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Office of Sponsored Projects

Vision Statement

The vision of the Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP) is to be the finest sponsored project administration office as viewed by the Smithsonian community, external sponsors and OSP staff. OSP’s philosophy is to foster proposal development for research, education and exhibitions throughout the Smithsonian; promote and sustain sound business practices; and provide the highest quality of administrative management and financial services to support the Smithsonian Institution's mission. OSP encourages an office community of staff having professional and cultural diversity.

Further Inquiries

If you would like to be placed on the mailing list or would like further information on funding opportunities, application procedures, or other services provided by the Office, please contact us at:

Telephone: (202) 633-7110
Fax: (202) 633-7119
E-mail: OSPMAIL@OSP.SI.EDU
Mailing Address: PO Box 37012
MRC 1205
Washington, D.C. 20013
Training Opportunities

The staff of the Office of Sponsored Projects regularly offer the following training workshops:

● Grant Writing
● Finding Funding Sources
● Preparing a Grant Budget
● Proposal Submission to External Sponsors
● Is it a Gift or is it a Grant?
● Cost Sharing Principles
● Financial Compliance and Audit

Some of these courses can be held on site at SI museums and research institutes to accommodate SI staff.

Contact the Office of Sponsored Projects at (202) 633-7110 for details on scheduling and locations.

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Overview of the Office of Sponsored Projects

The Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP) has five goals:

- To provide high quality services that satisfy all Principal Investigators and museum/institute/office support staff
- To facilitate the increase of the sponsored project base, unrestricted income and indirect cost recovery
- To keep Smithsonian research stakeholders informed and advocate for their interests
- To foster an environment of accountability and compliance, reduce risks, and decrease the possibility of negative audit findings
- To encourage and maintain a nurturing environment for all staff

DCAA Audit Liaison

As the Smithsonian’s liaison with external federal auditors, OSP staff provide the following services:

- Coordinate all audits of grant and contract financial management initiated by government auditors, external auditing firms, sponsors, and Office of the Inspector General
- Coordinate annually the audits of projected and actual indirect cost and other cost rate submissions

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. It is available to all Smithsonian staff and those with research appointments.
Indirect Cost Calculation and Negotiation

OSP staff provide the following services:

- Prepare the annual calculation of the indirect cost and other rates and negotiate the rates with the Office of Naval Research, the Smithsonian’s cognizant audit agency
- Monitor and analyze indirect expenses
- Maintain an indirect cost internal control program in compliance with OMB Circular A-122 cost principles
- Ensure that staff responsible for managing administrative allotment funds receive proper training
- Provide periodic training in non-recoverable costs and indirect cost methodologies

Identification of External Sources of Funding

OSP has developed a system to identify sources of external funding appropriate for the Smithsonian Institution. To identify these opportunities, OSP staff:

- Monitor a variety of newsletters and publications describing federal and private funding programs
- Maintain current guidelines and application information for hundreds of federal and private programs
- Subscribe to a computerized database of more than 6,000 funding programs
- Maintain a library of reference and instructional materials related to external funding
Dissemination of External Funding Information

OSP gathers and distributes grant-related information to individual researchers, museums, research institutes and offices. To do this, OSP staff:

- Identify researchers’ interests
- Match researchers’ interests with potential funding sources
- Provide researchers with updated information from sponsors
- Disseminate information through e-mails to researchers, the Blue Bulletin, and OSP’s website.

Post Award Financial Management of Externally Funded Projects

Following award notification, OSP’s financial accounting staff:

- Prepare and submit all invoices to the sponsor
- Ensure that all cash is received from the sponsor in a timely fashion
- Prepare and submit all financial reports required by the sponsor
- Provide assistance in interpreting the monthly financial report from PeopleSoft
- Assist in correcting discrepancies that may appear on monthly reports
- Finalize all budget transfers after sponsor approval
- Notify the Principal Investigator when funds go into deficit
- Assist in preparing award close-out documents
- Close out the project financially in a timely manner at the end of the grant or contract
Post Award Administration of Externally Funded Projects

Following award notification, the OSP staff:

- Establish a budget and fund account number for the project
- Assist the Principal Investigator and administrative staff in the orderly administration of the project
- Obtain the sponsor’s approval for changes proposed by the Principal Investigator
- Act as liaison between sponsor and Principal Investigator regarding modifications of funded projects
- Hold periodic seminars and workshops for Principal Investigators and fund managers

Liaison with Sponsors

OSP staff serve as liaison with federal and non-federal sponsors. In this capacity, they:

- Monitor program priorities and funding levels
- Observe trends in federal programs
- Monitor proposals that have been submitted and attempt to expedite their review
- Arrange for sponsors to visit the Smithsonian to discuss their funding programs
- Participate in site visits by sponsors
Proposal Development and Preparation

To support the research effort at the Smithsonian, OSP staff:

● Help to develop the business and administrative plans for pre-proposals

● Consult with Principal Investigators on proposal drafts

● Review proposal and standard forms for completeness and proper assembly

● Interpret program guidelines and regulations

● Present periodic programs on grant seeking

● Discuss reviews of unfunded proposals with Principal Investigators to assist in resubmission or in locating alternative sources of funding

Grant and Contract Negotiation and Signature

OSP is authorized to and responsible for negotiating the terms of awards with potential sponsors. Some of the more routine terms include:

● Budgets and financial plans

● Publication rights

● Indemnification

● Patents and copyrights

● Licensing and royalties
Proposal Transmittal

When the proper authorization and compliance have been secured, OSP’s staff can assist you in:

- Making the necessary copies
- Mailing the proposal to the sponsor
- Coordinating submission of revised or supplemental information
- Maintaining files for tracking submissions

Budget Preparation

To speed the review process, OSP staff encourage investigators to contact this office early for assistance in developing budgets. OSP staff:

- Provide expertise in developing and reviewing budget drafts that accurately reflect the projects’ direct and indirect expenses
- Ensure that proposal budgets comply with the Smithsonian regulations, and meet sponsor guidelines
- Keep updated sponsor-specific budget forms on file
Institutional and Sponsor Compliance

Smithsonian policy requires that appropriate Smithsonian compliance committees and offices review all proposed research projects involving activities subject to federal and local regulations.

To expedite this review process, OSP:

- Assists investigators in obtaining proper review of proposals that include the use of animals, human subjects, hazardous wastes, radioactive materials, recombinant DNA
- Assists investigators in obtaining proper review of proposals with international collaboration or sensitive contracting issues
- Informs investigators about necessary assurances, including the federal regulations on drug-free workplace, debarment or suspension, non-delinquency of federal debt, and scientific misconduct
- Maintains documents of the Smithsonian’s compliance with federal and local regulations

Institutional Authorization and Signature

Smithsonian policy requires that requests for external support be reviewed and approved before submission to the sponsor. OSP is the central office for the institutional review of sponsored projects. The Director of OSP has been delegated by the Secretary the authority to sign sponsored project proposals.

OSP obtains appropriate signatures from the following prior to granting institutional approval:

- Principal Investigator (to signify his/her agreement to fulfill the project as proposed)
- Supervisor (to signify his/her approval that the Principal Investigator can fulfill the project as proposed)
- Department Chair (if applicable)
- Museum, Research Institute or Office Director (to signify his/her approval that the project fits the goals of the museum, research institute, or office)