



Big Opportunity Fund for Proposal Support (formerly Tier 2)

Purpose:

The Big Opportunity Fund (BOF) offers proposal preparation support to incentivize faculty to pursue and be more competitive for large, high-visibility, externally-funded research opportunities (typically \geq \$2M/year for multiple years). Such awards contribute to the university's overall research volume, impact, and reputation.

Submission Cycle:

- Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and reviewed after the 20th of each month. Please allow two weeks to process these applications.
- Applications should be submitted prior to incurring proposal development expenses, preferably more than two months prior to the agency submission date.
- Meeting with the Research Development Office is highly encouraged prior to submission.

Support Provided:

Up to \$50,000 per award.

Funds are distributed on an **expense reimbursement model** from ledger expenditures, reimbursed on a rolling basis to accommodate the shorter proposal development timeline. Proposals must detail budgets with accompanying justification.

Cost Share:

- VPR will fund 33.33% of the requested amount.
- Provost will fund 33.33% of the requested amount.
- The benefiting Unit(s) cost shares 33.33%.

For proposals involving multiple units, formulas used for the “unit” cost-sharing portions are at the discretion of the benefiting entities. It is common, though not a requirement, for units to contribute funds proportionate to their relative involvement in the project.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Both tenured/tenure-track and professional track faculty (assistant research scientist or higher) whose full-time, home position is at UMD are eligible to apply.
- PI must be actively pursuing a large externally-funded award (typically \geq \$2M/year for multiple years) involving multiple investigators.
- Proposal must be UMD-led with the majority of the funds remaining at UMD.
- The award if won should contribute to UMD overall impact and reputation.

Big Opportunity Funds may be requested prior to the release of the agency's formal request for proposals if an expected announcement date is known. If the opportunity to be pursued is a limited submission, Big Opportunity Funds cannot be requested until the university has officially



designated its eligible candidates. There is no lifetime limit to the number of BOF awards granted to a given PI.

Award Fund Use:

The fund use for this award should be considered moderately flexible but must be outlined in the proposal budget because funds will only be awarded as a **reimbursement for expenses already posted to the ledger**.

Uses include but are not limited to:

- Collection of pilot data;
- Student support;
- Summer salary (up to one month);
- Required travel;
- Workshops;
- Hiring of outside technical editors/writers;
- Proposal graphics development;
- Use of specialized consultants such as programmers or web developers.

Review Criteria and Process:

All proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the following criteria:

- **Quality of Proposed Research:** Does the PI indicate a solid research plan, responsive to funder priorities, that is likely well-placed for funding consideration?
- **Increased Competitiveness:** Do the proposal and team have a high probability of success? (e.g. strong research plan well-aligned to the solicitation and priorities of the funding agency) Will funding this BOF application lead to the development of an outstanding research proposal? Will the proposed planning and research tasks make the team more competitive in obtaining external funding?
- **Enhanced Collaboration:** Will the funds enhance collaboration and yield a well-integrated proposal?



Application Process and Materials:

In addition to completing the electronic submission form, all application materials must be uploaded in one PDF file and must be submitted electronically through <https://umd.infoready4.com/>.

Application materials include:

- **Universal Funding Form** with department/college signatures affirming willingness to support a total of **33%** of the request.
- **Project Narrative:** Prepare a two (2) to three (3) page project narrative that describes the targeted externally-funded research opportunity and the proposed research effort, and details all proposal planning activities. This document should clearly outline:
 - The project's intellectual merit;
 - How the project fits into the university's stated priorities;
 - Proposal preparation plan and how the activities/expenses to be covered by the BOF will help to make the external proposal more competitive for funding;
 - All UMD co-PI's and any university sub-awards;
- **Budget and Justification:** Please provide an estimated budget and justification for the planned expenditures. The budget and justification should demonstrate that you have thought through all aspects of your project and the costs associated with them. Please include any other sources of funding that will be supporting the project (if applicable) and whether those funds are committed or pending.
 - Include details of any of unspent start-up, gift, or retention funding
- **Biosketch or CV** for the submitting principal investigator and for any co-investigators if applicable (up to two pages each)

The InfoReady online submission form will also request: Title, Co-investigator information (names, titles, affiliations and emails), and Project summary (suggested length: 150 words max).

Expectations of Applicants and Awardees:

- Applicants must provide a complete copy of their proposal to the Research Development Office following submission to the agency.
- Big Opportunity Fund awardees **must** notify the Research Development Office in writing when a decision (either funded or not funded) has been made by the agency. Failure to do so may impact eligibility for future Maryland Catalyst Fund consideration.
- BOF awardees may submit expense ledger reimbursement reports to the VPR and Provost business offices on a rolling basis; funds will be reviewed for adherence to the proposal budget and allowable uses before reimbursement occurs.