From Proposal to Payday: Navigating the Research Administration Adventure! Bridging the Gap between Pre-Award and Post-Award

Presenters:

University of Mississippi Medical Center
Felicia Clerk, MBA, CPRA
Directors, Sponsored Programs
Pre-Award Division

University of Maryland College Park
Debra Y. Murray
Assistant Vice President
Sponsored Programs Accounting and
Compliance (SPAC)

1

W203: Bridging the Gap Between Pre and Post Award

Creator: wildpixel | Credit: Getty Images/iStockphoto

Introduction of Speakers

University of Mississippi Medical Center
Felicia Clerk, MBA, CPRA
Directors, Sponsored Programs
Pre-Award Division

University of Maryland College Park
Debra Y. Murray
Assistant Vice President
Sponsored Programs Accounting and
Compliance (SPAC)

Learning Objectives

✓ Understanding pre- and post-award research administration requires recognizing the responsibilities of each phase, from finding funding and preparing proposals (pre-award) to managing the awarded project (post-award).

✓ A framework for understanding the distinct roles for Pre and Post Admins and best practices to guide investigators to successful proposal activities.

What is your primary job function?

- Pre-Award
- Post Award
- Other
- Both

Designed by Freepik

Roles & Responsibilities

- **Pre-Award:** Involves identifying funding opportunities, proposal development including researching sponsor priorities, budget creation, submission, negotiating and accepting the award.

- **Post-Award:** Focuses on award setup, financial management, compliance, financial reporting, and closeout procedures.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

shutterstock.com · 1950010933

Roles & Responsibilities (continued)

- Identify funding opportunities
  - Pre-Award or Proposal Development task
  - Identifying Sponsor priorities (ex. Focusing on cancer initiative, population health, etc.)
- Interpreting NoFo's
  - What is the sponsor saying?
- Checking formatting, page limit, etc.

- Budget Assistance
- Ensuring Compliance

  - Can the institution agree to sponsor terms?
  - Does the institution have the capacity to fulfill the terms of the award?
- Actual submission
- Negotiating Contracts

Navigating Challenges in Pre-Award and Post-Award Phases

(But Let's Pretend We're Ignoring Them)

Pre-Award challenges if not addressed effectively, can manifest as post-award problems due to a lack of communication, shared understanding, or proactive planning.

Challenges

Pre-Award

- Deadlines (Post Award too)
- Complex regulations
- Technology and Legacy Systems
- Institutional Processes
- Award Negotiation and Acceptance

Designed by Freepik

Challenges

Post Award

- Data integrity/security
- Financial System limitations
- Regulations/Policies & Procedures
- Closeout of awards
- Inadequate staffing
- Audits/investigations

What factors contribute to the complexity of projects and lead to Pre-Award Issues?

- Human Subjects Research

  - navigating IRB, developing Informed Consent (ICF) procedures, and addressing potential ethical dilemmas
- Clinical Trials Research
- Multiple collaborating institutions and/or PIs
- Changes prior to award (transfers, Change in locations, promotion)
- Over-arching policy changes (federal and institutional)

Pre-Award

1. Inaccurate Budgeting

2. Unclear Project Scope

3. Incomplete or Inaccurate Proposal Information

4. Disregarding Feedback

5. Poor coordination

Post Award

1. Causes issues with expense tracking and reporting

2. Results in misunderstandings during grant implementation

3. Errors or missing information in the proposal, such as incorrect contact details or reporting requirements, can create problems when the grant is awarded

4. Ensure that the proposal aligns with the federal, sponsor and institutional policies and procedures.

5. Can lead to inefficiencies and delays in grant implementation and management

SRA
INTERNATIONAL

Pre-Award & Post Award (continued)

- Lack of Communication & Shared Understanding
    - Delayed Information
    - Misinterpretation
- Inadequate Planning & Anticipation
- Incomplete Training & Knowledge Transfer
- Changes in Agency Guidelines
- Emerging Compliance Issue

- Build a culture of compliance
- Launch/Kick-off meetings for awards
  - Meet with the stakeholders of the award
- Cross Training
  - Learn what your counterparts do
- Shared Checklist
  - Update regularly
- Shared Naming Convention
  - Helps speak the same language
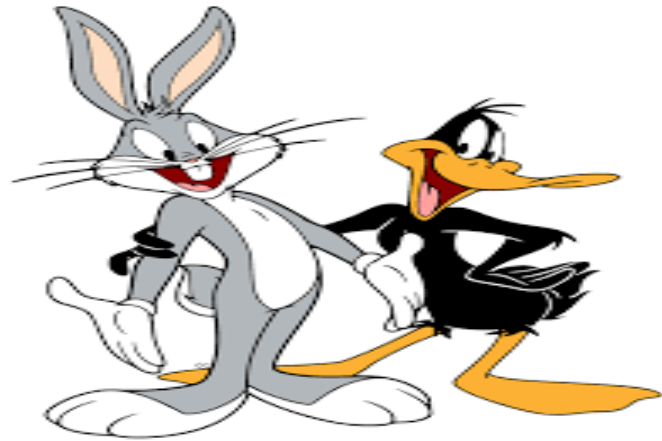
Strategies for Collaboration and Understanding

- Collaboration is key
    - Mutual accountability
- Pre-Award must anticipate the needs of Post Award
- Not a "Us vs. Them"
    - Cliché but "We are all in this together"
- Interact regularly (Pre-Award, Post-Award, Departmental and PIs)
    - Three (3) Problems or Three (3) Situations Solved this month
- Do away with artificial boundaries and explore what is best practice
- Periodically request feedback – Is the current process working? What can be changed to make this more efficient

In Summary

- Problems that arise during the pre-award phase and remain unresolved before the award is granted often reappear as post-award issues. Don't ignore them.
- Build relationships with counterparts "We work better together"
- Set goals for continuous collaboration and innovation
- We can ensure smoother transitions, minimize potential issues, and enhance overall project success.
- Your role is valuable, regardless of your position.

Thank you for attending our session!