A: OSP helps PIs manage sponsored projects by:
- Acting as the liaison with the sponsor for award modifications
- Notifying the PI if the account goes into deficit
- Preparing and submitting all invoices and financial reports to the sponsor
- Billing the sponsor to ensure that cash is received in a timely fashion or meets the sponsor’s payment plan
- Working with the fund manager to reconcile discrepancies identified in the monthly financial reports
- Preparing award close-out documents, closing out the project financially and administratively, and verifying that the PI has submitted sponsor required reports.

Indirect Cost Rates

Q: Where do indirect cost rates come from?

A: OSP uses Federal regulations to calculate and negotiate annual indirect cost rates with the Office of Naval Research. OSP then monitors the use and application of indirect cost rates in compliance with the OMB Circular A-122 — Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations. For the current rates, see OSP’s website.

Audit Liaison

Q: Who is responsible for taking care of audit issues?

A: OSP. As the Smithsonian’s liaison with federal auditors, OSP staff coordinate all audits of grants and contracts initiated by government auditors, external auditing firms, sponsors, and the Office of the Inspector General. OSP also coordinates the audits of projected and actual direct and indirect costs in compliance with grant/contract requirements.

PIs are advised of their responsibility to retain all relevant project documentation for three years, following project completion, in case of an audit.

Additional Resources

Training Opportunities

OSP offers periodic training workshops for Smithsonian staff on a wide variety of relevant topics. Contact OSP for details on scheduling and locations. On-site training is offered on request.

The Principal Investigators’ Guide

OSP has prepared the Principal Investigators Guide that gives detailed information on each of the services described in this brochure. This guide includes Smithsonian policies and procedures, as well as examples of standardized forms and checklists. Contact OSP for a copy or download it from OSP’s website.

For Further Information contact:

Smithsonian Institution
Office of Sponsored Projects
P.O. Box 37012
MRC 1205
Washington, DC 20013-7012

Phone: (202) 633-7110
Fax: (202) 633-7119
E-mail: OSPMAIL@OSP.SI.EDU
Website: http://prism.si.edu/osp/index.htm
Proposal Development and Budget Preparation

Q: How can OSP help me write a winning proposal and develop a project budget to be submitted to an external sponsor?

A: OSP offers workshops on proposal writing and budgeting. Please call us at 275-0840, or visit OSP’s website for class schedules and additional information. OSP offers Principal Investigators (PIs) individualized guidance developing proposal business and administrative plans. OSP helps PIs develop proposal budgets that accurately reflect project direct and indirect expenses, and comply with sponsor guidelines and Smithsonian regulations.

Q: How can OSP help me identify a potential sponsor for my proposal?

A: OSP does the following:

- Subscribes to a computerized database of more than 6,000 funding programs. Access and use of this database is available to SI staff at no charge via OSP’s website
- Offers workshops on how to locate funding information
- Monitors a variety of publications describing different funding programs
- Sends PIs relevant funding information if PIs advise them of their current project funding needs
- Posts funding opportunities in the SI’s Blue Bulletin and on OSP’s website
- Maintains a library of potential funding programs

Q: I have drafted a proposal and identified a potential sponsor. How can OSP help me obtain institutional approval and send my proposal out?

A: OSP prepares a Proposal Brief Form to streamline the internal approval process and assists with obtaining required signatures. Smithsonian policy requires that requests for external support be reviewed and approved before submission to the sponsor. The Director of OSP has delegated authority from the Secretary to sign sponsored project proposals.

In addition, OSP helps PIs by interpreting sponsor program guidelines, reviews proposals for completeness and proper assembly, and will submit the proposal to the sponsor on the PIs behalf upon request.

Institutional Compliance

Q: What is OSP’s role in ensuring that I comply with institutional, sponsor, and Federal guidelines?

A: OSP can help you in several ways by:

- Obtaining review and approval of proposals that include the use of animals, human subjects, hazardous wastes, radioactive materials, and recombinant DNA
- Aiding the PI in obtaining proper review of proposals with international collaboration or sensitive contracting issues
- Informing PIs about sponsor-required assurances, including the federal regulations on drug-free workplace, debarment or suspension, non-delinquency of federal debt, and scientific misconduct
- Maintaining the file of record documenting Smithsonian’s compliance with audit requirements and sponsor regulations (both federal and private).

Negotiating and Accepting an Award

Q: Who negotiates the terms and conditions of my award, and who signs for the Institution?

A: OSP does both. OSP negotiates award terms that are in the best interests of the PI and the institution. The Director of OSP is delegated the authority by the Secretary to sign all sponsored project award documents.

Establishing an Account

Q: Once the award is signed, when can I begin spending on my project?

A: Immediately, upon receipt of the award document. OSP sets up a PeopleSoft designated code and establishes spending authority and the budget for your project.

Financial Management of Your Project

Q: How do I access the accounting system and monitor the financial aspects of my projects?

A: Through your fund manager. It is the responsibility of the PI to identify an individual in his/her unit to take care of project accounting, usually referred to as the “fund manager.”

Q: How does OSP help me during the life of my project?