Summary: The MRI Program serves to increase access to shared scientific and engineering instruments for research and research training in our Nation's institutions of higher education, and not-for-profit museums, science centers and scientific/engineering research organizations. This program especially seeks to improve the quality and expand the scope of research and research training in science and engineering, by supporting proposals for shared instrumentation that fosters the integration of research and education in research-intensive learning environments. Each MRI proposal may request support for the acquisition (Track 1) or development (Track 2) of a single research instrument for shared inter- and/or intra-organizational use; development efforts that leverage the strengths of private sector partners to build instrument development capacity at MRI submission-eligible organizations are encouraged.

To accomplish the program's goals, the MRI program assists with the acquisition or development of a shared research instrument that is, in general, too costly and/or not appropriate for support through other NSF programs. The instrument is expected to be operational for regular research use by the end of the award period. For the purposes of the MRI program, a proposal must be for either acquisition (Track 1) or development (Track 2) of a single instrument or for equipment that, when combined, serves as an integrated research instrument (in contrast to requests for multiple instruments that enable research in a common or focused research domain, which MRI does not support). The MRI program does not support the acquisition or development of a suite of instruments to outfit research laboratories/facilities or that will be used to conduct independent research activities simultaneously.

Instrument acquisition or development proposals that request funds from NSF in the range $100,000-$4 million may be accepted from any MRI-eligible organization. Proposals that request funds from NSF less than $100,000 may also be accepted from any MRI-eligible organization for the disciplines of mathematics or social, behavioral and economic sciences and from non-Ph.D.-granting institutions of higher education for all NSF-supported disciplines. Cost-sharing of precisely 30% of the total project cost is required for Ph.D.-granting institutions of higher education.

Proposal Limitations: The University can only submit three proposals. If three are submitted, one must be for instrumentation development. Only two proposals can be submitted for instrumentation acquisition.

An unfunded collaboration does not count against the submission limit. Inclusion as a funded subawardee on a development proposal at a level in excess of 20% of the total budget request from NSF, or on any acquisition proposal, will be counted against an organization's proposal submission limit. However, if a subaward to an organization in a development proposal is 20% or less of the proposal's total budget request from NSF, the subawardee's submission limit will not be affected. See NSF 13-517, Limit on Number of Proposals per Organization, for more information on limitations.

Selection Process: The following procedures for an internal Notice of Intent (NOI) describe the process to select the proposals that will be submitted on behalf of the University. Should more than the allowable number of NOIs be received from across the University, they will be reviewed by a committee formed by
the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) and in consultation with the Provost. The OVPR will notify each applicant whether or not their proposal has been selected to move forward.

Proposal Schedule: Internal NOI due to OSP on 14 October 2013, 5:00 p.m. CDT  
Notification of NOIs selected anticipated for early November  
Full Proposal due to OSP on 16 January 2014, 5:00 p.m. CST  
Full Proposal due to NSF on 23 January 2014, 5:00 p.m. CST

NOI Format and Content: Proposal pages should have at least 1” margins all around, and use no smaller than an 11-point font for the text. Tables and figures are exempt from the 11-point requirement, but must be clearly legible.

Submission Method: A single PDF file emailed to your OSP Contract Administrator.

NOI Contents:
1. Cover Page: 
   a. Include “NSF 13-517 Major Research Instrumentation Program.” 
   b. Project title (which should identify the scientific discipline(s) for which the instrumentation is requested, should convey the primary purpose of the proposal, e.g., “MRI: Acquisition of ________” or “MRI: Development of ________” 
   c. Names, departments/centers, campus address and email address for each PI, Co-I, and key personnel proposed. 
   d. List of other partnering institutions and entities.

2. Project Summary: (Limit: 2 pages double-spaced) The Project Summary consists of an overview, a statement on the intellectual merit of the proposed activity, and a statement on the broader impacts of the proposed activity.

3. Project Description¹: (Limit: 6 pages, double-spaced) Please include in this section the following information, each in its own subsection with the following headings: 
   a. Instrumentation Location and Type 
   b. Research Activities to be Enabled 
   c. Description of the Research Instrumentation and Needs 
   d. Impact on Research and Training Infrastructure 
   e. Management Plan 

4. Recurring Costs: A one-page double-spaced description of the recurring costs associated with operating and maintaining the instrument, and a description of who will be responsible for providing these funds.

5. One to two-page tentative budget and budget justification showing estimated costs and justification (the OSP Contract Administrator is available to assist you if requested)

6. One to two-page bio for each PI, Co-I and key personnel proposed.

Direct questions about this NOI preparation or process to your OSP Contract Administrator.

¹ See NSF 13-517, Section V.A.3.a-e, for description of the content of these subsections