

# FAQ: POST-AWARD GRANT MANAGEMENT

## Post-Award Grant Management

### TOPIC: Getting started / First Steps

*Q. I just received a notice of grant award (NOGA) or (Grant Award Notice (GAN)) and/or a grant agreement; what do I do now?*

A. Please contact the OGM as soon as possible or bring the agreement to the OGM (A1.114) or send it via email to [DL-GrantsDept@sjcd.edu](mailto:DL-GrantsDept@sjcd.edu).

*Q. Who should sign the grant agreement?*

A. Only a signatory on the Strategic Leadership Team can sign a grant agreement on behalf of the institution. **DO NOT sign it yourself.** If you do, you become personally liable for execution of the grant agreement.

*Q. I am a project director for a newly funded grant, now what?*

A. If at any time you have a question or problem implementing your project, you should feel free to call the OGM for assistance. Once an award notice from a funder is received and the grant is set up by the OGM, an initial grant binder meeting will be scheduled. Members of the project staff and grant accounting will attend. During this meeting the highlights of the grant- including the objectives, reporting and budget requirements, activity implementation, and College grant management protocol will be reviewed. The goal of this first meeting is to clearly define the responsibilities and expectations (of both the funder and the College) associated with the management of the grant.

*Q. What is the single most important thing I should do as a new project director?*

A. Be familiar with your approved grant proposal. Your proposal is your blueprint of what you should do, when it needs to be done, who is responsible for it, and what you should accomplish.

*Q. When can I start spending the money approved in the grant agreement?*

A. Almost all of the time a grant number is assigned and a fund for each funding agency (sometimes 2 or more agencies fund a project) is set up immediately after the award is received and is being signed by a signatory. Thereafter, the budget is created and made ready to discuss at the binder meeting. In all cases you will be notified when the budget is ready. It is important to determine the sources of all funding prior to set up. This may take time.

*Q. How do I know what is allowable under a grant?*

A. Every grant program has a unique set of requirements and regulations. The best place to get started is look at your approved contract and submitted proposal. If your proposal does not clearly state that you can do or purchase something, don't assume it is allowable. Check with your grant accountant to see if permission is required or if a revision can be requested from the funding agency. Bear in mind that grant funds are not exempt from standard state and College policies and procedures. In fact, we receive grants because we have policies and procedures and are an accredited educational institution. Please always follow all Human Resource and Purchasing Policies. Additional or stricter requirements will be explained at the binder meeting.

*Q. How Should I respond to a funder asking for information about my grant?*

A. Before you respond to any inquiry please contact the OGM immediately. We will notify the Vice Chancellor of Marketing, Public Relations, and Government Affairs who is the institutional representative designated to handle all requests for information. Please know that there is a time limit for a response. **DO NOT** wait to notify us.

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*Q. Is a grant budget different from a College budget?*

**A.** Yes. Grant budgets come with very specific regulations that may restrict the transfers between budget categories, prohibit the purchase of certain goods, or services, and limit the specific timeframe when the funds are available. In many cases, modifications to the originally-approved budget require prior approval from the funder. This approval process, which is coordinated by the OGM can be very detailed and may require several weeks to obtain. You may save yourself time and frustration by consulting with the OGM and grant accountant before expending any grant funds not specifically provided for in the approved contract.

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*Q. What are the reporting requirements related to my grant?*

**A.** Because every grant program is different, funders will have different reporting requirements. Grant accounting will process and submit all financial reports. Program reporting is the Program Officer or Principal Investigator's responsibility and will be an important item discussed in the binder meeting. If a signature is required on behalf of SJCCD, please provide the program report to the OGM to secure signatures three (3) days prior to the due date. Always send a copy of the program report to the grant accountant to be stored in the grant folder on the G Drive. Auditors want to examine program reports and sending copies to us may save you a meeting with an eventual auditor.

*Q. What about audits – What will I have to do as a Project Director or a Principal Investigator?*

**A.** If you are asked to meet with an auditor, it is often nothing more than an effort by the auditor to understand the project. Be prepared to discuss the project and the attainment of the goals and objectives. OGM makes every attempt to build compliance into all steps of development, execution, and closeout of a grant. We call it being "audit ready." Any criticism by auditors is not seen as an affront; rather, as an opportunity to improve our process.