UTCA

University Transportation Center for Alabama
The University of Alabama, The University of Alabama at Birmingham,
and The University of Alabama in Huntsville

UTCA Budget Policies
**Pre-Proposals**

**Budget Detail** - Budgets for pre-proposals must be organized into designated categories of expenses and income (i.e., they must match the budget line items that UTCA must use to report annually to USDOT. These line items may be found in the "Instructions for Preparing Full Proposals." Within these specified line items, budgetary items may be broken into logical subcategories normally used by the university offering the pre-proposal. The budget must clearly state the sources and amounts for all matching funds, by category.

**Multiyear Efforts** - For multiyear projects, each year's budget and the overall budget must be clearly identified, using logical categories.

**Consultants** - Significant subcontracts to outside consultants are discouraged.

**Equipment/Non-Expendable Supplies** - Purchase of equipment and non-expendable supplies will receive close scrutiny. It is expected that the home institution will provide these items for normal research purposes. The Executive Committee recognizes that such purchases are sometimes necessary; however, they must be clearly related to the proposed plan of research, and must be integral to the successful conduct of that plan.

**Multi-campus Proposals** - UTCA encourages faculty members to "team" between campuses. Where this concept is used, one campus must be designated as the lead campus. The project budget must be handled through that campus.

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**Full Proposals**

**Budget Detail** - All full proposals must include a detailed listing of income and expenses that follows the line items used by UTCA for its annual report to US DOT. These lines may be found in the sample budget within the instructions for preparing full proposals. Within the designated budget lines, PIs may organize sub-lines or subcategories of expenses and income. Specifically identify and address items like joint purchases of equipment, use of consultants, and other expenses.

Matching funds are not required; however, if match is used, the budget spreadsheet and associated narrative must describe the sources used to match UTCA funds including the portion of cash and/or in-kind match for the project. The specific allocation of match should be indicated in the budget spreadsheet.

**Descriptive Justification** - Full proposals must include a full descriptive justification of budget items, especially with respect to equipment, travel, materials and supplies, and similar items. This is necessary to meet federal "Cost Accounting Standards Guidelines." Such detail is not required for pre-proposal budgets.

**Salaries** - For each faculty/staff member, indicate the percent of time or effort in relation to total professional activities. In computing estimated salary charges, an individual's base salary represents the total authorized annual compensation that his or her institution would be prepared
to pay for a specified work period. The base salary for purposes of computing charges for a UTCA project excludes income that an individual may earn outside full-time duties at his or her home institution. If an individual is appointed on less than a full-time basis for the base salary period, indicate the percentage of full-time appointment, e.g., 50 percent of full-time appointment. Where appropriate, indicate whether the amounts requested for the PIs and other personnel are for summer salaries and/or academic year salaries, and indicate the formulas for calculating their salaries.

Clerical Assistance - Research proposals should not normally include clerical support. Clerical costs are a component of the research overhead charge on all three campuses of the UA system. Administrative proposals may include clerical support as necessary to meet project objectives.

Final Report- Your budget should include a $500 line item for the peer review and publication of your final report. When your project is authorized, the $500 and associated indirect cost will be retained at UTCA headquarters.

Equipment - Items of equipment having a unit acquisition cost of $5,000 or more are considered "permanent equipment" and written permission must be obtained from US DOT prior to each such purchase. Such purchases must adhere to section III.3 of the "General Provisions" document for university transportation centers funded by US DOT. At the conclusion of the PI's project, the permanent equipment is assigned to the grantee institution (UA).

The proposed purchase of equipment and non-expendable supplies will receive close scrutiny by the Executive Committee. Such purchases are sometimes necessary; however, they must be clearly related to the proposed plan of research and must be integral to the successful conduct of that plan.

All purchases of computing equipment require the written approval of the Executive Committee, regardless of cost.

Foreign Travel - Travel to any destination outside of the US and its territories is considered "foreign travel", and advance written permission must be obtained from US DOT prior to such travel. Such travel must conform to section III.4 of the "General Provisions" document for university transportation centers funded by US DOT.

Matching Funds – Matching funds are not required but may be used at the preference of the PI. Projects that provide significant amounts of matching funds from outside sources may be given higher priority in selection of projects.

If matching is proposed, the PI must demonstrate the certainty of any matching funding. This might be in the form of the signature of the appropriate campus official for in-kind services, cash, or reduced indirect charges. It might be in the form of a letter of commitment from an external sponsor, or it might be some other form of certainty.
In submitting a proposal, the required budget spreadsheet and associated narrative must describe the sources used for any matching funds, including the portion of cash and/or in-kind match for the project. The specific allocation of match should be indicated in the budget spreadsheet.

Rules governing in-kind and cash contributions used for matching funds are set forth in the most recent revision of OMB Circular A-110. Any restriction on the use of federal funds applies equally to non-federal matching funds.

For UTCA projects, federal funds may not be used for matching purposes with the following rare exceptions: funds provided to a recipient under sections 503, 504b or 505 of Title 23, US Code (technology deployment, local technical assistance, and state planning and research programs managed by the Federal Highway Administration).

Multi-campus Proposals - UTCA encourages faculty members to "team" between campuses. Where this concept is used, one campus must be designated as the lead campus. The project budget must be handled through that campus.

Overhead for Subcontracts Between Campuses - The three UA System campuses have agreed that each subcontract to another campus will include overhead from that campus only. The home campus will not charge its own overhead on top of that. For example, if a UAB faculty member agrees to work on a project that has a UA home campus, the UAB researcher prepares a subcontract that includes full UAB overhead. UA will not charge additional overhead on the subcontracted work.

Home Campus Approval - The PI at the home campus must secure some form of written budget approval by an appropriate home campus authority. This is typically in the form of an approval page or an appropriate statement attached to the proposal.

Subcontracts - Where a faculty member subcontracts to another UA System campus, the subcontract must include the same budget lines as the main contract and must include some form of written budget approval by an appropriate authority on the subcontracted faculty member's campus.

Awarded Faculty Projects

Notice of Funding - For each successful project, the PI will receive notice that the proposal has been approved in the form of a "notice to proceed" memo that contains the authorized project start date. A copy of the memo and the approved proposal will be forwarded to the UA Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP).

If the PI resides on the UA campus, OSP must establish a project account number and allocate funds to the account before expenses can be charged to UTCA. This may take several days to several weeks, depending upon the time of year and the level of activity of OSP at the time.

If the PI resides on the UAB or UAH campus, OSP will provide funding to the corresponding research unit on that campus by processing an agreement. The PI must abide by the project
initiation rules and procedures on her/his home campus.

**Carryover Funds** - Carryover of funds at the end of a project is not allowed without the prior written approval of the Executive Committee. That is, all unused funds expire at the end of the project period listed in the "notice to proceed" memo. Under some circumstances, the Executive Committee might extend the project period; however, this requires a request from the PI. The request must be in writing, include an adequate justification, and occur prior to the project expiration date.

**Budget Changes** - The Executive Committee recognizes that situations arise during research projects that sometimes warrant a change in the project budget. Such changes are generally acceptable as long as they do not significantly affect the scope of work or the objectives of a project.

All significant budget changes require a written request to the Executive Committee. Examples of significant changes include the following:

- **a)** Major changes (i.e., cumulative changes that consist of more than 10% of a project budget).
- **b)** Revisions within major budget lines of more than 10%; for example, shifting student salaries to faculty salaries where the total amount shifted exceeds 10% of total salaries.
- **c)** Shifting funds between major budget lines; for example, shifting salary funds to travel.
- **d)** Creating a new type of budget category; for example, shifting travel funds to equipment when no equipment line was contained in the original budget.

Where there are questions about budget revisions, the PI should contact the UTCA Associate Director on her/his campus.