Streamlining Administrative Requirements to Reduce Effort and Cost

Goals

- Identify the causes of administrative burden for funders, institutions, including central offices and investigators, and identify potential solutions.

- Develop effective practices and guidelines to streamline administrative processes that can be shared with the broader funder and institutional communities.

- Determine next steps and areas for collaboration with other Working Groups (i.e., Research Operating Costs and IP).

Potential areas for streamlining

- Proposal Submission
- Communication
- Award Issuance and Acceptance
- Financial and Progress Reporting
- Terminology

Proposal Submission

How can proposal submission be more efficient?
What are the barriers?

Research Institution Wish List	Nonprofit Funder Wish List
More consistent format for proposal applications	Reduce or eliminate ineligible, non-compliant and misguided proposals
Do not require acceptance of award terms and conditions at the proposal stage	Minimize last minute or late submissions
Limit submission deadlines to normal business hours	Provide correct tax ID numbers
Allow multiple points of access to funders' submission system	Provide current contact information for university administrators
	Good submission system access

What are the limitations for both parties?
Where is change is possible?
What has worked for your organization?

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Communication

How can improved communication help reduce administrative burdens?

Research Institution Wish List	Nonprofit Funder Wish List
Work together to create Excel financial reporting templates and contract guidelines	Communicate to grant managers well before contract or reporting deadlines if there are questions to reduce corrections and payment delays
Include university administrators in communications	University administrators acknowledge that they have received and read communications
Allow multiple points of access to funders' submission system	Designated contact who is technically equipped to negotiate terms
More coordinated communications between funders, sponsored program, and development offices	Provide current contact information for university administrators

Award Issuance and Acceptance
How do you ensure that contracts are executed efficiently?

Research Institution Wish List	Nonprofit Funder Wish List
Prioritize maintenance of online links	Designated contact who is technically equipped to negotiate terms
Re-use previously agreed upon terms	Re-use previously agreed upon terms and limit individual negotiation
Work together to develop guidelines for as many contract and grants terms as possible	Implement consistent processes for review of terms and conditions, including: • Reviewing funder's policies prior to receiving agreement • Processing and signing electronic agreements
	Provide current contact information for university administrators
	Meet deadlines for signing grant agreements

Financial and Progress Reporting
What are the barriers to timely reporting? What works well?

Research Institution Wish List	Nonprofit Funder Wish List
Create invoicing templates	Develop accounting systems so that expenses collapse into categories requested by funders
Consider accepting university's standard invoicing template when possible	Avoid editing previously approved budgets
Discuss practices for collecting and reporting financial data; document similarities for potential adoption by other funders	Provide explanations for large variances between approved budget and actual expenses and large reallocations in proposed budgets
Increase accessibility to funders' financial reporting system via multiple logins	Meet reporting deadlines, request extensions early and in writing. Timely responses to questions about reports.
Grace period for financial reports involving subrecipient reporting	Provide current contact information for university administrator responsible for financial report
Work together to create Excel financial reporting templates	Avoid budgeting large allocations to unspecified expense categories
Provide guidance on interest balances, unspent balances, conditional carryforward restrictions, and allowable budget variances/re-budgeting	Communicate to grant managers well before deadline if there are questions to reduce corrections and payment delays

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Terminology

The following were identified as terms and policies that can vary between contracts. Is there room for agreement on some of these?

- Use of name
- Intellectual Property
- Direct vs Indirect Costs
- Indemnification
- Publicity