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SECTION I

Overview of External Funding of SURA Programs

Once a program concept is endorsed by the SURA Board of Trustees, the proposing group has the opportunity to submit a grant or contract proposal under the auspices of SURA to an external funding source in support of that program.

This manual provides information to people acting as the Principal Investigator (PI) or co-Principal Investigator (co-PI) on a grant under the auspices of SURA. SURA uses the term PI for anyone, SURA staff member or faculty member at a member institution, in charge of a grant or a project managed operationally or fiscally by SURA. Anyone heading a SURA program or project, whether externally funded or not, works within the governing structure of SURA. SURA is not simply a fiscal agent for an individual, or even a group, effort. Thus, to ensure smooth operation and financial and managerial accountability, whenever the PI is not a SURA staff member, a staff member will participate as part of the proposing group and act as one of the project's co-PI's. In cases where the PI is not a SURA staff member, all references in this manual to the "PI" shall mean the PI in collaboration with the SURA Co-PI.

Grants submitted under the auspices of SURA often are initiated by a SURA committee and have a minimum of one volunteer willing to organize and coordinate the writing of the grant proposal and the management of the funded project. This person, the PI, identifies one or more funding sources for the project with the help of the committee, other members of the proposing group, and SURA staff.

This manual provides a description of the internal policies and procedures necessary for the approval and implementation of a grant proposal. It details the process and necessary interactions with the staff and committees as well as the timing of these interactions.

SECTION II

Proposal Development and Approval Process

1. Concept Development

A program, to be funded through SURA, must have followed the SURA Program Guidelines and been endorsed by the Board of Trustees. Once this happens, a prospective PI who wishes to submit a grant proposal in support of that program to an external funding source should first present a brief (1-2 page) concept paper of his/her grant proposal to the appropriate SURA Program Director along with a copy of the grant program solicitation. The concept paper should include a draft budget that includes SURA's indirect cost rate. ~~The Office of Sponsored Programs~~SURA has a budget template in Excel format that can be used by PIs to develop their draft budget.

The concept paper should be submitted to the relevant SURA Director as early as possible in the grant proposal process to allow for meaningful feedback and to enable the Director to make a timely decision as to whether the PI should continue to work on a full proposal and (where the PI is not a SURA staff member) to identify the appropriate SURA staff member who will act as Co-PI. The optimum lead-time is at least ten weeks before the sponsor's proposal deadline.

Once the concept paper is approved by the appropriate SURA Director, the PI prepares a full draft proposal (see next section) in accordance with the sponsor's requirements, completes a SURA grant proposal approval routing form, and routes the proposal for approval within SURA. Ideally, this process is begun minimally two weeks prior to the sponsor's deadline.

Once a proposal has been routed and approved for submission, a master proposal file is created and maintained in the Office of Sponsored Programs at SURA headquarters. It holds all original documents pertaining to the proposal. Documents include the concept paper, original full proposal, award letters, reports, requests for extensions and additional or supplemental support, letters responding to these requests, and other pertinent materials and correspondence.

2. Proposal Development Process

The PI is responsible for assuring that the proposal meets sponsor guidelines and required format. At least two weeks prior to the grant deadline, the PI should route the proposal for approval internally at SURA using the SURA Grant Proposal Approval Form. Items to be included in the routing package depend on the specifications in the program solicitation and usually include:

- Cover letter or sheet
- Abstract
- Narrative
- Budget and budget justification
- Vitae

- Subaward documentation
- Letters of support and/or acceptance from:
 - subawardees
 - individuals
 - other organizations

Proposals to the National Science Foundation must be submitted via FastLane and may also be prepared in FastLane. PI's and co-PI's who are contributing to the preparation of the proposal can get a FastLane password from SURA by contacting the SURA Office of Sponsored Programs.

If the proposal includes subawards, a letter of agreement from the subawardee organization should be submitted with the full proposal and the subaward budget should be a part of the full budget. The process of getting a letter of agreement should usually begin at least 4 weeks prior to the deadline. The SURA Office of Sponsored Programs will create the subaward, which must be approved by the PI .

Once the proposal is fully approved, it is submitted to the granting agency by the Office of Sponsored Programs. If the funding agency, prior to awarding the grant, requires modifications that result in changes to the project activities and/or budget, the Office of Sponsored Programs will work with the PI to expedite changes as needed.

The granting agency will determine whether it will award or decline the funds or require modification to the proposal, and will send notification by mail or email. Most often, this notification will be sent to the SURA Office of Sponsored Programs. Sometimes it is sent to the PI. If it is sent to the PI, she/he should forward it to the SURA Office of Sponsored Programs for response.

3. Budget Guidelines

The PI should consult with the relevant Program Director and/or the Office of Sponsored Programs in construction of the proposal budget. Budget items must conform to the regulations of the sponsor and SURA policy.

Anyone compensated by project funding who is not a SURA staff member must be paid either through their employer as part of their salary or as a consultant on the project. In the first case, the compensation must represent a portion of salary equivalent to the time devoted to the project. In the second case, compensation must be supported by a formula included in the proposed budget that shows days to be devoted to the project and the daily rate of pay. Consultants must report their days devoted to the project in order to receive compensation in a timely manner; within a month is desirable, but no later than 2 months. No reimbursements can be made after a grant has been closed. For those grants developed with multi-year funding for PI compensation, the budget may be developed with a reasonable annual percentage increase.

4. Timeline

DEADLINE	ACTION
6 months - 12 weeks before deadline	2--3 page concept paper to SURA Program Director
10 weeks before deadline	Formal approval or disapproval of the concept paper given by Director to PI.
4 weeks before deadline	PI submits first full draft proposal. If needed, begin process of getting letters of agreement or subawards from subawardee(s).
2 weeks before deadline	Final version of full proposal along with completed SURA grant approval form routed for internal approval.
1 week before deadline	Fully approved proposal package submitted to Office of Sponsored Programs for review.
By deadline	Office of Sponsored Programs submits proposal.

SECTION III

Project Management

1. Funded Project Management

Once funded, the project is managed using the following procedures:

- a. The Office of Sponsored Programs sends a copy of the award letter to the SURA Chief Executive Officer, appropriate Director, PI, Co-PI(s) and SURA Finance Department.
- b. The project is assigned a project code by the Finance Department.
- c. The PI begins implementation of the project and, in a timely fashion, submits all technical reports as required by the grantor and SURA. The PI should forward a copy of each technical report to the Office of Sponsored Programs.
- d. The Office of Sponsored Programs sends budget reports monthly to the PI.
- e. The Office of Sponsored Programs approves all budgets. Any significant changes in budget distribution or request for supplementary funding for additional activities must be approved by the Office of Sponsored Programs before submission to the funding agency.
- f. The PI will be responsible for and manage all staff support of the project. He/she oversees the direct cost portion of the budget. All staff compensation is calculated on actual hours worked and individual salary rates. Staff effort devoted to a project is reported on bimonthly time sheets. The PI, the Finance Department, and the Office of Sponsored Programs work together to ensure smooth project management.

2. Award Modifications

Any significant changes in activities or scope during the implementation stage must be approved by the SURA Program Director. Any requests for budget revisions, additional or supplemental support, or no-cost extensions must be approved by the Office of Sponsored Programs subsequent to the following:

- a. PI ascertains the granting source requirements and format for a request, writes the request, and submits it to the Office of Sponsored Programs for review and approval.
- b. The Office of Sponsored Programs reviews the request and, if there are no problems, submits the request to the sponsor on behalf of SURA.
- c. The granting agency will either award or decline the requested modification and should send notification by mail or email. Most often, it will be sent to SURA's Office of Sponsored Programs; sometimes it is sent to the PI. If it sent directly to the PI, s/he should forward it to the Office of Sponsored Programs.

SECTION IV

Grants Financial Management

1. Budgets

Financial expenses originate in three areas: 1) direct program expenses 2) internal SURA administration costs and 3) subawards. The PI has primary oversight of the first area; SURA has primary oversight of the last two areas.

As soon as notification is received from the funding agency that the grant has been awarded and the final budget approved, SURA's Finance Department will assign a project code to the project. The PI is responsible for and has control over expenditures in each line item in category (1), direct program expenses, and is generally more familiar with where certain expenditures fit into the grant budget. The PI will review and approve all grant expenditures in category (1). Expenditure requests are then forwarded to the Office of Sponsored Programs which will review all expenditures for reasonableness, allocability and allowability and forward to the Finance Department for payment.

2. Reimbursement of Expenditures

SURA disburses all grant funds on a reimbursement, direct billing, or direct payment basis. This means that an expense has to have been incurred before reimbursement can be requested. Reimbursement to institutions, businesses or other vendors that provide services under a project may be made upon submission of an itemized institutional invoice. All requests for payment or reimbursement must use the appropriate SURA requisition/reimbursement form and indicate the grant project code to be charged. If the requestor is not the PI, the form must be signed by the PI to indicate his/her approval of the expenditure. Payment requisition/reimbursement forms are then sent to the Office of Sponsored Programs. Proper documentation (original receipts, invoices, etc.) is needed for all expenses and must accompany the form.

Project-related travel should be carried out in accordance with SURA's Travel Policy and reimbursement for grant travel should be requested via the SURA Travel Expense Report. US flag carriers are to be used in all cases. Any international travel must be approved in advance by SURA and (if required) by the funding agency.

3. Reimbursements for Salaries / Personnel Expenses

Staff members who are to be paid on a grant should indicate the effort expended by project code on their bimonthly timesheets. The appropriate salary amount and related fringe benefits will be charged to the grant. Anyone compensated by project funding who is not a staff member must be paid either through their employer as part of their salary or as a consultant on the project. In the first case, the employer will bill SURA for reimbursement. In the second case, compensation must adhere to the formula included in the project budget, and use the contracted rate of pay.

4. SURA Budget Reports^[MM1]

Each month, the Office of Sponsored Programs will distribute to PIs a budget report for all active grants. These reports will enable the PI to track the grant budget to see if it is on schedule and to check that the details in SURA's records are correct. If any errors are found the PI should notify the Office of Sponsored Programs immediately so that they can be corrected.

5. Subawards

Grant proposals that include subawards should have letters of agreement or contracts with the subawardee. The person who will direct that subaward should submit to the SURA PI a statement of the work to be performed and a budget with a budget explanation. The PI then submits all documentation, along with a "Request to Issue a Subaward" form, to the Office of Sponsored Programs. The Office of Sponsored Programs will then prepare the subaward agreement and forward the copies to be signed to the appropriate official of the subawardee.

The subawardee will be reimbursed for expenses upon submission of appropriate invoices. Invoices for work under a subaward should be sent directly to the Office of Sponsored Programs. Subaward agencies must comply with the same grant general terms and conditions as SURA. Please refer to the SURA Subcontracting Manual for all policies and procedures governing the monitoring of subawards on SURA prime awards.