**Budget Justification/Narrative**

A budget justification is a written description and explanation of the estimated project budget. The budget justification is a required proposal component for most sponsors and highly encouraged even when not required. The budget justification provides the reviewer, the sponsor- and potentially an auditor- with an explanation of cost estimation methods, a description of the types of costs that make up a larger budget category such as "other" or "supplies" and an explanation of why the projected costs are necessary to conduct the project.

Providing a robust budget justification that includes explanation of why costs are necessary helps the reviewers and sponsor understand that the budget request is reasonable and can prevent automatic budget cuts at time of award. Make it clear that all budget requests are reasonable and consistent with sponsor and UA policies.

**Format and Compile the Justification**

There is no university-required format for budget justifications. However, read the FOA and guidelines before beginning as some sponsors require specific formats. In general, budget justifications should follow the same line item format and contain the same costs as the budget form. A reviewer should be able to place the two documents next to each other and see the connection between each item.

For each person listed on the budget, describe their role, their effort- % or person months- any changes to personnel costs (such as increased effort), and anything else needed to explain why that person is needed on the project and how you determined the cost of their salary and benefits. Do not include “course” or “teaching buy-out” unless the sponsor specifically indicates that as an allowable cost. The effort commitment should indicate how much time will be spent working on the specific project.

Also justify the materials and supplies. Remember that the more general the categories are, and the higher the dollar amount of each category, the more detail that should be provided in the justification about specific items and how they relate to the research or project.

If any items in the budget would ordinarily be considered indirect costs, such as general office equipment or administrative support, provide details in the justification about why these costs are direct costs and how they are integral to the project. For example, if you need postage stamps to send out notices to research participants, these stamps could be considered a direct cost rather than an indirect cost. This cannot be determined if the justification simply indicates “postage” and a dollar amount.

The direct relationship between budget items and the actual work of the project should be made extremely clear, as this information may eventually be reviewed by an auditor. You want to avoid an auditor not being able to determine a clear relationship during the post-award phase.

**Examples of Budget Justification Language**

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| **Personnel Costs** | |
| Senior /Key Personnel | * *Name of Researcher, PhD* (1 summer month effort; 1 academic month effort)   o Dr. Researcher, an associate professor of X and an expert in A and B, will lead this project, providing oversight and management, designing and conducting the research and ensuring success.  • *PI Researcher*  o 0.25 summer months support per year are requested to support the PI’s effort toward the program, providing general management and oversight and leading the research efforts.  • *Co-PI Researcher*  o 0.25 summer months support per year is budgeted to support Co-PI Researcher in directing the education and training components of the program.  • *Senior Participant Researcher*  o Dr. Researcher is a soft-funded professional researcher; we therefore  request 3.0-month support- commensurate with his/her effort toward the program- to enable his/her work on remote collaboration and related  outreach activities of this NSF project.  • *Name of Researcher DVM, MPVM PhD*. (Principal Investigator, Deputy Director, 80%)  o Expertise: Area of expertise and large-scale program administration.  o Role: As Principal Investigator and Deputy Director, Dr. Researcher will work hand-in-hand with the Director (Dr. Researcher) to manage and administer the overall program. He/she will supervise the administrative support staff at UAF and oversee all UAF activities and work related to Objectives 1-5. |
| Postdoctoral Researchers | * *Postdoctoral Researchers* (2.25 calendar months’ effort)   o Postdoctoral researchers will be funded 2.25 calendar months per year to work on the bioinformatics components, supervise the graduate students, and contribute to reporting. |
| Graduate Student Researchers | * 3 graduate student researchers (GSRs) will be employed in year 1, and 1 GSR will be employed in year 2. All three will work 50% time during the academic year and 100% time in the summer. In year 1, the GSRs will assist with data coding, cleaning, reliability testing and preparation of the database for data analysis; during the second year, the GSR will assist with data analysis and manuscript preparation. * *Graduate Student Researchers (4 FTE @ 7.5 calendar months’ effort each)*   + We request support for graduate student researchers, who will work 50% time in the academic year and 100% time in the summer. The graduate students, anticipated from Dept. A, Dept. B and the Dept. C will participate on interdisciplinary research teams, developing visualization tools, software frameworks and their career skills. It is anticipated that several students will each be supported with these funds for an academic quarter at a time in order to maximize the project’s reach and broaden its impact. The remainder of the participating students’ effort will go toward complementary projects with independent funding, providing year-round support and a robust training program for all students. * **Graduate Student Researchers** – Two graduate students, one with programming expertise and the other with humanities and/or social science expertise, are allocated to the project to assist in development of the X application, maintenance of the prototype S module, testing of the platform and the module, and evaluation of the project as a pedagogical and research tool. |
| Undergraduate Student Researchers | * *Undergraduate Student Researchers (500 hours per year)*   + Funds are budgeted to allow undergraduate researchers from a variety of disciplines to fully participate in the project, including contributing to the specific visualization modules of the project, exploring cyberinfrastructure tools, and entering and manipulating data. Undergraduate researchers on the project will be strongly encouraged to present their work as a poster or talk at the UAF annual undergraduate research conference, which is modeled after professional research conferences. |
| Fringe Benefits | * Fringe Benefits   + Fringe Benefits are calculated using the UAF rates developed by UA Office of Cost Analysis as required per institutional policy. Rates are applied by title code and fiscal year. <http://www.alaska.edu/cost-analysis/negotiation-agreements/> * **Fringe Benefits** - Fringe benefits are budgeted at UAF’s federally negotiated rates, which are applied by fiscal year and title code. <http://www.alaska.edu/cost-analysis/negotiation-agreements/> |
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| **Travel** | |
| Domestic Travel | * Travel funds for domestic travel in the amount of $9,500 per year are requested for travel to Center workshops, clinics, pilot courses, meetings at collaborating intuitions, meetings with industrial and other partners and engineering education technical meetings. * External Advisory Board Travel o $2,000 per year will allow the external advisory board to meet in person for planning, decision making, and advising. * Objective Team Meetings   + An annual 3-day meeting will be scheduled to coordinate and plan activities for each of the 5 objectives. Five participants from key partner institutions will travel to UAF or Name of location for each of the 5 yearly meetings.   Objective Team meetings will be scheduled to coincide with other senior management meetings as a cost efficiency. Cost per meeting includes airfare @ $600, hotel @ o $200/day for 3 days = $600, per diem at $50/day for 3 days = $150, ground transportation @ $50/day for 3 days = $150; 5 trips/meeting @ $1,500 = $7,500; 5 meetings/yr. @ $7,500 = $37,500/yr. (total of 5 years $37,500/yr. = $187,500). |
| Foreign Travel | * International – Administrative   + Name of staff – 4 foreign trips per year from Fairbanks to 4 surveillance hotspot regions in name of countries to conduct site visits and coordination/facilitation with country coordinators and partners; as a cost efficiency one of these trips will correspond to the Annual Meeting each year; airfare @ $2,500, hotel @ $150/day for 10 days = $1500, per diem at $50/day for 10 days = $500, ground transportation @ $50/day for 10 days = $500; 4 trips @ $5,000 = $20,000/yr.; (5 years @ $20,000/yr. =$100,000) |
| Conferences | * **Professional Conferences** – Funds in the amount of $1,500 per domestic trip and $3,000 per international trip are requested to enable the principal investigator to attend four related professional conferences in year 1, and 2 in year 2, to disseminate the results of the study. Planned conferences are as follows:   + American Sociological Association, Denver, Colorado, August 2022   + American Psychological Association, Orlando, Florida, August 2012   + International Sociological Association, Research Committee on Social Stratification (RC28), Hong Kong, May 2023   + Association for the Study of Higher Education, Las Vegas, Nevada, November, 2023   + American Sociological Association, New York City, New York, August 2024   + American Psychological Association, Honolulu, Hawai`i, August 2024 |
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| **Materials and Supplies** | |
| Computer/Software | * In year 1, $1,145 is requested to purchase a Stata/SE license with PDF documentation, which will be used to conduct the statistical analysis necessary for completion of the study. $650 is also requested in year 1 to purchase NVivo, a qualitative data analysis program that will be used for the coding and qualitative analysis of the content of the evaluation reports. Both licenses will remain valid for the 2 years of the project * **Software Licenses** - We have budgeted funds to cover the costs of the licensing fees associated with the necessary software programs for the module. * **Materials and Supplies**   + Computer Supplies – $1,500 is budgeted to cover the costs of necessary computer supplies, such as back-up media, peripherals and supporting applications.   + Servers – $4,000 is budgeted for the purchase of three servers for hosting, distributing and maintaining the x platform and related software, data and materials |
| Laboratory Supplies | * Laboratory supplies are requested for evaluating and validating diagnostic tests used for wildlife surveillance (PCR reagents @ $100/sample x 3000 samples = 30,000/yr.; 5-year total = $150,000) |
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| **Other Costs** | |
| ATS/MediaWorks  Charges *(example)* | * Funds in the amount of $22,000 have been budgeted to cover the recharge fees of ATS/MediaWorks programmers and instructional designers. Their recharge rate is $77.50 an hour and we have estimated our use at 284 hours. |
| Graduate Student Tuition and Fees | * Graduate student tuition and fees are budgeted for the GSR employed on the project per UAF policy. Amounts are based on current rates in year 1 with projected rates in years 2 through 5. |
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| **Facilities and Administrative (F&A) Costs** | |
| Indirect Costs | • Indirect costs are budgeted at UAF’s federally negotiated rate. <http://www.alaska.edu/cost-analysis/negotiation-agreements/> |