Cost sharing is the portion of project expenses related to a sponsored agreement that is contributed by parties other than the sponsor and not directly charged to the sponsored project account(s).

Cost sharing may be required by the sponsor as a condition of receiving an award (“mandatory cost sharing”) or offered by the applicant institution or a third party by including it in the sponsored proposal document (“voluntary committed cost sharing”).

Cost sharing should be proposed only when required by the sponsoring agency, because mandatory and voluntary committed cost sharing is a binding commitment that constrains the PI’s flexibility and represents a real cost to the institution. When cost sharing is required by the sponsor, the source of the proposed cost share is determined and set aside at the proposal stage. Agnes Scott College avoids volunteering non-mandated cost share. It is the responsibility of the PI and the unit, in cooperation with the OSP, to evaluate the workload and budget implications of proposed cost sharing (i.e., mandatory or voluntary committed), and to track committed cost sharing during the award project period.

Committing academic year effort to a funded project without charging the sponsor for the effort is a form of cost sharing.

Many major science agencies (e.g., NSF, NIH) and other sponsors state that cost sharing is unnecessary and is not a review criterion in proposal evaluation. The determination of the need for cost sharing is to be made by the PI and the OSP, with an understanding of the institutional cost, agency rules, and solicitation requirements.

**Committing Non-quantified Effort:**

Where cost sharing is not required by the sponsor, necessary to ensure the competitiveness of a proposal, or required as a minimum commitment to the project, ASC will refrain from making such commitments voluntarily. In all situations, the use of cost sharing shall be kept to a minimal level because of the burden that it places on the College and its resources.

Commitments of cost sharing of faculty effort on grants are financially unfavorable to the College and are thus permitted ONLY under restricted conditions. Authorization for cost sharing commitments will be considered in the following circumstances:
• A commitment of 1% effort, which is the minimum effort required of the PI on federal grants, will be authorized when no salary is charged to a grant.
• The cumulative maximum salary that may be committed as cost sharing for all grants is 10% per year. The maximum on a single grant is 5%.
• Any request for voluntary cost sharing of PI effort above 5% on a single grant or 10% cumulatively requires the written permission of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. A positive response is most likely for projects which:
  o are multi-departmental or interdisciplinary;
  o respond to non-standard solicitations, i.e., are not traditional research projects;
• As an alternative to committed cost sharing faculty should employ one of the following options:
  o charging academic year salary to a grant (which is now permitted by the NSF provided it remains within the two-month yearly maximum);
  o so-called “voluntary uncommitted cost sharing,” which is NOT quantified or tracked by the accounting systems. It falls within the research effort paid for by the College during the academic year. It should be referred to only in the facilities and resources narrative (NOT the budget or budget narrative).

**Suggested Language for Describing Non-quantified Effort**

A number of research universities have crafted suggested language to use in proposals to describe institutional support for a project that does not commit the institution or the Principal Investigator to a specific amount of cost share. These statements are purposefully vague and do not constitute cost share commitments; they stay well away from citing percents of time or salaries and make no overt promises of specific levels of support. Agnes Scott College supports the use of such statements whenever its Principal Investigators wish to address the issue of academic or programmatic contributions or support, but do not wish to formally volunteer cost share.

**DO SAY:**

"Agnes Scott College fully supports the academic year salaries of Professors, Associate Professors, and Assistant Professors, but makes no specific commitment of effort or salary to this particular project. Key personnel will be available to oversee and direct the [students involved in the] project, as needed."
--*Adapted from Massachusetts Institute of Technology*

"Dr. Smith will be providing expert advice and consultation to the project, as needed."
--*Adapted from University of Alabama-Birmingham*

"The College demonstrates support to the project through the availability and expertise of the Project Director (or Principal Investigator)."
--*Adapted from University of Alabama-Birmingham*
"Dr. Smith is Principal Investigator and requests 25% salary support for this project. She will provide additional support to the project, as needed."

---Adapted from University of Alabama-Birmingham

DON'T SAY:

"Dr. Smith’s salary is paid by Agnes Scott College; she will devote 25% effort toward this project."

"Agnes Scott College is highly supportive of this project and agrees to be responsible for the salary of the PI for its duration."

"Effort equivalent to $15,000 in salary and benefits will be provided by the PI."