Who, What, When, Where, Why?

Improving Communication to expedite awards

Presented by:
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Communicating Effectively with Pls - it can be tricky!

Are we asking the right questions at the right time in the right way?
How Can We Promote Better Communications

- Identify your audience
- Identify their communication style
- Identify ways to build lasting relationships
Communication Tips for Research Administrators

- Write short email messages
- Opt for bulleted points, numbering
- Always ask for clarification when the response is unclear... *are you reaching out to the right person*
- Be concise
- Ask for background information.... *Sponsor/PI communications*
- Confirm the agreed upon timeline for each activity
- End conversation/email with options that will lead to action
- Don’t fail to communicate
Formula for Successful Communications

- **Explain:**
  - Why you need the information
  - Summarize the action needed

- **Expedite:**
  - Give timelines for needed information
  - Follow up, follow up, follow up
    - even if to say still working on it, if you needed to respond
    - Send friendly reminders

- **Empathize:**
  - Acknowledge busy schedules
  - Be kind....*assume positive intent*
Developing a Proposal

The importance of pre-award planning

- Keep in mind if your proposal is funded, it becomes a contract with the funding agency.

- Make sure it includes:
  - Well defined SOW...even sub-recipients should provide well defined SOW!
  - Clear and concise deliverables and time lines
  - Well define period of performance
  - Payment schedule
Recognize and Address Potential Road Blocks:

- What is the Performance Period and will it need to be revised at the award stage
  - Is there enough time to negotiate the award agreement
  - What happens if it doesn’t start on time
  - If pushed back, will deliverables be revised

- What kind of award is it
  - Fixed or Cost Reimbursable
    - If fixed, how will payments be structured?
      - Based on deliverables or based on time period
      - Is sponsor prepared to make an upfront payment?
    - If cost-reimbursement, is it straight CR or is it CR with invoicing as deliverables are completed?

- When will the work take place
  - Multi-year award... what happens to unspent funds
Recap: Tips for Proposal Preparation

- What is the performance period
- What kind of award will this be
- When will the work take place
- Who is writing the SOW
- How will the project be implemented
Tricky Situations:

Example #1: **Sponsor Switcharoo**.....Delay in execution due to type of award

- **Period of performance not well defined**
  - Gap in period
  - Phase I/Phase II

- **Missing prime award documents**
  - Flow-down terms were needed
  - Two separate awards for each phase discovered

- **Sponsor inexperienced with Federal Contract Management**
  - Communicated via phone for follow up details & explanation
Example #2: The Great Escape...Sponsor failed to pay after work was performed:

- **Purchase order-** several T&Cs objectionable
  - Indemnification, publication and IP restrictions
  - Sponsor agreed to send to legal for review...despite numerous follow-up requests, sponsor never responds

- **Period of performance had expired before award was negotiated & executed**
  - Sponsor requested invoice
    - Work completed...no IP, publications or risk of indemnification
  - Sponsor declines to pay; addendum never executed
Tricky Situations Cont.

Example #3: Now you see it, now you don’t...detailed payment schedule missing

- No clear cut way to invoice
  - Deliverables overlapped
  - Truly cost reimbursable or fixed
- Period of performance (PoP) was unclear
  - SOW was for 3 years
  - Contract PoP 26 months
- Total award amount misleading
  - Up to 25K annually for 3 years
  - Year one only 2 months
Planning Matters...
Not all questions can be answered at proposal stage

Managing unresolved issues:

- Make notes to the file of any concerns so they don’t fall through the crack at award stage
- When reviewing RFP, flag any T&C references or unusual grant management requirements
- If sponsor requires acceptance of T&Cs at proposal stage, include a cover letter stating you reserve the right to negotiate at time of award
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