3/20/20 | 4:30 pm: Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP)

Summary of Updates from our Extramural Funding Sponsors

The Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) continues to remain fully operational.  OSP is actively monitoring the release of information from our extramural funding sponsors related to the impact of COVID-19, and would like to provide the following updates, both agency-specific and in general terms.

**National Institutes of Health (NIH):**

The NIH has issued a number of important guide notices, including:

* [Late Application Policy due to Public Health Emergency (NOT-OD-20-082)](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-20-082.html)
* [General Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), Proposal Submission and Award Management related to COVID-19 (NOT-OD-20-083)](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-20-083.html)
* [Flexibilities Allowable to Applicants and Award Recipients affected by COVID-19 (NOT-OD-20-086)](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-20-086.html)
* [Guidance for NIH-funded Clinical Trials and Human Subject Studies (NOT-OD-20-087)](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-20-087.html)
* [Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): COVID-19 Flexibilities for Applicants and Recipients](https://grants.nih.gov/faqs#/covid-19.htm)

Some key points from NIH’s Notices and FAQs include:

1)  NIH will consider acceptance of late grant applications **on a case-by-case basis** for delays resulting from an applicant organization’s official closure due to natural disaster or other emergency, or because designated PD/PI(s) or other key staff is/are quarantined or involuntarily unable to come to their work locations.  In such cases, recipients must submit as soon as possible after reopening or end-of-quarantine, not to exceed the number of days the institution was officially closed or the key staff including but not limited to the PD/PI was quarantined.  A cover letter will be required with the application, providing enough detail about the delay so that NIH staff can make a determination whether circumstances justify accepting the application late.  Applicants should not request, and NIH will not grant, advance permission to submit late.

2)  If you are unable to complete your Research Progress Performance Reports (RPPRs) by the scheduled deadline due to the effects of COVID-19, please notify your OSP contact (<http://research.uthscsa.edu/osp/staff.shtml>).  NIH will accept these late reports, but will delay issuing grant awards until the reports are received and accepted by the appropriate Institute or Center (IC).

3)  Our institution has some discretion to carry forward unobligated balances on those active NIH grants that do not typically allow for automatic carryover (i.e. those not awarded under Streamlined Non-competing Application Process, or non-SNAP awards), for immediate efforts to support activities related to or affected by COVID-19.  In such cases, charges must be allowable costs and within the scope of the original award.  Please contact your OSP post-award administrator to discuss further, as needed.

4)  Investigators with active NIH non-SNAP grant projects that have been affected by COVID-19 may be granted a one-time no-cost extension of up to 12 months without requesting prior approval.  This provision does not apply to grants which have already received a no-cost extension.  Please contact your OSP post-award administrator to request an extension, if needed.

***It should be noted that, to date, UT Health San Antonio has not officially closed.  While some operations have understandably been disrupted, our work should carry on to the extent that is reasonably possible even under these circumstances.  As such, OSP would like to caution investigators that the flexibilities offered by NIH (and all sponsors) should not be regarded as “automatic”; rather, we must exercise good judgment and prudent practices.  The OSP staff is prepared to assist affected investigators in navigating their specific circumstances; please be prepared to provide additional documentation or information to OSP staff if needed when requesting special considerations, as this may still be required in order for us to implement such allowances on our awards.***

**Department of Defense (DOD):**

The United States Army Medical Research Acquisition Activity (USAMRAA), which is the source of the majority of our institution’s DOD funding, has released a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) related to COVID-19 document, available at <https://www.usamraa.army.mil/Shared%20Documents/COVID-19%20FAQs%20-%20USAMRAA_CLEAN.pdf>.  This document will be updated by USAMRAA as needed.

**Cancer Prevention & Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT):**

CPRIT is in process of disseminating guidance regarding COVID-19 impacts on awards, including frequently asked questions.  We will pass along information once available.

**Other Sponsors/General Guidance:**

* Many other sponsors are echoing similar guidance as NIH and other major federal funding agencies – acknowledgement that “business as usual” might not be possible during this time and that certain flexibilities or additional allowances will be extended, as it relates to application submissions and management of current awards.
* Most sponsors will defer to standard institutional policies and procedures with regard to the allowability of expenses that could not have been anticipated and/or are the result of natural disaster or other emergency, and UT Health San Antonio has policies in place that speak to these topics, as detailed in the Handbook of Operating Procedures (<https://uthscsa.edu/hop2000/>).
* Sponsors that are issuing guidance/information about the impact of COVID-19 are generally posting guidance on their websites, usually prominently displayed on the home page and easily located through a quick internet search of the funder’s name.  If you have questions about a specific funder, a visit to their website will likely lead you to answers to the most common questions.
* The **Council on Governmental Relations (COGR)**, of which UT Health San Antonio is a member institution, continues to actively compile guidance and resources related to COVI-19 from federal agencies as well as associated institutions and medical centers, and we encourage you to visit this site for up-to-date information at <https://www.cogr.edu/institutional-and-agency-responses-covid-19-and-additional-resources>.
* We urge you to also maintain awareness of institution-wide information available through the UT Health San Antonio Coronavirus Updates website at <https://www.uthscsa.edu/notices/coronavirus-update>.

**Funding Opportunities Related to COVID-19:**

Not surprisingly, we are also beginning to see announcements related to funding available for the study of COVID-19 and related topics.  This is an ever-changing list and we encourage interested researchers to utilize their normal resources and processes to seek out such opportunities, but we will also watch for such opportunities and pass along such information via our listserv.  Currently, we are aware of the following opportunities:

* NIAID and NIGMS: [Notice of Special Interest (NOSI) Regarding the Availability of Urgent Competitive Revisions for Research on the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) (NOT-AI-20-030)](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-AI-20-030.html), NIAID is particularly interested in projects focusing on viral natural history, pathogenicity, transmission, as well as projects developing medical countermeasures and suitable animal models for pre-clinical testing of vaccines and therapeutics against 2019-nCoV. NIGMS is specifically interested in incorporation of data from the 2019-nCoV into ongoing research efforts to develop predictive models for the spread of Coronaviruses and related pathogens.  Deadline: 02/06/2021.
* NIAID: [Partnerships for Countermeasures against Select Pathogens (R01 Clinical Trials Not Allowed)](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-AI-20-028.html).  This initiative will support development of new or improved therapeutics for emerging viral pathogens of public health concern. Note that this FOA will support development of a candidate therapeutic against severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), the virus that causes COVID-19. Deadline: 06/29/2020.
* NHLBI: [Notice of Special Interest (NOSI): Availability of Administrative Supplements and Revision Supplements on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) (NOT-HL-20-757)](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-HL-20-757.html)
Topics of specific interest to NHLBI include host response, associations with heart, lung, and blood diseases, potential impacts on transfusion safety, and clinical outcomes of infected individuals. Deadline 10/05/2020.
* NIDA: [Notice of Special Interest (NOSI) regarding the Availability of Administrative Supplements and Urgent Competitive Revisions for Research on the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (NOT-DA-20-047)](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-DA-20-047.html).  NIDA is especially interested in research collecting and examining data on the risks and outcomes for COVID-19 infection in individuals suffering from substance use disorders.  Deadline: 03/31/2021
* CDC [Centers for Disease Control COVID-19 Broad Agency Announcement](https://beta.sam.gov/opp/728e1131ef444abc880f63540a37c364/view?keywords=75D301-20-R-67897&sort=-relevance&index=opp&is_active=true&page=1) (released 03/11/2020)
* The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services updated a broad agency announcement (BAA) on March 6, 2020 to focus specifically on products to diagnose, prevent or treat coronavirus infections. The Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) issued the BAA to solicit proposals for advanced development and licensure of COVID-19 diagnostics, vaccines or medicines, such as therapeutics or antivirals. BARDA will provide funding, as well as expertise and core services to support development projects selected through this BAA. These products include diagnostic tests (assays); vaccines; therapeutics; medications to help regulate or normalize the immune system (immunomodulators); therapeutics targeting lung repair; medicines that prevent infections either before or after exposure to the virus (pre-exposure or post-exposure prophylaxis); respiratory protective devices; and ventilators.  Additional information is available at <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2020/03/06/hhs-solicits-proposals-for-development-of-medical-products-for-novel-coronavirus.html>.
* The National Science Foundation, as of March 5, 2020, is funding 20 research projects across the agency involving COVID-19. In response to the urgency of COVID-19 and increasing inquiries from the research community, NSF issued a letter to researchers inviting additional proposals for rapid response grants related to the virus. This letter welcomes research to help understand COVID-19, inform and educate the public about virus transmission and prevention, and develop effective strategies for addressing this challenge at the local, state and national levels. Support for these efforts is made through NSF’s Rapid Response Research (RAPID) funding mechanism, which enables the agency to swiftly process and support research that addresses an urgent need.  Additional information is available at <https://nsfgov.home.blog/2020/03/05/nsf-supporting-research-to-address-coronavirus-disease/>.
* The Department of Energy (DoE) is soliciting ideas about how the department and the National Laboratories can contribute resources for science and technology efforts around COVID-19.  From the DoE:

*Through its user facilities, computational power and enabling infrastructure, DoE has unique capabilities that the scientific community may leverage for the COVID-19 response and recovery. DoE does not provide medical and clinical work; instead, the department's mission complements the efforts of the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Defense and other federal partners by helping to understand the scientific phenomena contributing to COVID-19, from the structure of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which causes the disease, to models that can mimic its spread. The department encourages researchers to consider scientific questions that underpin COVID-19 response and that the research community may answer using DoE user facilities, computational resources and enabling infrastructure. Any research questions that the scientific community may address with DoE resources can be emailed to**SC.DCL@science.doe.gov**.*

OSP plans to provide an update each week on Friday regarding COVID-19 as it relates to sponsored awards, or more frequently if the need arises.  For questions, please contact OSP.  A complete listing of OSP staff and their general areas of responsibility can be found at <http://research.uthscsa.edu/osp/staff.shtml>.  For more specific staff assignments:

* Proposal matters: <http://research.uthscsa.edu/osp/forms/ProposalAssignments.xls>
* Post-award matters on existing awards: <http://research.uthscsa.edu/osp/forms/PostAwdAssignments.xls>
* Industry-sponsored and other contracts/agreements: <http://research.uthscsa.edu/osp/forms/contractstaff.xls>

You may also email grants@uthscsa.edu for general inquiries/guidance, or if you are unsure of your specific OSP staff contact.

Thank you all for your continued efforts during this difficult period.

Stay safe,

Chris

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