

# **Proposal Planning & Development for Administrators**

**Research Administration Workshop**

**October 11, 2012**



# Proposal Development & Submission

## The Departmental Perspective

Michelle Grana

- First Steps
- Budget Development & Fiscal Considerations
- Potential Pitfalls

## The OSR Perspective

Jamie Young

- Common Errors and OSR Review



# First Steps

- Communication
- Questions
- Timeline
- Division of Labor



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# First Steps: Communication

## Communicate with Faculty

- Proactively reach out to faculty to query planned submissions
- Gather key info
  - Sponsor, RFA/PA # if NIH, Personnel & Effort
  - Checklists available at multiple sources

## Communicate with OSR

- Notify OSR of your planned submissions



# First Steps: Questions

- Grant vs. Gift
- PI Eligibility
  - University & sponsor requirements
- Other eligibility considerations
  - Effort commitment and restrictions
    - Especially concerning Career Development Awards (K's)
  - Understanding dual appointments
  - Impact of external commitments (VA appointments)



# First Steps: Questions

## Grant vs. Gift

- Grant = Transaction (strings attached)
  - Has deliverables, reporting requirements, performance period
  - Must be routed through OSR. Subject to University policy concerning F&A.
- Gift = No string attached
  - No deliverables or reporting requirements beyond periodic progress reports/summary of expenditures.
  - Irrevocable; work with Development Office



# First Steps: Questions

## PI Eligibility

- University Requirements
  - Faculty (all tracks; full, associate, and assistant professors)
  - Instructors, Adjunct faculty, Emeritus faculty, Librarians, Curators
  - On a case-by-case basis: Visiting faculty, Visiting scholars
  - Research associates may seek approval from the VP for research
  - Postdoctoral fellows and research assistants (graduate students) may not serve as PIs.
- Sponsor Requirements
  - See guidelines



# First Steps: Questions

## Other eligibility considerations

- Current and proposed effort commitment; especially concerning Career Development Awards (K's awards)
- VA appointments/impact
- Cost sharing





# First Steps: Questions

## Effort Commitments & Restrictions on NIH Mentored Career Development (K) awards

Almost all K's require a full-time appointment at the applicant organization and minimum 75% effort commitment to the goals of the career award.

- Because salary recovery is limited to \$75K, may need to cost share
- The effort commitment on a K-award may not be reduced by any amount without sponsor approval
- May reduce to no less than 50% in last 2 years if PI on independent research project grant and/or sub-project director role on multi-component program project/center grant, with prior approval.



# First Steps: Questions

## Effort Commitments & Restrictions on NIH Mentored Career Development (K) awards

A career award recipient meets the required commitment of total professional effort as long as:

- 1) the applicant has a full-time appointment with the applicant organization; and
- 2) the minimum percentage of the candidate's commitment required for the proposed career award is covered by that appointment.



# First Steps: Questions

## Effort Commitments & Restrictions

### ***What does this mean for NU faculty with NMFF appointments?***

- The basis for sponsored project effort commitment is NU and, if applicable, NMFF effort:  $NU + NMFF = 100\%$  effort
- The effort an investigator may commit to sponsored research is typically exclusively from the NU side and may include research, teaching and administrative activities.



# First Steps: Questions

## Effort Commitments & Restrictions

***If an investigator has two days/week clinic (40% NMFF), can s/he commit 75% effort to a K award?***

- S/he will need to reduce their NMFF appointment.
- This has significant fiscal implications for the clinical unit, since this may either reduce the clinical income for a unit and/or these clinical sessions may need to be covered by another physician.



# First Steps: Questions

## Effort Commitments & Restrictions

### ***What about VA (or other) external appointments?***

- If the individual also has a VA appointment, the associated commitment is not included in the full-time NU appointment and may not be used to meet any minimum effort requirement.
  - HOWEVER, the number of eighths of the VA appointment does impact the NIH view of whether an investigator may be considered to have a full-time NU appointment.



# First Steps: Questions

## Effort Commitments & Restrictions

### *For example...*

- An investigator has a full time appointment at a university and a half time appointment with another organization (4/8 VA appt or other half-time independent clinical practice plan). Under NIH policy, the investigator can be supported because the university and candidate can commit at least 75% of the full time appointment to the award.
- Any investigator with 5/8 VA appointment or greater, should contact OSR in advance of K award submission (and possibly in advance of other research support applications if significant effort is committed).



# First Steps: Questions Cost Sharing?

## Types of cost sharing

- Mandatory Cost Sharing/Matching
- **Voluntary Committed Cost Sharing**
  - **Salary Cap Cost Sharing**
- Voluntary Uncommitted Cost Sharing



# First Steps: Questions

## Cost Sharing?

### Salary Cap Cost Sharing

- NIH does not require cost sharing
- Most common type of cost sharing on the Chicago campus is the **NIH statutory cap** and the **salary limitation on NIH career (K) awards**
- This can have a huge impact for clinical units where salaries are in hundreds of thousands
  - DoM requires divisional & dept approvals for proposals that involve salary cap/salary limitation cost sharing





# First Steps: Questions

## Cost Sharing?

- **NIH statutory cap** - the NIH salary cap is a statutory limitation imposed by Congress on any individual's rate of pay directly chargeable to NIH awards.
  - The NIH budget approved December 23, 2011 reduces the salary cap from the Executive Level I federal pay scale (\$199,700) to Executive Level II (\$179,700).
- **K-award salary cap** - varies by institute, but typically limited to only \$75K allowable salary recovery (for min. 75% effort) and typically provides only ~\$20K for research support.



# First Steps: Questions

## Cost Sharing Impact

### Financial Impact

- Redirection of resources
- Forfeit not only the direct cost, but also the associated F&A cost

### F&A Calculation Impact

- The University's total Cost Sharing is included in the F&A rate calculation. This serves to decrease the University's overall F&A rate.

### Administrative/Compliance Impact

- Cost Sharing commitments must be met and tracked for sponsor verification in the University's records.



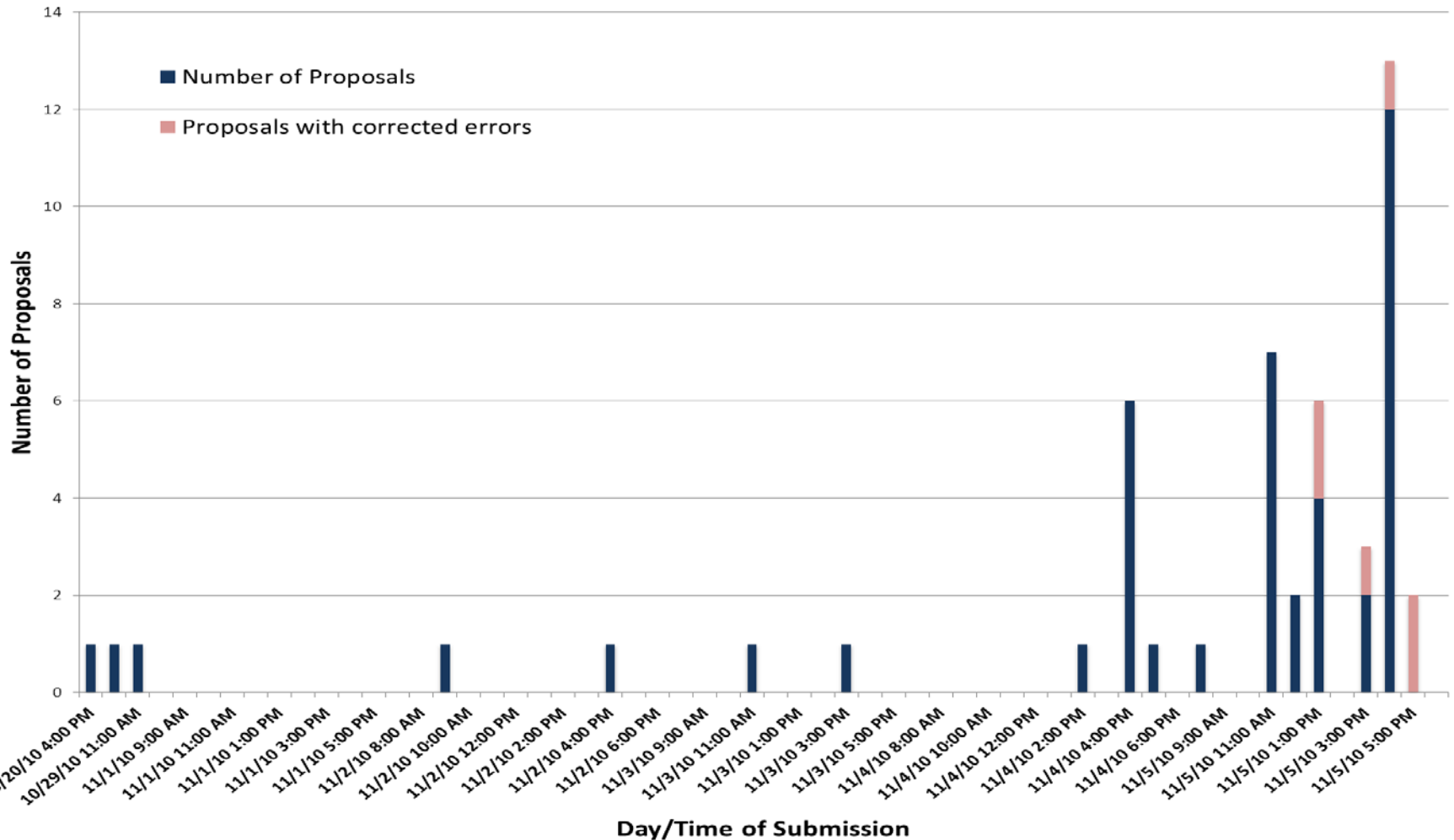
# First Steps: Timeline

- When do I ask my PI's about planned submissions?
- When do I require minimal info for administrative portions?
  - RFA/PA#, list of personnel and % effort, subaward info, project title, etc.
- When is the latest we can make budgetary changes?



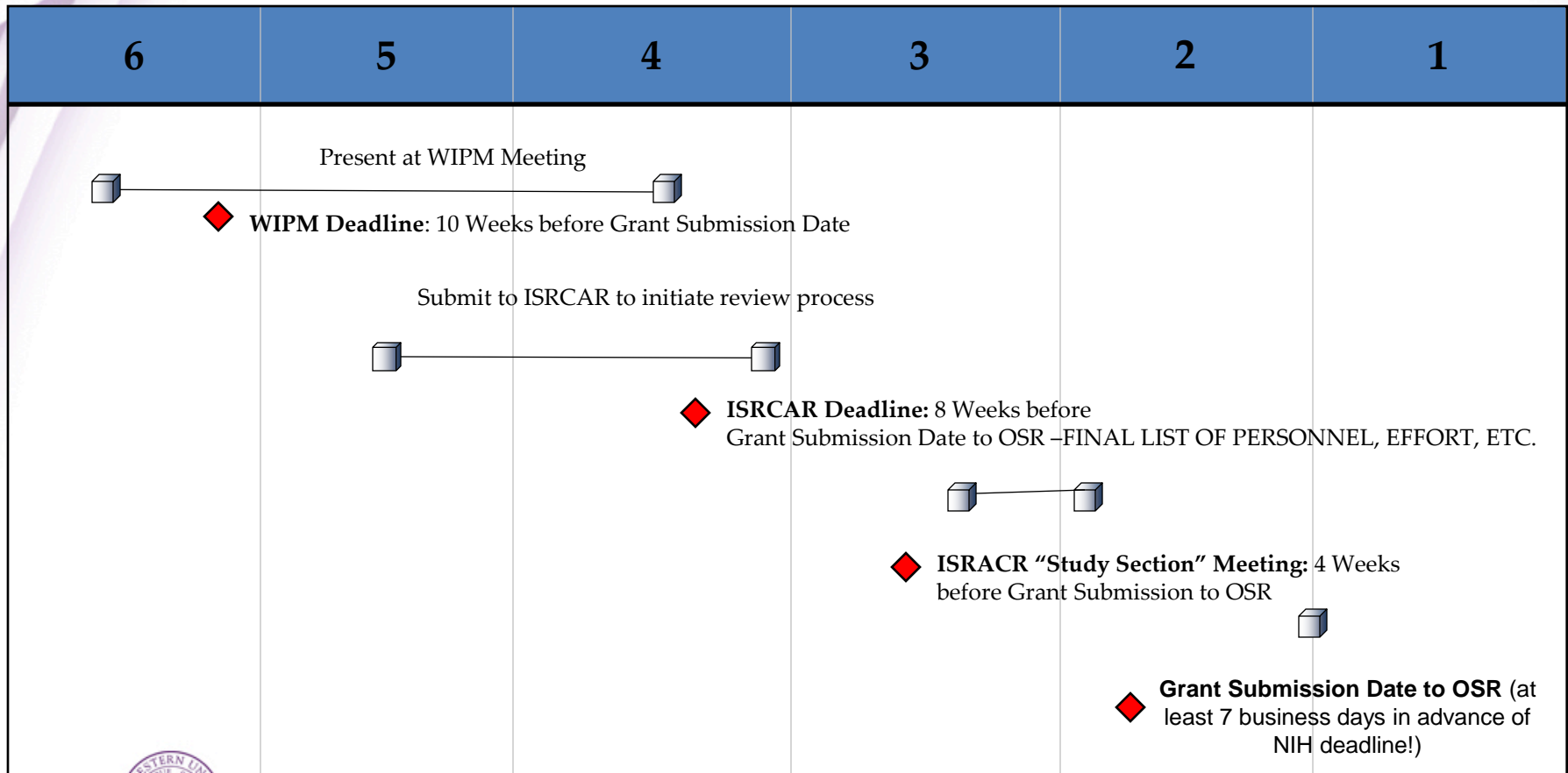
# First Steps: Timeline

## OSR-CH November 5 Deadline: Time of Submission to Grants.gov



# Sample Timeline

## Internal Review Committee



WIPM=Works in Progress and Methods Meeting

ISRCAR=Internal Scientific Review Committee on Aging Research

# First Steps: Understanding the Division of Labor

## Teamwork

### PI Responsibility

- Notify administrator
- Provide required info
  - RFA/PA#
  - Personnel/% Effort
  - Subcontract Info
  - Project Title
  - Aims/Abstract/Draft Methods
- Write the research plan



# First Steps: Understanding the Division of Labor

## Teamwork

### Admin Responsibility

- Prepare OSR forms (InfoEd)
- Prepare budget and justification
- Prepare resources/institutional commitment pages
- Collect, prepare, edit biographical sketches
- Collect, prepare, edit letters of support



# Budget Considerations

## Budget Development

- Budget calculation
- Budget narrative (justification)
- Determining reasonable effort

## Fiscal considerations

- Can it be done?
- Fiscal health of the department
  - Utilization of dept resources
  - F&A recovery; F&A sharing





# Budget Considerations

## Developing the Budget

- Choosing a template (NURAP/OSR websites)
  - Federal
    - SF 424 Regular
    - SF 424 Modular
      - see OSR modular budget tabulator:  
<http://www.research.northwestern.edu/osr/forms.html#NIH>
    - PHS 398
  - Non-Federal
- Completing the budget
- Writing the budget narrative
- Determining reasonable effort



# Budget Development

## Choosing a budget template

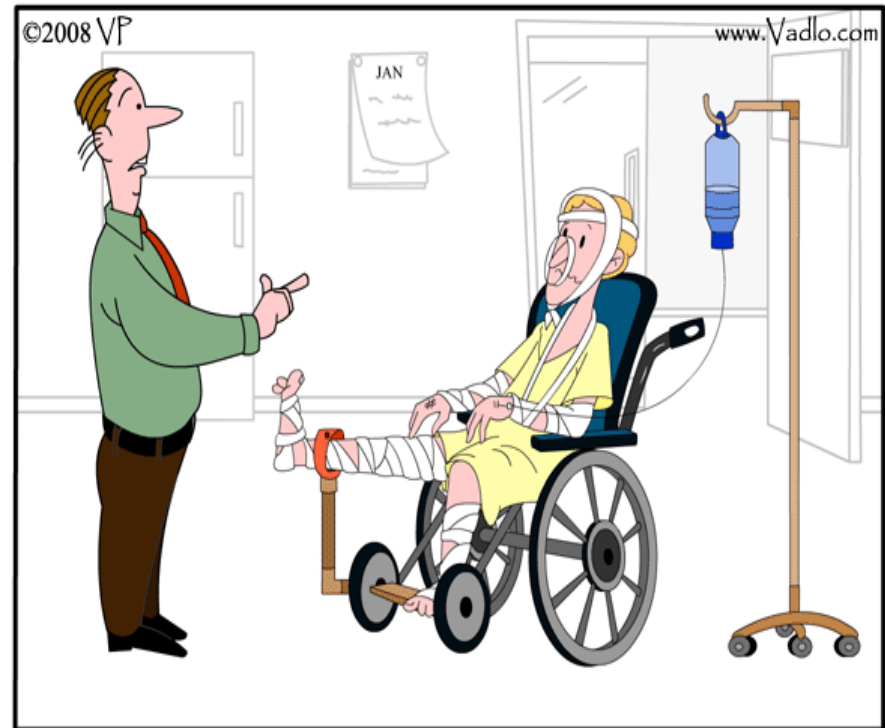
No need to recreate the wheel!

Departmental Resources

- OSR
- Colleagues (NURAP)
- Schools
- Web



NORTHWESTERN  
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*Do you have to take sick leave? We have a grant deadline.*

# Budget Development

## Completing the budget template

### Regular updates to any template

- RFA requirements (such as requirements/ restrictions on max no. years of support, direct costs, salary cap, effort requirements, etc.)
- NIH salary cap
- Fringe benefits

### Other considerations (common mistakes)

- Subcontracts
- Items excluded from F&A calculation
- Math check (always!)



# Budget Development

## SF424 Regular Budget Template

### NIH SF424 REGULAR Budget Worksheet

Project Begin Date:

12/01/12

Project End Date:

11/30/17

Number of years:

5

Personnel Inflation Rate:

3.0%

Non-Personnel Inflation Rate:

0%

NIH Salary Cap:

\$ 179,700

yes

**Please make sure to provide the  
NIH Salary Cap or the Personnel  
Calculations will not work!**

# SEE HANDOUT: SF424 REGULAR NIH BUDGET



# Budget Development

## SF424 Regular Budget Template

### Fringe Benefits Calculation

Budget Period Begins in Fiscal Year:	<b>13</b>
Fringe Rate	25.80%
current budget period months	9.0
next budget period months	3.0
prorated fringe rate/budget period	<b>25.83%</b>

<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>25.90%</b>	<b>26.00%</b>	<b>26.10%</b>	<b>26.10%</b>	<b>26.10%</b>
9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	
3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	
<b>25.93%</b>	<b>26.03%</b>	<b>26.10%</b>	<b>26.10%</b>	



# Budget Development

## SF424 Regular Budget Template

A. SENIOR/KEY PERSONNEL		YEAR 1					
Name	Project Role	YEAR 1: Base Salary	YEAR 1: Cal Months	Year 1: % effort	YEAR 1: Requested Salary	YEAR 1: Fringe Benefits	YEAR 1: Funds Requested
	PD/PI		0.00	0.0%	-	-	-
			0.00	0.0%	-	-	-
			0.00	0.0%	-	-	-
			0.00	0.0%	-	-	-
			0.00	0.0%	-	-	-
			0.00	0.0%	-	-	-
			0.00	0.0%	-	-	-
			0.00	0.0%	-	-	-
			0.00	0.0%	-	-	-
			0.00	0.0%	-	-	-
			0.00	0.0%	-	-	-
SENIOR/KEY PERSONNEL SUBTOTAL					-	-	-

**SEE HANDOUT: SF424  
REGULAR NIH BUDGET**



# Budget Development

## Writing the Budget Narrative

### (Regular NIH Budget)

#### Key Requirements

- Follow general guidelines (SF424) and RFA instructions precisely
- List each line item separately in the order it appears on the budget
- For personnel costs, list name, role, % effort and/or person months (calendar, academic, summer). **Is effort reasonable?**
  - See NIH percent effort/person months conversion chart at OSR website: <http://www.research.northwestern.edu/osr/budget.htm>
- For consultants, list name, organizational affiliation, rate and role. Provide letter of collaboration from each consultant.
- Itemize general non-salary costs (materials and supplies, etc.)

# Budget Development

## Writing the Budget Narrative: (Modular NIH Budget)

### Key Requirements

- Follow general guidelines (SF424) and RFA instructions precisely
- Personnel (including consultants)
- Consortium/Contractual
- Additional justification – provide as needed for unusual items and/or variations in the number of modules requested.





# Fiscal Considerations

## Can it be done?



# Fiscal Considerations

## Can it be done?

Can the work that is promised in the application be accomplished within the proposed budget?

- Does budget match research plan?
- Is the budget reasonable and fully justified?
- Are other resources not included in budget being committed? Do you have approvals, letters of commitment, etc.

Upon award, has the budget been reduced?

- Will award reduction require reduced scope of work?
- Work with OSR and sponsor to determine/negotiate appropriate actions.



# Fiscal considerations

- Utilization of dept resources
- F&A recovery; F&A sharing
- Cost sharing
- Effort commitments/restrictions



# Fiscal considerations: Utilization of dept resources

## - Personnel

- Does the application propose use of current staff? Are they available? What are the implications for their current work?
- If TBN positions are included, is recruitment possible? If there are obstacles, how will you address?

## - Other resources

- Are other departmental resources promised in the application? If so, are these resources available? Do you have necessary approvals from dept chair?



# Fiscal Considerations

## F&A recovery

F&A cost recovery on sponsored projects represents a vital part of the University's operating budget

- NU does not generate a surplus from its research activities.
- F&A costs are recovered at a rate and an amount lower than the University's actual incurred cost of doing research.
- Research infrastructure and administrative personnel are subsidized by the University due to the lack of full recovery from sponsors.



# Other Considerations

## Multi-PIs

- Management Plan
- Review Committee Reaction

## Just-in-Time

- Regulatory Approvals
- Documentation of Training in Protection of Human Subjects
- Other Support
  - Addressing potential overlap
  - Proposal and/or award stage questions



# Other Considerations

## Multiple PI's

- Management Plan
- Review Committee Reaction
  - Adds extra layer of review for qualifications, resources, etc. for multiple PIs as well as review of the management plan
  - Current data demonstrates increasing acceptance, but still less multi-PI applications funded than not



# Other Considerations

## Multiple PI's

### Management Plan

- Not allowed on all applications – check the RFA/PA
- NIH strongly encourages applicants to contact the PO named in RFA/PA at earliest possible date to discuss the appropriateness of the multiple-PD/PI model
- Multi-PI Leadership Plan
  - Roles and areas of responsibility of the named PD/Pis
  - Process for making decisions on scientific direction
  - Allocation of resources
  - Methods for dispute resolution





# Other Considerations

## Other Support

### Addressing potential overlap

- Especially with K's
- Work with OSR to get agency approval

### Proposal and/or award stage questions

- Especially for K's
- Contact OSR to address potential issues



# Other Considerations

## Other Support and Overlap

Overlap, whether scientific, budgetary, or effort commitment is not permitted.

- Budgetary Overlap
- Commitment Overlap
- Scientific Overlap



# Other Considerations

## Other Support and Overlap

### Budgetary Overlap

- duplicate budgetary items (e.g., equipment, salary) are requested in an application but are already provided for by another source

### Commitment Overlap

- effort commitment exceeds 100 percent or 12 person months, whether or not salary support is requested in the application



# Other Considerations

## Other Support and Overlap

### Scientific Overlap

- substantially the same research is proposed in more than one application/submitted to multiple funding sources
- a specific research objective and the research design for accomplishing that objective are the same or closely related multiple applications or awards, regardless of the funding source
- potential scientific overlap is to be addressed by the **SRG** **only** by its identification in an Administrative Note in the Summary Statement



# Other Considerations

## Other Support and Overlap

### Resolution of Overlap

- Resolution of overlap occurs at the time of award in conjunction with applicant institution officials, the PD/PI, and awarding agency staff.
- Work with **OSR** at PROPOSAL stage and at AWARD stage

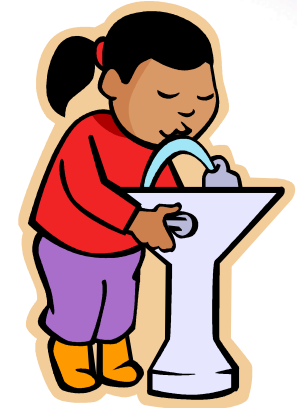


# General Advice

- Work closely with PI and OSR on proposal preparation (start early, submit early!)
- Ask relevant questions for budgeting and larger fiscal considerations (F&A, cost sharing, effort commitments)
  - Utilize available resources (OSR) for budget process
- Work with OSR to resolve questions/ address concerns



# Break/Questions?



# Proposal Planning & Development: OSR Perspective

## Communicate with OSR

- Notify OSR of your PIs' planned submissions
  - Proposal Deadline, Sponsor, RFA/RFP/Specific Guidelines
- Ask questions
  - OSR staff are friendly people and a valuable resource to you
  - We know (almost) everything about sponsored projects
  - We want to aid in the successful submission of every proposal

We love to hear from you!





# Proposal Planning & Development: OSR Perspective

A successful research administrator  
is one who works closely with OSR



# OSR can provide the highest level of service...

- When contacted early in the process
- When alerted to any potential issues
- When questions are asked early—e.g., is the progress report for a competing renewal application included as part of the 12 page research strategy?
- When provided adequate time for review—submit as complete as possible, as early as possible



# How to Minimize Unexpected Problems

- Review sponsor's general proposal guidelines and if applicable their award policies
- If in response to an RFA, PA or RFP, carefully read the specific announcement for any unique requirements and then address
- Notify OSR of any unusual sponsor requirements—If you contacted the sponsor to find out an answer to a specific question, forward that communication to OSR
- Plan ahead



# How to Minimize Unexpected Problems

- OSR closes at 5 p.m., regardless of any later sponsor-allowed deadline time
  - Proposals must be received by OSR in time to submit the proposal by 5 p.m. of the due date even when the sponsor deadline is later than 5 p.m.
  - OSR is not open on the weekend either!
- Be available
  - It is critically important that once your proposal has been submitted to OSR, you are readily available to respond to questions from OSR



# First Steps: Timeline

## Common Errors Reported by NIH

From OER website:

[http://grants.nih.gov/grants/ElectronicReceipt/avoiding\\_errors.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/ElectronicReceipt/avoiding_errors.htm)

- DUNS number on the SF424 (R&R) doesn't match registration
- Wrong Type of Submission (box #1), Federal Identifier (box #4), and Type of Application (box #8) information on the SF424 (R&R) cover form
- Did not include eRA Commons ID in the Credential field of the R&R Sr/Key Person Profile form for all PD/PIs
- For Multiple-PD/PI applications, did not include the PD/PI role on the Sr/Key Person Profile form for all PIs



# First Steps: Timeline

## NIH Common Errors (Con't)

- Did not include Organization name for all Sr/Key Personnel
- Missing required attachments; attachments not in PDF format
- Exceeded page limits specified in the FOA and application guide
- Effort must be > 0 for all Sr/Key listed on the R&R Budget form
- Did not follow special instructions from RFA/PA announcement
- Role of Co-PD/PI not used by NIH (Warning only)
- No degrees submitted for PD/PI (Warning only)



# Common Proposal Errors

- With the use of Infoed PD, many of the types of errors previously seen have become obsolete
- Standard information is hardcoded into PD
- However, with the mandatory use of S2S, OSR has seen new types of errors



# Commons Errors for NU

1. Set up questions filled out incorrectly/adjusting the pre-selected NIH form
2. PDF attachment format issues (has editable fields, file size too big, blank last page, file names use special characters/too long, etc.) Also, .pdf form should not be protected.
3. Inconsistencies between the budgets and justification
4. Use of PI role with non-MPI proposals





# Discussion Points

## SAMPLE QUESTION:

One of my Investigator submitted a proposal with the [FILL IN THE BLANK]\* and lo and behold the project was funded with a 10/01 start date.

However, the proposal didn't go through my office, nor OSR. What does OSR need to process this award?

***P.S. The PI is really anxious to get started and we need a chart string ASAP!***



\* Not all sponsors require institutional sign off, but per NU policy, all proposals should come through OSR before submission

# Discussion Points

Answer:

1. Complete a PD submission
2. Include the a copy of the final proposal submitted to the sponsor
3. Budget – reviewed to ensure appropriate costs and rates have been included, e.g., FB, F&A, effort for the PI...etc
4. Award letter/notification, with PI signature if required



# Discussion

Questions



Thoughts



Ideas

