DEPARTMENT OF CONTRACTS AND GRANTS SERVICE COMMITMENT

The Department of Contracts and Grants (DCG) supports USC's investigators from proposal development to award closeout, ensuring that our grants and contracts are consistent with university standards for academic freedom, research ethics and fiscal responsibility.

The Department of Contracts and Grants:

- Reviews, approves and submits proposals to extramural sponsors;
- Negotiates and accepts awards on behalf of the University;
- Executes subcontracts;
- Coordinates pre-award and post-award actions;
- Develops and maintains positive sponsor relationships;
- Ensures institutional compliance with federal and state regulations, sponsor policy and University policy.

1. Support for Proposal Review

DCG is committed to supporting USC investigators by assuring timely review and submission of complete and accurate proposals that have the best chance possible of success in the sponsor review process. To succeed in this goal, DCG offers an enhanced review for proposals ready for submission three business days in advance of the sponsor's deadline.

Proposals Received Three Business Days in Advance: Enhanced Review

For proposals where (1) All Kuali Coeus (KC) approvals are in place and (2) the proposal is final and ready for submission at least three business days in advance of the sponsor's deadline or the USC Deadline, if earlier, the Principal Investigator may request the Enhanced Review. The Enhanced Review will include:

Comprehensive proposal review in comparison to the sponsors' guidelines, including:
- Font type and size;
- Margins;
- Page limits for sections and proposal;
- Completeness for inclusion of all required sections;
- Non-technical review of proposal for grammatical and spelling errors

Institutional Information:
- Verify institutional information (e.g., DUNS, contact information, etc.);
- Check and clear errors generated by Grants.gov and/or Sponsor's proposal submission system;
- Verify completeness and accuracy of KC Proposal eDoc;
- Verify regulatory reviews (e.g., human/animal subjects, conflict of interest).

Budget Review:
- Verify budget calculations, rates and cost-sharing;

- Verify that all costs are categorized correctly and have appropriate justification;
- Verify that there are unallowable costs are not included.

Subawards:
- Verify that we have received a scope of work, budget and budget justification;
- Verify that we have received a subawardee institutional commitment;
- Verify compliance with FCOI, when applicable.

Proposals Received Two Business Days in Advance: **Standard Review**

For proposals where (1) All KC approvals are in place and (2) the proposal is final and ready for submission at least two business days in advance of the sponsor's deadline or the USC Deadline, if earlier, DCG will perform a Standard Review. The Standard Review will include, at a minimum:

Adherence to sponsor proposal solicitation

Institutional Information:
- Verify institutional information (e.g., DUNS, contact information, etc.);
- Check and clear errors generated by Grants.gov and/or Sponsor's proposal submission system;
- Verify completeness and accuracy of KC Proposal eDoc;
- Verify regulatory reviews (e.g., human/animal subjects, conflict of interest).
;
Budget Review:
- Verify budget calculations, rates and cost-sharing
- Verify that all costs are categorized correctly and have appropriate justification;
- Verify that there are unallowable costs are not included.

Subawards:
- Verify that we have received a scope of work, budget and budget justification;
- Verify that we have received a subawardee institutional commitment;
- Verify compliance with FCOI, when applicable.

For Proposals Received Less Than One Business Day in Advance

Due to time constraints, proposals received less than 24 hours (or one business day) in advance of the sponsor's deadline or the USC Deadline, if earlier, will receive a minimum review with the goal to ensure that it is not rejected from the electronic submission vehicle. Unfortunately, proposals received by DCG less than 24 hours in advance risk rejection by sponsors, or potentially late submission.

In the event a proposal is submitted due to time constraints or because the proposal was submitted to the sponsor without going through DCG, DCG will conduct a

Standard Review after submission. DCG will work with the PI and the School to secure any additional approvals and make any additional corrections that are identified after submission.

For all proposals, DCG staff will communicate with the Principal Investigator and his/her research administrator when a proposal will receive less than a Standard Review due to time constraints.

Confirmation of Proposal Submissions

DCG will forward electronic confirmation to the Principal Investigator and his/her research administrator once the proposal is received and accepted by the sponsor.

2. Tips to Facilitate the Proposal Approval Process

The following are some tips to facilitate the proposal approval process:

1. Your proposal should be circulated for approvals within the KC system at least five business days in advance of the proposal deadline. Please allow more time if your proposal requires reviews and approvals by multiple schools, departments, centers or divisions;
2. Include the proposal guidelines and/or solicitation in the KC Proposal so DCG staff can review the proposal along with the solicitation guidelines;
3. Allow time for corrections. Allowing time for corrections helps to ensure the proposal is at its best when it is submitted to the sponsor;
4. Ensure a point of contact is available to make corrections. The Principal Investigator and/or a departmental contact should be available to make corrections until the proposal is ready to submit to the sponsor.

3. Negotiation of Sponsored Research Agreements

Sponsored Research Agreement negotiation timelines vary depending on agreement and sponsor; however, the DCG staff is committed to facilitating and completing negotiations in a professional and timely manner. Once DCG has (1) a complete and correct KC record containing the submitted proposal and Principal Investigator and School approvals and (2) the draft agreement, we are committed to initiating negotiations with the sponsor within five business days.

4. Communication with DCG Staff

DCG staff make every effort to be available to communicate with investigators and research administrators by telephone and email during heavy deadlines. When away from the office for more than 24 hours, staff will provide an out of office message indicating whom to contact during their absence. Staff will otherwise normally respond to inquiries within 24 hours of when they are contacted, and usually much sooner.

In addition, during the negotiation of any sponsored research or non-industry clinical trial agreement, DCG is committed to providing a biweekly status update to the Principal Investigator and department/center research administrator.

5. <u>Additional Resources and Questions</u>

The Department of Contracts and Grants offers a comprehensive online training program developed to meet the needs of today's evolving research environment. The C&G Curriculum is a valuable resource for proposal preparation and award management and ensures an overall standard level of expertise for research administrators working at a program, department or dean's office level.

The Office of Research through the Center of Excellence in Research also offers proposal writing workshops and resources.

In addition, the Grants Management Training programs for Faculty and Staff are online training modules required for new faculty, Principal Investigators, Co-Principal Investigators, and Research Administrators. The GMT consists of three training programs:

> Grants Management for Faculty: Required for all new faculty hired after 7/1/2015
> Grants Management for Faculty Refresher: Required for PI/Co-PI who completed training prior to 7/1/2015
> Grants Management for Staff: Required for staff seeking approval privileges on sponsored project accounts

The Office of Research and DCG websites provide additional information on procedures for processing grants and contracts, support available from different research administration units of the University, and information tailored for both sponsors and investigators.

For any questions regarding the DCG Service Commitment, please contact Jeri Muniz, Executive Director, Department of Contracts and Grants (jerimuni@usc.edu).