

THE AWARD

EQUATION:



UPMC | HILLMAN
CANCER CENTER



University of
Pittsburgh®

Agenda



Welcome & Introductions



Organizational Structure & Metrics



Objectives



Roles & Responsibilities



Facilitating Seamless Transitions



Coordination, Collaboration & Communication



Questions?

Welcome & Introductions

University of Pittsburgh - UPMC Hillman Cancer Center Research Fiscal Office



Heather Culp

Assistant Director of Finance
Post-Award
haj21@pitt.edu



Nicole Webb

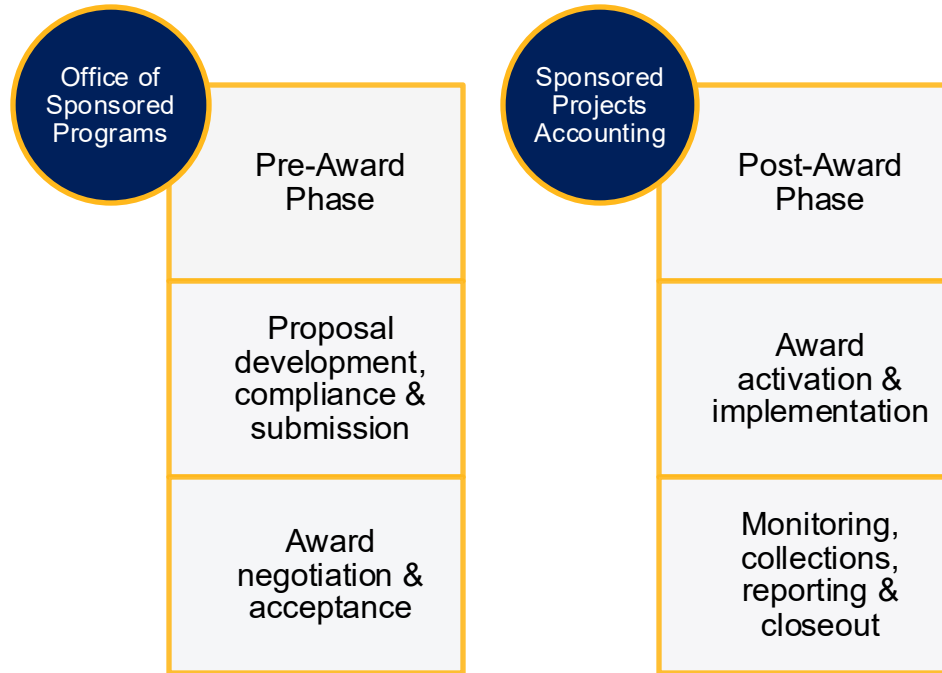
Director of Submissions
& Research Analytics
nif3@pitt.edu



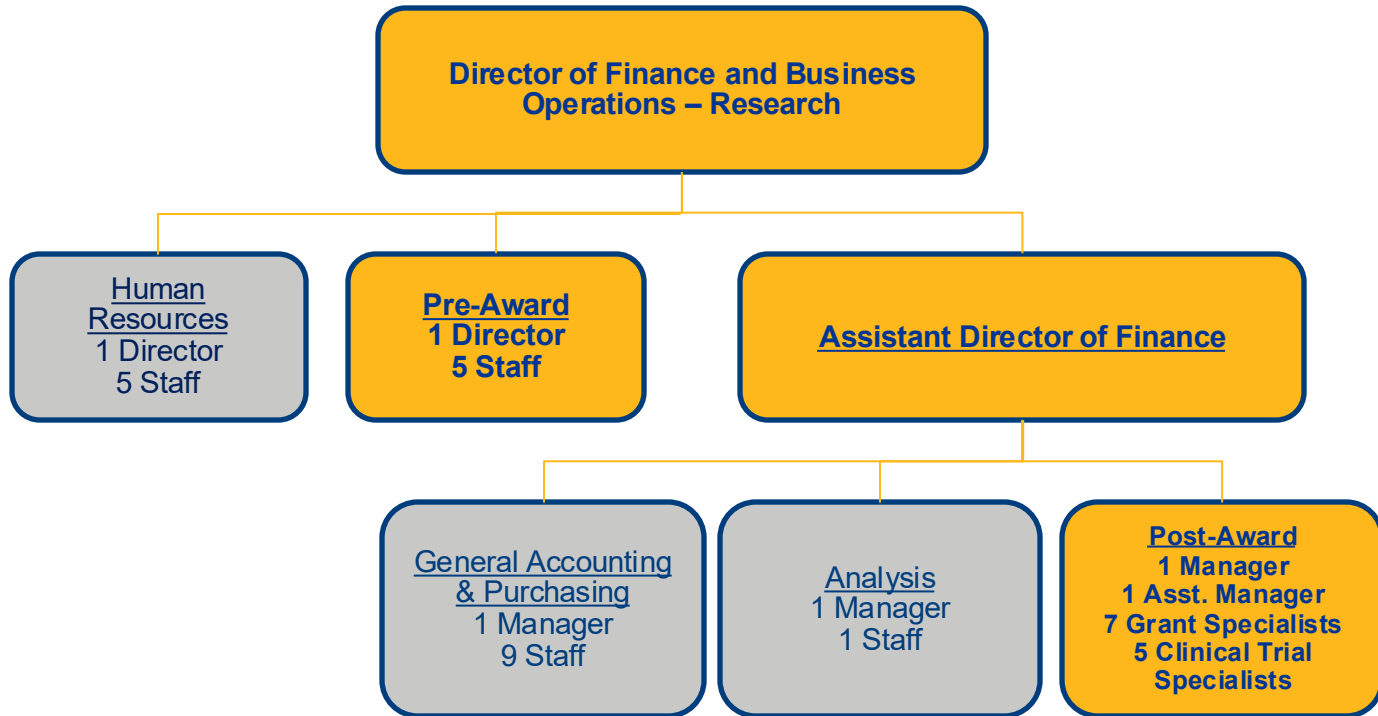
Becky Nau

Senior Pre-Award
Administrator
rln37@pitt.edu

Central Pre- and Post-Award Structure



Organizational Chart: Research Office



Pre-Award Metrics: Submissions



424

FY25 Total
All-time high

275

15-Year Average
FY10 – FY25

+51%

Growth FY10 → FY25
Long-term trend ↑

Pre-Award Metrics: Fiscal Year 2025

TOTAL
SUBMISSIONS

424

Across all sponsors
& mechanisms

TYPE OF SUBMISSIONS

Federal	212	50%
Non-Federal	128	30%
Federal Pass-Through	84	20%

Federal = Direct federal agency

Non-Federal = All other sponsors

Federal Pass-Through = Federal subcontracts from other sites

SUBMISSION OUTCOMES



TOP SPONSOR TYPES

- NIH – R-Series
- NIH – Other
- DOD
- ACS
- Foundations
- Industry (incl. SBIR/STTR)
- Other

Post-Award Metrics: Fiscal Year 2025

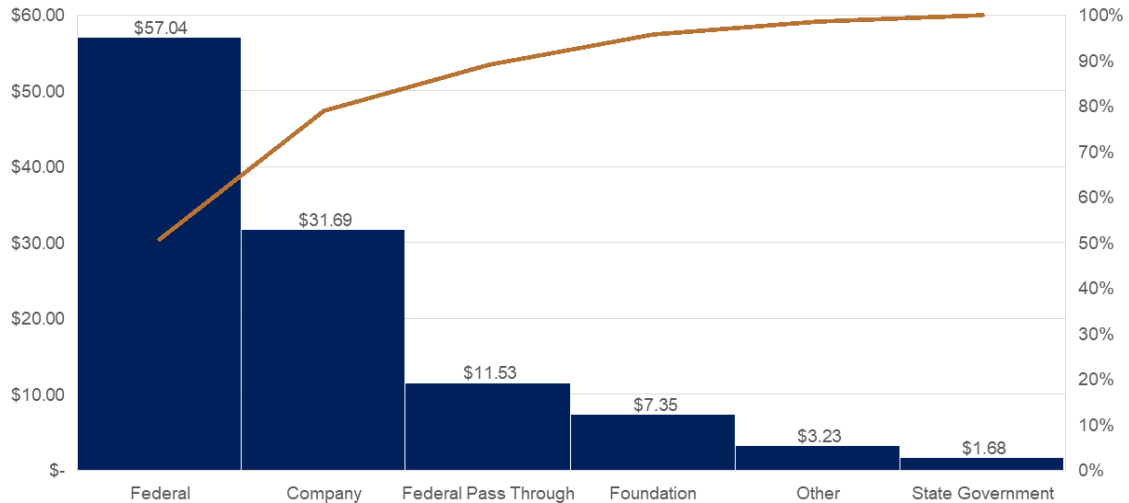
Principal Investigators:
208

Accounts Managed:
1,743

Post-Award Specialists:
12

Sponsored Research Total Expenditures:
\$112.5M

Sponsored Research Total Expenditures by Sponsor Type (\$ millions)



Objectives

Clarify Roles and Responsibilities

- Develop a responsibility matrix to define ownership across the award lifecycle
- Regular Pre/Post Award “Diving Deeper” sessions

Facilitate Seamless Award Transitions

- Utilize tools such as an Award Activation Checklist to relay critical submission details
- Conduct structured award kick-off meetings to transition award from pre-award to post-award

Enhance Coordination, Collaboration, and Communication

- Leverage platforms, trackers, and other metrics
- Subaward management
- Reporting tools
- Other Support

Clarify Roles & Responsibilities



Responsibility Matrix

A **Responsibility Matrix** that clearly defines the division of duties across Pre-Award, Post-Award, and Coordinator Research Support Services ensures accountability, consistency, and seamless collaboration at every stage of the grant lifecycle.



Pre-Award

- Proposal development & budget preparation
- Submission coordination, compliance & approvals
- Award activation and subaward processing



Post-Award

- Budget management & effort confirmation
- Reporting & ongoing compliance
- Subaward administration & financial oversight



Coordinator

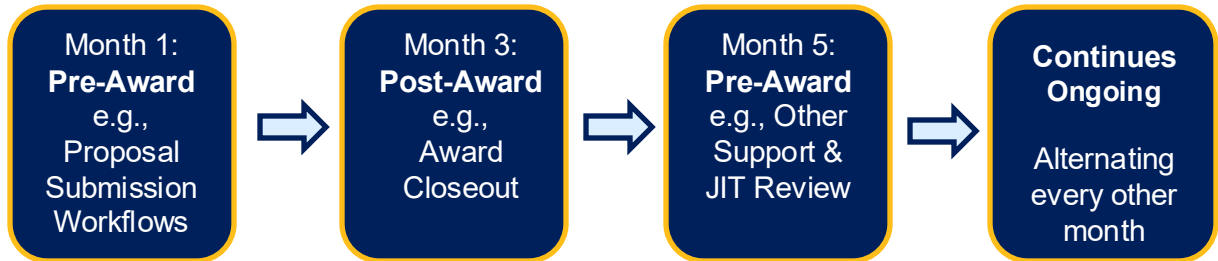
(Research Support Services)

- Other Support & RPPR coordination
- Internal record management & modifications
- Activation processing & distribution

The full responsibility [Matrix](#) is located on our HCC Research Fiscal Office SharePoint Hub. It serves as the authoritative reference for all grant lifecycle processes.

Diving Deeper Sessions

Diving Deeper sessions are focused groups that alternate between Pre-Award and Post-Award teams. Each session selects a specific topic for an in-depth exploration, fostering mutual understanding of each team's roles, workflows, and responsibilities.



These sessions build cross-team awareness – helping Pre-Award, Post-Award and Coordinator staff better understand one another's processes, reduce handoff friction, and strengthen collaboration across the full grant lifecycle.

Facilitating Seamless Transitions



Meeting Cadence

MEETING	FREQ.	WHO'S INVOLVED	PURPOSE
Pre-Post Team Meeting	Bi-Monthly	Senior Pre- & Post-Award Staff	Process updates Workflow improvements' Issue resolution
Grants Collaboration Meeting	Bi-Weekly	Management + Senior Pre- & Post-Award Staff	Cross-team collaboration Award updates Shared challenge resolution
Dean's Office Meeting	Bi-Monthly	Dean's Office Grants Leadership + Senior Pre- & Post-Award Staff	School-wide updates NIH guidance Compliance review
Post-SPA Meeting	Quarterly	Sponsored Projects Accounting Staff + Senior Post-Award Staff	Award-specific issues Post-award process alignment
Kick-Off Meetings	As Needed	PI, Pre-Award & Post-Award Contacts	Detailed on Future Slide

Award Activation

How We Hand Off an Award



This process ensures that Post-Award receives all the necessary information to effectively manage the award moving forward. It also reduces confusion for the PI by clearly communicating the transition from their Pre-Award specialist to their Post-Award contact.

The Activation Packet

The **activation packet** is a structured tool that guides the transition from pre- to post- award for newly funded grants and modifications. It prompts the review of grant terms and budget, and the completion of setup tasks, with key documents attached for reference.

What's in it?

- Activation checklist
- Notice of Award
- Relevant guidelines
- Funded budget

How does it flow?

- Pre-award populates key award information
- Pre-award completes set-up steps
- Pre-award attaches documents
- Post-award completes activation steps and manages project

Our activation report checklist: [HCC Activation Checklist](#)

Kick-Off Meetings

Who is at the Table?

- Pre-award lead
- Post-award lead
- Principal Investigator
- Key administrative contacts for the award

What We Cover

- Award terms
- Budget overview
- Outgoing subaward details
- Compliance requirements

Why It Helps

- Surfaces complexity early
- Prevents mid-award surprises
- Builds team relationship from the start

When It Happens

- Scheduled during the activation process
- Only awards that are complex or particularly large

Coordination, Collaboration & Communication:

Tools that Improve Accuracy & Efficiency



HCC SharePoint Hub



A central resource for documents, team navigation, and service information.



Document Management

Centralized storage for award documents, templates, policies, and reference materials — accessible to the full team.



Team Directory & Routing

Connects visitors to the right team or contact for pre-award, post-award, subawards, and compliance questions.



Services Overview

Clear descriptions of the services that the Research Office provides to faculty and staff

HCC SharePoint Hub

University of Pittsburgh | SharePoint | Search this site | Culp, Heather Ann

Hillman Cancer Center - Research Fiscal Office

Home | About | Personnel | Pre-Award | Post-Award | Purchasing | UPMC Hillman Cancer Center Intranet | Team (Restricted) | Recycle bin | Edit | Public group | Not following | 16 members

+ New | Page details | Preview | Analytics | Published 4/10/2026 | Share | Edit

UPMC Hillman Cancer Center - Research Fiscal Office

Lithgow, Allison Paige

Announcements

Post Award:

- Grant Closeout Reminders: Guidance on spending in the final 30 days of a project. Additional information is available on the [Post-Award](#) page.

NIH Updates:

If you receive a grant termination notification, please forward it to hcfiscalgrants@upmc.edu. They will help navigate it through Pitt central offices for review and next steps.

- [Implementation of New Initiatives and Policies | Grants & Funding](#)
- [Notices of NIH Policy Changes | Grants & Funding](#)

Introduction

One of our primary goals at the Fiscal Office is to collaborate with faculty to support their research endeavors. Our office is made up of several specialized groups dedicated to facilitating all your grant and financial needs. We hope this website provides you with the necessary tools and answers to common questions related to grants, start-ups, purchasing, and Human Resources.

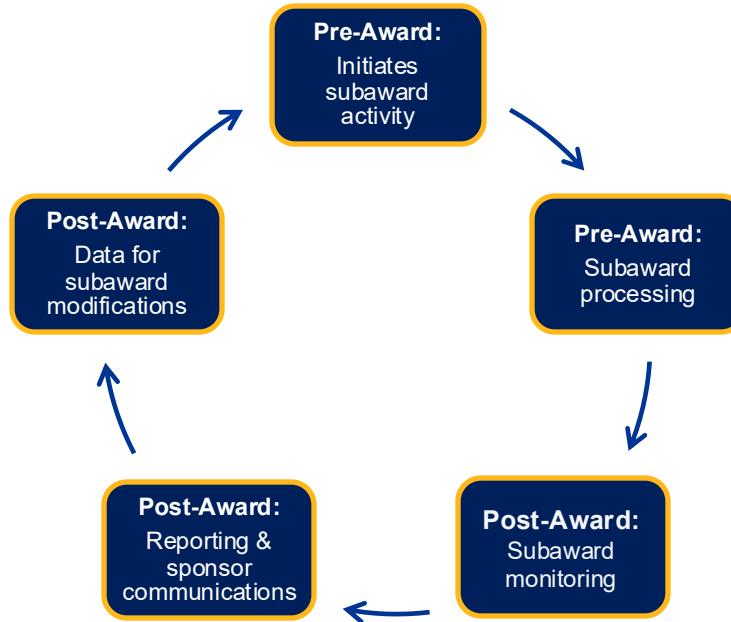
Navigating the Site

Shared Tracking Tools

Shared Tracking Tools are used across Pre-Award and Post-Award to keep teams aligned



Subaward Management



Coordinator Research Support Services assists pre- and post- award with modification actions. **Internal action trackers** play an important role in tracking all subaward activity.

RPPR Checklist Tool

- A step-by-step checklist covering every RPPR requirement
- Used by the RPPR Coordinator in conjunction with the Post-Award Specialist to ensure accurate, on-time submissions
- Catches issues early – before they become last-minute problems!

Please complete this document and save the requested documents in the RPPR folder. Once these are complete, email the RPPR coordinator to confirm.

- Detailed PI-approved budget for next budget period with completed Allocation Tab
- All Personnel Report in final format, including:
 - eRA IDs (for PIs, Co-Is, Postdocs, Graduate Students, and Undergraduate Students)
 - Project roles
 - One decimal point for calendar month efforts
- Signed Other Support for Senior/Key Personnel (if included on the NOA)
- Signed MFTRP Certification for Non-HCC Senior/Key Personnel (if included on the NOA)



This tool reduces errors, questions from the NIH, decreases time to NOA, and simplifies new employee training.

Our RPPR checklist: [RPPR Checklist](#)

RPPR Outgoing Subcontract Form

- A dedicated form sent to sub-sites to collect required documents and information
- Supports both RPPR submission and the amendment process for the next funding year



This tool keeps pre-award, post-award and sub-sites aligned by collecting everything needed in one place!

SUBCONTRACT DOCUMENTS FOR NIH RPPR

Please complete this document and return it along with the requested documents to the University of Pittsburgh.

- Detailed budget for next budget period (SF424)
- Budget justification (*only* if there have been [significant change](#) changes. Will need to ask subsite)
- Signed Other Support for Senior/Key Personnel
- Updated SOW (*only* if there have been changes)

Personnel:

Will there be a reduction of 25% or more in the level of effort for Senior/Key Personnel designated on the Notice of Award?

- No
- Yes:

Our Form: [Subcontract RPPR Checklist](#)

RPPR Email Templates

Standardized templates ensure consistent, professional communication — saving time and keeping all groups informed.



Principal Investigator

Scientific Content & Next Steps

- PI Responsibilities
- Clear Expectations
- Deadlines



Subcontract Sites

Data & Document Collection

- Subcontract RPPR Form
- Deadlines



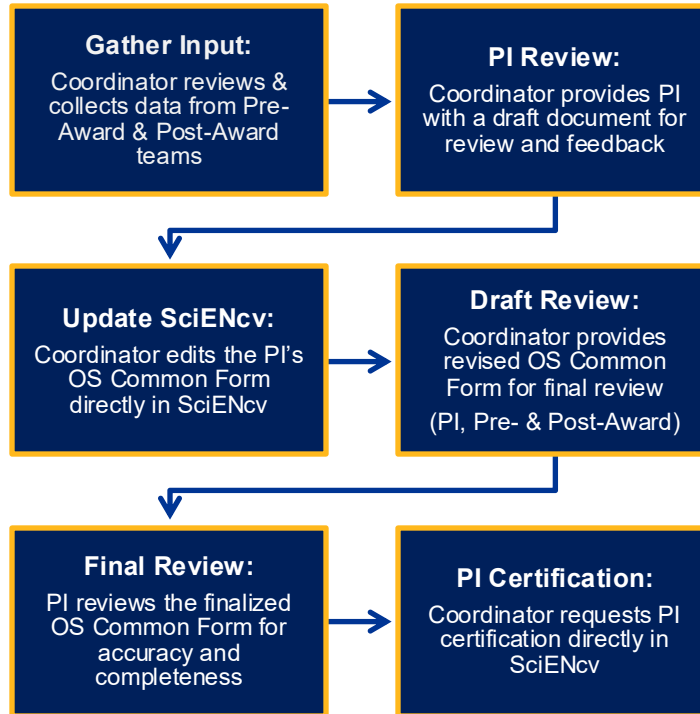
Administrative Team

Support Document Gathering

- Prompts Pre- and Post- to Start Process
- Responsibilities and Expectations
- Deadlines

Other Support Review

Managed by HCC Coordinator (Research Support Services)



Pre-Award + Post-Award = Impact

Standardized tools and processes mean less guesswork and smoother handoffs.
When Pre-Award and Post-Award work from a shared framework, the result is greater efficiency -
and **greater impact!**

- ◆ **Promotes clarity and uniformity** Consistent processes across pre- and post-award teams mean everyone operates from the same playbook.
- ◆ **Ensures compliance** Meets NIH and institutional requirements by reducing variation that leads to errors or gaps.
- ◆ **Reduces processing time** Eliminates redundant questions and back-and-forth by establishing clear expectations up front.
- ◆ **Accelerates onboarding** Helps new staff learn processes more quickly with documented, repeatable workflows.
- ◆ **Enables smoother handoffs** Supports seamless transitions between pre- and post-award teams at every stage of the award lifecycle.



Questions?

We're here to help — reach out anytime!



HCCFiscalGrants@upmc.edu

Content editing support from Claude (generative AI).