

Get Funding

5 Tips to Secure Funding for a Flow Cytometer or Cell Sorter



Cell Sorting

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Shared Instrumentation Grant Program (S10) is designed to help fund the acquisition of a single large piece of equipment, from \$100,000 to \$600,000, to support the research at an institution or group of institutions. If you are considering preparing a shared instrumentation grant (SIG), here are some questions that you should remember to address as you prepare the application:

1 What is your biosafety plan? If a cell sorter is on the list, make sure the grant has addressed the recommendations from the International Society for Advancement of Cytometry (ISAC) biosafety taskforce. Review Holmes et al. 2014 (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24634405>) about cell sorting and, for all grants, make sure to obtain a letter from the institutional biosafety officer.

2 Who are your major users? The major users are the reason for submitting the grant in the first place. Three users are needed for P01, R01, U01, R35, R37, DPI, or DP2 level funding, and these levels allow a maximum of eight to ten users. While the NIH allows up to six pages, the reviewers will appreciate fewer pages that are just focused on the critical components. Work with the major users so that they highlight what their research is, what the limitations of the current technology are, and how the new instrument will enhance or speed up their research. Don't forget that for each accessory, list three users who need it and have those users detail why they need the accessory.

3 What are you asking for? Make sure you understand the capabilities of the instrument you are asking for, and that the major users do as well. Don't foul the grant by having a major user highlight what the instrument can't do (for example, describing sorting on an analytical instrument). And don't use FACS when referring to flow cytometry. FACS is a Becton, Dickinson and Company trademark, but has crept into the modern lexicon. Using this acronym may make you look too confused about the instruments to be taken seriously.

4 Do you have institutional support? This is a critical part of the grant that often gets buried in dean grant speak. Historical support is good to highlight, but that doesn't guarantee future support. Get a firm commitment for future support — be it a service contract, a technician, space, etc. Better yet, get a commitment for each.

5 What is your facility's budget and administrative situation? In preparing the administrative and budget sections, highlight the skills of the researchers in the facility. Which people can help with the new instrument? What is the training program like? How do the researchers analyze and securely store the data? All these are questions that need concrete answers.

With the budget, prepare a 1-year detailed budget for the integration of the new instrument, with a 5-year projected budget. Show long-term thought on how the new instrument will be integrated into the facility.

Holmes et al. (2014). International Society for the Advancement of Cytometry cell sorter biosafety standards. *Cytometry A* 85, 434–453.



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