Better Together: When Pre-Award Becomes a Post-Award Activity
Speakers

Ann Holmes  
Senior Assistant Dean, Administration and Finance  
University of Maryland College Park

Laura Kingsley  
Director, Office of Sponsored Programs  
University of Pittsburgh

Erin Bailey  
Chief Financial Officer, CTSI  
University at Buffalo
Session Objectives

- Provide examples of common post-award issues
- Determine potential solutions in the pre-award process to avoid the common post-award issues
- Describe different perspectives on the proposal to award lifecycle to increase collaboration and understanding
Poll Question 1

Do you work in pre, post, both, or something else?

☐ Pre-Award
☐ Post-Award
☐ Both Pre- and Post-Award
☐ Something else
Poll Question 2

What is the most important part of pre-award that can positively impact post-award?

☐ Quality budget

☐ Communication with PI

☐ Coordination between department and central research administration offices

☐ Proposal not selected for funding
WHEN PRE-AWARD BECOMES POST-AWARD
Video: If Only It Were That Simple
When Pre-Award …

Delays in no-cost extensions or negotiation of continuing awards

- Cost overruns/Deficit spending on existing awards. Post-award can’t bill or draw funds
- Financial reports can’t be properly completed.
- Inadvertent closing of award that will be extended
- Compliance with reporting can be delayed or missed.
- “Burn-rates” are not calculated properly.
Becomes Post-Award…

Close Out Concerns

- Expiration of project notices
  - What happens when the balance of unused funds is significantly high?
  - What happens if the account is expiring and already in deficit?
  - How does the institution manage these anomalies? Who takes responsibility for working with the Principal Investigators or the administrators?
- Final Report Requirements
  - Who is coordinating final reports? Technical, invention disclosures, property reports, trademarks?
Coordination between “Pre” and “Post”

- Building a culture of compliance is key.
- Understanding the risks to the institution makes it clear to everyone.
  - Use audit reports to stress the risk in dollars and reputations.
- The availability of staff in both areas is essential.
  - Do you require folks to “sign on” to Zoom or Teams every day? Can they be reached easily no matter where they are physically located?
- Does each office have an expert in areas that generate the most questions? i.e., Uniform Guidance, salary cap, NIH, NSF, etc.?
- How are your offices perceived by the research community? Will the business folks come to you first? How do you build that trust?
PRE-AWARD STRATEGIES
Pre-Award Strategies to Prevent Post-Award Issues

- Communication channels between central offices, departments, department administrators, PIs
- Conducting thorough proposal reviews
  - Compliance with sponsor policies, institutional policies, and applicable regulations
  - Building partnerships with colleagues during pre-award stage
SUBAWARDS
Pre-award tasks ➔ Post-award processes

Subaward is the AWARD provided by a pass-through entity (prime) to a subrecipient (non-federal entity receiving the funds) to carry out part of an award.

- The subaward is legally binding agreement
- The subrecipient uses their own infrastructure to conduct the work
- Pre-award
  - Determine if a subrecipient or contractor
  - Risk Assessment
  - If subrecipient - SOW, Budget, Budget justification, Bios, Letter of Commitment [NIH new subaward guidelines](#) effective October 1, 2023
  - JIT
  - Award acceptance - Pre notify post on any unusual terms and conditions
Pre-award tasks → Post-award processes

Post-Award
- Terms and Conditions of subaward agreement (does it align with proposal submitted)
- Execute agreement (check sub is not on any government list of ineligible to receive funding)
- PO is assigned and set up in accounting system
- Award management and subrecipient monitoring
- Close out
AWARD LIFE CYCLE
Perspectives on Proposal to Award Life Cycle

- **Find funding**
  - Usually done by PI working with the pre award office
- **Preparing the Proposal**
  - DRA, PI and Pre-award team
- **Setting up the Award**
  - Review NOA, set up subawards, review budget limits
- **Managing the Award**
  - Pre-award and Post-award team working directly with DRA and PI. Understand terms and conditions of the award and compliance
- **Closing out the Award**
  - DRA PI and Post-award team
COLLABORATION
Strategies for Collaboration and Understanding

**Collaboration is key**

- Pre-Award must anticipate the needs of Post-Award
- Communication between pre- and post-award related to specific terms and conditions
- Not “us versus them” Work to minimize and disconnects
- Interact regularly (Pre-Award, Post-Award, Departmental and PIs)
- Utilize pre-award as a resource if there is a question during post-award
- Obtain feedback - what is working, what is not working
Summary

- Real risk
- Follow guidelines and policies in pre-award
- Understand award lifecycle
- Open and frequent communication with all stakeholders
- Do not wait to address post-award issues
Thank you for joining us!
The after show will begin at 3:35