal cannot be submitted until institutional approval is acquired.**

#### 4.1 [Authorization to Submit \(ATS\) Form](#) (Official institutional internal routing form)

Required signatures are:

- Principal Investigator (PI)
- Co-Principal Investigator(s) (if applicable)
- Primary Administrative Contact for department/college
- Department/Program chair(s)
- Dean(s)
- Provost/Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs (if applicable)

#### 4.2 Clearances Checklist:

Before the ATS form can be signed, the following must be addressed:

- **Animals\***
- **Biosafety\*** (rDNA, Infectious Agents, Blood borne pathogens)
- **Facility Needs:** *Does your project require additional*
- **Hazardous Materials\***
- **Human Subjects\***
- **Match and Cost Sharing Requirements:** Provide a detailed description any proposed cost share. List account numbers and signature if university cash is included. If the agency does not require matching/cost share, **DO NOT INCLUDE IT IN YOUR PROPOSAL**.
- **National Science Foundation:** *Is the proposal to the National Science Foundation (NSF)?* New requirements related to [Responsible Conduct of Research Training](#) have been established for all NSF awards.
- **PHS Funded:** All federally required training must be completed.
- **Radioactive Materials\***
- **Release Time:** Must be approved by the dean and consistent with university policy.
- **Significant Financial Interest Disclosure (SFID):** The PI and Key Research Personnel who contribute in a substantive way to the project must have a current [Significant Financial Interest Disclosure \(SFID\) form](#) on file with the Office of Research Integrity. [Individual Conflict of Interest in Research Policy](#).
- **Subawards or Subcontracts:** If your project contains a subaward or subcontract, please provide appropriate contact/budgetary information.

- **Time and Effort Commitments:** The total commitments of time and must not exceed the threshold established by the Marshall University Board of Governors [Faculty Compensation from Grants and Contracts Policy](#).
- **Compensation:** Must be approved by the dean and consistent with federal and university policy
- **Graduate Assistants/Tuition Waivers:** New GA positions must have approval from the dean and/or tuition waiver included in the proposal (if allowed by the funding agency).

**Your (PI) signature on the ATS Form certifies the following:**

- **The information submitted within this application is true, complete, and accurate to the best of my knowledge**
- **Any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to administrative, civil, or criminal penalties.**
- **I am not delinquent in any Federal debt**
- **I am not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible or voluntarily excluded from current transaction by any federal department or agency**
- **I am not delinquent in submitting final project reports to sponsors for previous awards I have received**
- **I agree to accept responsibility for the scientific conduct of this project and to provide the required progress reports if a grant is awarded.**

## 5. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

**5.1 Submission to the Funding Agency:** A completed proposal can be submitted to the funding agency on when:

- Agency proposal guidelines have been followed
- Budget has been reviewed and approved by MURC
- A copy of the full proposal has been submitted to the Pre-Award Grants Officer for review
- Confirmation received of all required college, institute, or center reviews
- Dean approval on any variances (release time, FTE, new GA, etc.)
- Completed, signed and routed ATS form has been received by the Pre-Award Grants Officer.

**5.2 Notification of Rejection:** If your proposal is rejected the first time, you are in good company, as a good number of proposals are not funded the first time. Reviewers are never **correct** and reviewers are never **wrong**, so do not take it personally. Rather:

- Know the resubmission options with your funding agency
- Address the reviewers' comments thoroughly with relevant updates
- Contact the agency program officer to discuss your project (when appropriate)

**5.3 Notification of Award:** Once an award has been made, the Pre-Award Grants Officer will begin a review of the award terms and conditions. Once this review has been completed, the awarded budget finalized in a Banner-compliant format, and signatures obtained, the executed award will be sent to MURC Compliance for account set-up

**5.4 Advance Funding:** MURC acknowledges that there are instances in which it is necessary for the PI of an awarded grant or contract to begin performance before funds are fully released by the sponsor. In order to accommodate this situation MURC allows you to request advance funding for grant-related costs subject to the terms and conditions outlined in the [Advance Funding Request Policies](#) guide.

**The Vice President for Research/MURC Executive Director is the only person legally empowered to enter the Marshall University Research Corporation into a contract or agreement on behalf of Marshall University. Under no circumstances will a PI accept an award on behalf of the university or negotiate terms and conditions of an award and or contract on the behalf of the university**

## 6. POST AWARD

### Compliance Officer Designation

When the notice of award is received by the MURC Compliance Office, a MURC Post-Award Compliance Officer will be assigned to your particular award, based on your college, center or institute.

**6.1 Account Set-up:** Once your award account has been set up, your Post-Award Compliance Officer will send you an email notification containing:

- Account number
- Forms and instructions for Banner and Informational Reports access
- Copy of the award
- A list of responsibilities for MURC and the PI

**6.2 Account Management and Support:** Your assigned Post-Award Compliance Officer, along with the Financial Administration Office, helps you to ensure your project accounting (payroll, spending, invoicing) meets all federal, state, agency, and institutional guidelines.

### 6.3 Personnel and Payroll:

Employees funded by sponsored programs are supported through the MURC Human Resources/Payroll Office. Go here to view MURC'S [Human Resources Policies and Procedures](#)

- Make sure to submit a **Personnel Action Requests (PAR)** as soon as is possible, for all employees that are working on the grant. Questions regarding salary employee onboarding go to Coria Kent. Hourly employee onboarding goes to Lisa Houdyschell or Tammy Brumbaugh.
- **MURC Payroll Office:** Questions regarding PARs, timesheets or paychecks that are issued through MURC, should be directed to the **MURC Payroll Administrator**, Tammy

Brumbaugh, 304.696.2830, [brumbaught@marshall.edu](mailto:brumbaught@marshall.edu) or Lisa Houdyschell, 304.696.6793, [houdyschell1@marshall.edu](mailto:houdyschell1@marshall.edu)

- **MURC Human Resources:** Questions regarding employee benefits should be directed to the **MURC Human Resources Coordinator**, Coria Kent, 304.696.6320, [kent1@marshall.edu](mailto:kent1@marshall.edu).

#### 6.4 Purchasing:

- **Purchase Card (P-Card):** For the convenience of our researchers, P-Cards are available for making eligible purchases (e.g. laboratory and/or project supplies). If you need to apply for the MURC P-Card, please submit the [Cardholder Application and Agreement](#) to the P-Card Coordinator. Questions concerning the p-card should be directed to the **MURC P-Card Coordinator**, Rebecca Hill at [hill286@marshall.edu](mailto:hill286@marshall.edu) or 304.696.3792.

**6.5 Requisitions:** For purchases ineligible for the use of a P-card (such as large equipment): A requisition must be made in accordance to [Purchasing & Receiving Guidelines](#). Requisitions will go through [Marshall University Office of Purchasing](#).

**6.6 Travel:** For project related travel, questions can go to Bradley Smith, [smithbra@marshall.edu](mailto:smithbra@marshall.edu) or 304-696-6203 Go here to view MURC's [Travel Policy](#).

#### 6.7 Intellectual Property:

- Marshall University owns all intellectual property created by university and MURC employees using university resources.
- University policy may be found here: [Marshall University Board of Governors Intellectual Property Policy](#).
- For further information, contact Amy Melton, Director, [Marshall University Technology Transfer Office](#), [tto@marshall.edu](mailto:tto@marshall.edu) 304-696-4365.

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#### 6.8 Reporting:

- **Progress Reports (Programmatic):** As the Principal Investigator, you will solely be responsible for providing the required programmatic progress reports to the funding agency. Please provide a copy to your Post-Award Compliance Officer.  
*Questions concerning progress reports should be directed toward your assigned Post-Award Compliance Officer*
- **Financial:** You, your Post-Award Compliance Officer, and the MURC Financial Administration Office will work together to submit required agency financial reports.
- **Cost Share:** If matching/cost share has been listed in the proposal, it must be properly tracked and reported. You are responsible for providing documentation to the MURC Financial Administration Office in the form of Cost Share Reports.

**6.9 Project Close-Out:** Once your project has ended, your assigned Post-Award Compliance Officer will work with you to make sure all federal, state, agency and institutional requirements have been met.