



College of DuPage Grants Office

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Welcome

Congratulations on your grant award and welcome to the College of DuPage grant management process!

Grant awards provide exciting opportunities to accomplish great work on behalf of our students and campus community, but they are also legally binding contracts. It is essential that everyone who works on a grant project is aware of the importance of staying in compliance with what the college has agreed to do and provide to the funding agency.

That's where this manual comes in...

Please use the information in the Grant Management Guidelines to assist you as you begin to implement the project work plan. Read carefully and if you have any questions at any point along the process, please contact the Grants Office right away. It is up to the entire grant team, including everyone in the Grants Office and the Grant Accountant, as well as the project personnel, to ensure that grant activities and expenditures are fully in compliance at all times.

The Grants Office must be involved in the grant management process, and our role, first and foremost, is to help you succeed!

Barb Abromitis, Director of Grants x3020
Dominique Steward, Grants Coordinator x3021



Post-Award Preparation

What to do first

Once a grant has been awarded, several things occur in the Grants Office:

1. Everyone celebrates!
2. The Grants Coordinator establishes files to assist with compliance and organization of award records.
3. Once the contract is received and verified, the Director of Grants announces the award to the greater COD community.

And then the work begins...

Once an award is made, the Project Director, and any other COD personnel who will be responsible for implementing project activities, must re-read the proposal carefully, and complete, sign, and submit the following forms to the Grants Office:

Initial Project Compliance Form

Data Collection Agreement Form

The purpose of these forms is to make sure that those responsible for the implementation of the project understand exactly what the requirements of the award are, are reminded of all the activities that were proposed in the grant, and remember that data collection must begin immediately in order to make quarterly and final reports more accurately and easily completed.

Initial Project Compliance Form

Congratulations on your grant award! Within the next two weeks, please reread the entire proposal, the award letter, and any attachments to the award letter. Use the information in the proposal, letters, and attachments, and if necessary, from the RFP to complete this form.

Please return the form through interoffice mail to the Grants Office. Questions? Contact Barb Abromitis at x3020. Thank you!

Project Title:

Fiscal Year: _____

Start Date: _____

End Date: _____

Funding Agency:

Program Officer Contact Information:

Grant Accountant Assigned to the Project:

Required Report Due Dates: _____

Please mark these dates on your calendar and add a reminder 2-3 weeks ahead of the deadline.

I have read and fully understand the requirements of the grant award and the project objectives and activities that must be implemented within the timeline outlined in the approved proposal. I agree to provide regular informal progress updates to the Grants Office as needed or requested, and to contact the Grants Office for assistance if, at any time, it appears that there will be a problem completing any of the requirements of this award.

Signature *Date*

Data Collection Agreement Form

In order to keep compliance issues to a minimum, and to assist with the timely reporting of project accomplishments, data collection should begin with the first project activity.

Please reread the proposal carefully.

Using the following format, briefly list the data you will be collecting for each project objective/activity. Please attach the sheet to this form before submitting to the Grants Office, and keep a copy for your records.

Make sure that everyone working on the project understands that data must be collected for every activity according to what has been proposed.

<i>Objective</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Data</i>
<i>Ex. To establish an Advisory Board for the project</i>	<i>Meet with community members and faculty to choose board members.</i>	<i>Meeting attendance records Meeting minutes Board member roster</i>

Does the project require baseline data? _____ If so, has it been collected?

If not, what is the plan for collecting the baseline data?

I have read and understand the plan for project evaluation, including immediate and ongoing data collection to assist with grant compliance and reporting requirements.

I agree to contact the Grants Office for assistance if issues with compliance, data collection, or reporting requirements arise so that these issues may be addressed in a timely manner to ensure the integrity of College of DuPage and the funded grant program.

Signature

Date

Ensuring Compliance

Why it is important

When a grant is awarded to COD, the college receives a contract which is a legally binding agreement. As such, project personnel must fully comply with the terms set out in the contract, even if they are modified from the original proposal.

Grants and contracts received from government and private agencies are legally binding agreements and organizations awarded them must fully comply with their terms.

Noncompliance can result in:

- Termination of the contract
- The requirement to refund money
- Adverse publicity
- A higher level of scrutiny in the future

- Reduced likelihood of future funding from this or other sources

Project team roles and responsibilities

The successful management of a grant program relies on the collaborative efforts of the Project Director, other project personnel, the Grants Office, and the Finance Office:

The Project Director is responsible for

- Day-to-day implementation, management, and assessment of the funded project.
- Maintenance of time sheets for all administrators, faculty, or operational personnel that are listed as in-kind services.
- Maintenance of detailed files of project activities.
- Regular updates to his/her immediate supervisor about the status of the project.
- Immediate update to the Grants Office if there are any problems with the completion of project activities.
- Development of newsworthy stories of project activities or outcomes to be shared with External Relations and the greater community.
- Timely preparation and submission of all required reports, with assistance as needed or prescribed by the Finance or Grants Offices.

The Grants Office is responsible for

- Official contact and being the liaison with the funding agency. If the funder should contact the Project Director directly, it is essential that the Project Director inform the Grants Office immediately about the communication and any changes to the program resulting from it. Under no circumstances should the Project Director contact the funder directly. All contact initiated by COD should be made by the Grants Office.
- Training the Project Director and his/her team as needed so that the grant program may be successful.
- Troubleshooting when issues arise with a grant program. If at any time it appears that the program will not meet its objectives on time and within budget – or the Project Director perceives any other type of problem with the grant project – the Grants Office must be informed immediately. Problems can usually be solved if caught early on, but if left to grow, they can result in noncompliance and adverse consequences to the institution.

- Keeping a grant file with the RFP, proposal, correspondence, contracts, reports, budget or program amendments, news releases, and any other appropriate information.

The Finance Office is responsible for

- Maintenance of official internal fiscal records as required by the funding agency.
- Assurance that all federal, state, and college financial requirements are followed in the expenditure and accounting procedures for external funds.
- Review of grant expenditure requests for compliance and available funding. If there is ever a question about whether or not an expenditure is allowed, the Project Director must check with the Grant Accountant before incurring the expense.
- Review of the grant budget and related expenditures to assure accurate accounting.
- Preparation of requests for reimbursement.
- Arrangement of audits in a timely manner as required for the grant project.
- Guidance and instruction to the Project Director as needed.
- Keeping the official grant file containing a copy of the proposal, the original-signature copies of official documents, budget and program amendments.

Initial project team training

Once a new grant is awarded, the Grants Office will schedule an initial project team meeting and training for the Project Director and his/her team. The meeting will include the Project Director, other project personnel, the administrator, Director of Grants, Grants Coordinator, the Grant Accountant assigned to the project, and the appropriate Dean when necessary.

The purpose of this initial meeting is to review the funding agency's reporting needs and the college's established procedures in relation to the grant. It is imperative that each person understands the internal and external policies, and the specific grant management responsibilities required by the funding agency.

The Director of Grants may modify or waive the initial meeting depending on the individual experience and need of the Project Director and the nature of the grant project.

Follow-up meetings

If problems have occurred in the completion of grant activities, funds have not been expended according to the agreed-upon timeframe, data has not been collected in a timely fashion, or other issues exist which threaten the integrity of the project, the Director of Grants and/or the Grants Coordinator may request regular follow-up meetings with the Project Director and Grant Accountant in order to ensure compliance.

In some cases, for large multi-year grants or particularly complex projects, regular meetings will be scheduled throughout the term of the grant as a means of providing proactive assistance to the project team.

Grant Personnel

Personnel employed by the grant must be hired in accordance with college policies. Grant employees are not considered permanent employees. They will have no implied or guaranteed employment beyond the official grant-funding period.

If grant positions are available, the Project Director will work with Human Resources to determine the final job description. The Human Resources Office will advertise and post all grant-funded positions as defined in the grant guidelines proposal; maintain the hiring records of all grant personnel; and offer guidance and instruction as needed to the Project Director should personnel issues arise.

Data Collection

Timeframe

Data collection should begin with the first project activity. All project activities should be documented, and data collected according to the plan prescribed in the proposal, or according to funder guidelines. Timely collection and entry of data ensures that issues are caught early and that required reports are accurate. In addition, project data can then be used to inform decisions about later activities or program components.

Meeting project requirements

It is the Project Director's responsibility to be aware of the types of data required for the funding agency. Most often this will be built into the proposal and/or contract, but whether or not it has been specified ahead of time, it is necessary to begin collecting the required data immediately. In some instances, this will require establishing systems for data collection and entry. The Grants Office is able to assist with this effort as needed.

Meeting reporting deadlines

Timely collection of data makes the process of filing quarterly (or other) reports much simpler for everyone.

After completing the Initial Project Compliance Form, the reporting deadlines must be put on the Project Director's, and project team's calendars. In addition, the Grants Coordinator will enter those dates into the Amplifund system, used by the Grants Office to monitor all grant projects and development. The Project Director and other project personnel as appropriate will complete an Amplifund Profile Form, and be trained in the use of Amplifund to enter data and to keep track of deadlines and reporting requirements.

The Grants Office will also set internal dates for receiving report drafts or data so that the reports may be submitted on time. Please be aware that with multiple grant projects on campus, there are often many reports due at the same time. The Project Director is responsible for meeting the internal dates set by the Grants Office in order to expedite the process of filing the required reports.

All reports must be submitted by the Grants Office (or in rare cases, the Grant Accountant). Under no circumstances should the Project Director individually submit reports to the funder.

Problem-Solving

General guidelines for all grant projects

Despite everyone's best efforts, sometimes things do not go as planned when implementing a grant project. When a Project Director is having trouble meeting objectives, collecting data, or expending funds for whatever reason, he/she must inform the Grants Office immediately. Often, if caught early enough, problems can be easily solved. It is when too much time has passed and deadlines approach, that the task becomes difficult and compliance becomes an issue.

Once notified of a possible issue with a project, the Director of Grants will call a meeting of the Grants Coordinator, Project Director, other project personnel as necessary, the Grant Accountant, and others who are relevant to the project. Using the documentation of the project up to that point, this team will figure out what has happened and why, and what the next logical step is. In most cases, steps can be taken to get the project back up to speed so that the funding agency does not have to be involved. However, should a change to the program be indicated, the Grants Office will contact the funding agency make the appropriate request. Contact made outside the Grants Office leads to misunderstanding and often miscommunication about how to get the project back on track. Therefore, under no circumstances is the Project Director or anyone else from the project team to contact the funding agency individually.

Requests for project revision

Grant projects are funded based on the activity plan submitted with the proposal. It is expected that the project will be implemented as planned. Program changes resulting in a modification of the scope of work or the objectives of the approved project require prior approval of the Finance Office and the funding agency. Project revisions should be directed through the appropriate campus department or division after a meeting of the project team with the Grants Office and Grant Accountant (see above). The Grants Office will coordinate the request for program change with all internal and external departments or agencies as appropriate.

Requests for a project revision should not occur except in extraordinary circumstances and should follow the funding agency's requirements. The requests should explain the desired revision, why the revision is necessary, what will happen if the revision does not occur, how the revision will affect the project, and when the revision will be completed. The Grants Office will submit the request to the funding agency. If approved, the original of the document from the funder will be retained in the official project file in the Finance Office. A copy of the approval will be sent to the Project Director and a copy will also be retained by the Grants Office. If the original is sent to the Project Director, it should be forwarded immediately to the Grants Office for processing.

Requests for budget modifications

Project Directors may expend grant funds only in the amounts listed in the final proposal negotiated with the funding agency. Federal guidelines are flexible enough to allow minor line item changes within the total award without prior approval from the agency. If a change is anticipated, the Project Director and Grant Accountant should determine what is allowable. No expenditures outside the original budget should be made without the approval of the Grant Accountant.

Requests for extensions or carryover of funds

It is sometimes possible to request an extension on a grant and to carry over unexpended funds into the following year in order to complete unfinished program objectives. However, this should only occur under extraordinary circumstances, and a project should never be conducted on the assumption that an extension will be approved by the funding agency.

In order to request a project extension, adequate notice must be given to the funding agency at least 90 days before the expiration of the grant. If the need for an extension is anticipated, the Project Director should immediately inform the Grants and Finance Offices and with them, review the program guidelines to determine if an extension of funds is possible. The Grants Office will coordinate the request for an extension or carryover of funds with the agency.

While waiting for a response, the Director of Grants will call the entire project team together to plan for how to complete the project successfully if the extension is approved, and how to proceed if it is not.

Project Close-Out

Once all funds are expended and the final reports submitted, the grant will be closed by the Grants Coordinator and the Grant Accountant. All project files are kept for three, five, or seven years, according to the regulations of the funding agency.