

Federal Agency Updates Plenary Session – Monday, September 21, 2020, 1:30pm

National Science Foundation (NSF)

For the purposes of NSF, please see the link to the presentation and direct questions to the NSF Policy Office at policy@nsf.gov.

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Kristin Ta in the NIH Office of Policy provided updates on the expiration of COVID-19 awardee flexibilities, NIH policy and systems changes, and HHS federal-wide system changes. Most of the flexibilities provided by M-20-11, M-20-17, M-20-20 have expired or will expire very soon; NIH will consider requests for the continuation of individual flexibilities on a case-by-case basis. Grantees were reminded of the need to maintain appropriate records and cost documentation for charges relating to COVID-19-related unusual costs. Policy updates included a new requirement in Type 7 award transfers to indicate if the change in institution is the result of a hostile or inappropriate work environment, mandatory electronic submission of administrative supplements (either eRA Commons or Grants.gov), and upcoming changes to the Bio Sketch and Other Support formats as part of NIH's commitment to transparency. Bio Sketch changes will include clarifying that Section B should include all scientific appointments (foreign or domestic, funded or non-funded) and the removal of Section D (as it is duplicative of the information requested in Other Support). Revised instructions and format pages for both documents will be forthcoming soon.

HHS federal-wide updates include the ability of those with the institutional Signing Official role to access summary statements, mandatory submission of the SF425 via the HHS Payment Management System (PMS), elimination of the quarterly cash transaction report, and the newly formatted Notice of Grant Award Page 1 (effective for all NOAs issued on or after 10/1/2020; award specific terms and conditions will still be detailed in sections III and IV). Kristin concluded with a reminder about NIH's Virtual Seminar on Program Funding and Grants Administration, provided at no-cost, and taking place 10/27/2020-10/30/2020.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

Kanitra Cobbs began NASA's agency update with a review of NASA's FY2019 funding levels (\$1.1 billion), upcoming revisions to the Grants and Cooperative Agreements Manual and Proposal Guidebook to align these documents with 2 CFR 1800, and the rescinding of 14 CFR 1274 (the mandatory cost sharing requirement in cooperative agreements with commercial firms). New EPSCoR (Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research) funding opportunities were announced, with release dates in September-December 2020, along with new IPA (Intergovernmental Personnel Act) opportunities in the Human Health and Performance Directorate. Mary Sladek then provided updates from the Science Mission Directorate (SMD, comprising 85% of NASA's funding portfolio), including new SMD funding opportunities, calls for reviewers, COVID-19 related funding augmentation and extension requests, and the announcement of the new Biological and Physical Sciences Division within SMD.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Alexandra Raver provided EPA's updates, beginning with the announcement that EPA now has a dedicated COVID-19 website containing general COVID-19 information, award FAQs, and COVID-19 related funding opportunities. Recent EPA Recipient/Applicant Information Notices (RAINs) were also addressed, including implementation of OMB Final Guidance requirements (prohibition on certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment and termination provisions, and the requirement to communicate these changes to subrecipients); submission of administrative and financial assistance agreement documents with electronic or digital signatures by email; and the requirement to

enroll in EPA's Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) system [note: due to the closure of EPA's Las Vegas Processing Center, the Research Triangle Finance Center will be processing all payments, email address: rtpfc-grants@epa.gov]. The EPA update concluded with upcoming grant opportunities the encouragement for all grantees to sign up for EPA grants listserv [note: the listserv is experiencing technical difficulties, and no notifications are currently being sent out].

Office of Naval Research (ONR)

Wade Wargo kicked off the ONR update with details on several current ONR initiatives, including a DOD-wide DoDGARs working group to standardize post-award administration, with the DoDGARs final rules published in federal register on 8/19/2020, a new ONR initiative related to CAS disclosure statements review and audit resolution in an effort to streamline these processes, and changes to the property management system and contractor purchasing system review process, with on-site reviews paused due to COVID-19. The discussion then shifted to implementation of Section 889 of the FY 2019 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which prohibits the government, contractors, and grant and loan recipients from procuring or using certain covered telecommunication equipment or services. Contract and OTA recipients will have to submit a representation disclosure before contracts, modifications, or options will be issued, while recipients with assistance awards will continue to receive awards referencing 2 CFR 200, which will be revised to comply with Section 889. The final update from ONR was the announcement of a new ONR Chief of Naval Research, Rear Admiral Lorin Selby, effective May 2020, in light of the retirement of Rear Admiral David Hahn.

Government-University-Industry Research Roundtable (GUIRR) – National Academies

Susan Sloan focused the GUIRR update on the recent summer and upcoming fall meetings. The summer meeting featured six virtual workshops on the "Resilience of the Research Enterprise During the COVID-19 Crisis," the proceedings of which are expected to be published soon, while the fall meeting series will consider what can be learned from the collaboration, innovation, and adaptation across research institutions in response to the COVID-19 crisis, and will be held 10/14/2020-10/16/2020. GUIRR's next webinar, on NSF's Convergence Accelerator, will take place on 10/27/2020. The monthly webinars are open to all and free of charge.