



A BASIC GUIDE TO
GRANTS,
PROGRAM DESIGN,
& GRANT WRITING
FOR GRANT SEEKERS

The Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs

www.msun.edu/grants

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GUIDE TO GRANTS

DIFFERENT TYPES OF FUNDING

There are several types of external funding that are available for Institutions of Higher Education. They include Grants, Contracts, Donations, and Cooperative Agreements.

GRANTS

This type of external funding is probably the type that most faculty and staff are familiar with. This section will cover the different types of grant funding, as well as examples of when grant funding is an appropriate source of funding for a project or program.

A grant is a sum of money given by an organization for a specific purpose. Typically grants are given for a program or project with measurable outcomes. Most of the grants that we encounter come from federal or state government sources, but grants are also available from corporations and private foundations.

A **Competitive Grant** is a grant that is given through a competitive process. The funder will send out a Request for Applications (RFA) a Request for Proposals (RFP) a Notice of Availability of Funding (NOFA) or Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA), all of which are basically just notices sent out by the funding agency with the details of the grant and the requirements needed in the grant application.

Competitive grants are usually open for applications for a limited time. The amount of time that funding agencies are willing to accept applications varies from grant to grant and from agency to agency. One grant may have 4 weeks from the announcement of the grant to the submittal date. For more complicated and research based grants the funding agency may allow 6 or more months between the announcement of the grant and the application due date. Some foundations may have grant opportunities available at all times, with no application due date. ***It is important to note the submittal date on grants, as many private and government funders will not accept a grant after the posted submittal date, for any reason.***

A **Formula Grant** differs from a competitive grant because the recipients are usually defined by a formula used by the funding agency. An example would be a federal agency that gives money

to state agencies depending on their population. The state agency can then either use the funds internally or re-disperse the funds, possibly utilizing a competitive process to determine who gets funded. When funding is passed on to a third party, it is known as **Pass Through Funding**.

Continuation Grants are grants that can be applied for to continue funding existing funding. When the original term of the grant expires, a program may have the option of applying for additional funding to continue their work, if the funding agency has additional funds for supporting that type of project. Many programs are able to apply for and are awarded continuation grants, allowing those programs to exist long past the terms of their original grants.

In certain situations Northern may participate in a **Subaward**. An example of a subaward would be a sexual assault grant that is awarded to one Montana University, but is then sub awarded to other smaller universities to engage in sexual assault programming on their campuses. The sub awardee is not the applicant to the grant, and they do not report to the funding source. Instead, they report to the original applicant, and the applicant is responsible for compiling the reports from their sub awardees and using that information to compile their report to the funding agency.

CONTRACTS

Occasionally Northern may participate in contracts with outside agencies. These are legal documents, and can be made in partnership with various types of outside agencies, including government agencies and private companies. Typically contracts involve a Request For Proposal from the funder, where the topic and methods for conducting the research are specified in detail by the funder. Contracts usually have greater performance expectations than grants, and are usually designed to benefit the funder by achieving an expected outcome or product. For example, a private fuels company may contract with the Advanced Fuels Department to have tests run on fuel samples. The contract would state the number and types of testing performed, the origin of the fuel samples, and the expected date the results will be made available.

COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS

A cooperative agreement is very similar to a grant, with the exception that the funder is expected to be much more involved in the proposal preparations and will have more involvement in research activities once the award has been made.

DONATIONS

Donations are a charitable gift that is given to an organization or cause. It can come in the form of cash, property, or services. Charitable donations, if made through our foundation, can offer a tax benefit to the giver.

SOURCES OF FUNDING

State Funding- Several State of Montana offices have grant offerings throughout the year. All of these opportunities are published on the states grant funding page www.fundingmt.org

Federal Funding- All federal grant opportunities are posted on grants.gov

Foundations- Funding from private and corporate foundations are often an option for grants and gifts. Foundations tend to focus their giving on specific areas, for example education or employment. The Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs can help you identify and prepare application materials for foundations.

Corporate Sponsors- Many corporations have foundations through which they offer grants or charitable donations. Some corporate sponsors may offer contracts or cooperative agreements.

LOCATING FUNDING

At MSU-Northern the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs sends out emails with grant notifications every time we receive a grant notification that is appropriate for MSU-N. We also track the interests of departments and PI's and actively search out funding in those areas. If you have not participated in the faculty intake for grants, please contact the grants office and we will schedule a time with you. A list of opportunities is also kept on our website, as well as the log in information to the Grants Resource Center

Grant funding tip:

Grants Resource Center- This is a subscription service that identifies grant funding for Institutions of Higher Education. MSU-Northern maintains a subscription, and the login information for that service is available to faculty and staff via the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs website.

Here are some other options for locating funding opportunities:

Federal Funding- The US Federal Government keeps a searchable database for government funding at [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). Currently all federal agencies funding opportunities are available on that website. Most federal agencies also post grant information on their department's website. Often times the information on the agencies website is more detailed than the information on grants.gov, however grants.gov usually also provides a link to the agency websites grant information.

State funding- The State of Montana maintains its own grant funding website www.fundingmt.org. An account is needed to access the grant list, or you can click on a link on our webpage www.msun.edu/grants to be taken directly to the grants list page.

Nonprofits and Private Foundations- Most private foundations and nonprofits maintain a web presence, and often times their websites will include a link to apply for their grants or a downloadable copy of their application form. To locate an appropriate nonprofit or foundation funding source, contact the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs.

GRANT LIFE CYCLE

Pre Award

This is the grant planning phase. During this phase of the grant life cycle, the PI and their team will search Funding Opportunity Announcements to discover funding opportunities that align with their programming. For more information on locating funding opportunities so the locating funding section. Pre-Award also includes the program development and grant writing phases. Before developing an application the PI should spend time going through the FOA to determine their capabilities and comparing them to the specific eligibility and technical requirements in the application instructions. This is an important step that will prevent the PI from investing a lot of time and energy in a grant that they do not qualify for, or that is inappropriate for their needs.

Award

Once the Federal agency completes the application review process, the Award Phase begins. The final award decisions rest solely in the hands of the federal agency staff with fiduciary responsibility and legal authority to enter binding agreements. Federal staff review and make award recommendations based on the programmatic and financial reviews of the applications. These recommendations are reviewed by a series of levels in the agencies to ensure high-quality, fair, and unbiased decisions.

Once the final award decisions are made, the awarding agency sends a Notice of Award (NOA) to the entities selected for funding. All of these notifications are received through the Chancellors office. The NOA is the official, legally binding issuance of the award. When you or your organization accepts the grant (i.e., by signing the grant agreement or by drawing down funds) you become legally obligated to carry out the full terms and conditions of the grant.

Post Award

The post award phase comprises a significant amount of work over the duration of the award dates, which includes implementing the grant, reporting progress, and completing the closeout requirements. The federal agency that makes the award to you is also there to assist and ensure you or your organization complies with the grant terms and conditions. Your job is to faithfully and diligently carry out the grant program.

*Reporting-*The agency monitors your progress and expenditures through various programmatic and financial reporting procedures, as well as using performance metrics per the grant agreement. While the majority of award recipients carry out the grants ethically and efficiently, these monitoring procedures are necessary to maintain transparency and to prevent fraud and abuse.

The awarding agency typically has a grants management officer and program officer designated to each grant, both of which you will work with throughout the life of the grant. They are the ones who will review reports and conduct site visits, so we recommend you build an effective line of communication with these staff members. It is better to prevent issues by talking to your grant and program officers to clarify grant terms or expectations than it is to submit a report and wait for problems to be identified and recourse initiated. The specific reporting requirements, schedules, and systems can vary for each grant, so please review the grant terms and conditions carefully for this information.

Closeout- The closeout step is where the grant process ends. In order to complete a closeout, you, the award recipient, must submit the final financial and programmatic reports. According to the OMB Uniform Grants Guidance §200.343, the recipient must submit all financial, performance, and other reports required under the grant within 90 days after the grant award expires or is terminated. The awarding agency will review these reports to ensure compliance with all the grant terms and conditions as well as to make sure you spent all the funds appropriately.

How do I know when a grant is officially over? The awarding agency has to confirm that the recipient has completed all of the required grant work and all the applicable administrative tasks. Until the awarding agency confirms this, you are still responsible for fulfilling all the terms

of the grant. The closeout process can take several months if there are financial concerns or questions to reconcile. Also, if you or your organization acquired any property using grant funding, the closeout step is when you must make sure to handle this property exactly as the grant stipulates, which includes completing the appropriate reports on this property. Lastly, you are typically required to retain your grant records for at least three years from the date of the final expenditure report.

Grantseekers checklist- MSU Bozeman has a great resource that can help with the development of grants. Please take a look:

<http://www.montana.edu/research/osp/general/checklist.html>

GRANT PROGRAM DESIGN GUIDE

CONTEXT IN RESEARCH

Grants don't exist in a vacuum. Often times there have been studies and other grant programs that will have touched on the same subject that you have undertaken. It is important to do research on the subject area and to learn from what has been done before. After a suitable amount of research, you'll have a better understanding of what has worked in the past, and what has been a failure. Of course not everything that works for one institution will work for another, and grants are an opportunity to explore uncharted territory. Grant assessors are often experts in the field of study the grant is designed for. A lack of preparation and research to support your grant may be noticeable and reflected in their decision of where to allocate funding.

Your research for grant preparation should focus on sources that have been recently published and are peer reviewed.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

A purpose statement can help clarify your intentions for the grant, and give you a clear direction to work in. Simply stated, a purpose statement should be a one sentence explanation of why you are seeking funding. When used in a grant application, there are two types of purpose statements: *Direct* and *Indirect*. A Direct Purpose Statement will include a dollar amount, an Indirect Purpose Statement will tell the reader of the purpose of the grant request.

GOALS

Measurable outcomes and objectives- Must be specific, measurable attainable, realistic, time bound. Should give a good indication of the success of the program in the evaluation

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Project activities should be laid out in the grant timeline in the proposal, which needs to be closely adhered to if the grant is funded. Project activities should provide measurable deliverables that can attest to the effectiveness of the grant.

REASONABLE TIMELINE

A reasonable timeline will account for many different factors in a grant, including time for hiring staff, acquiring equipment, and will include reporting and close out of the grant.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

“Funding sources are no longer willing to allocate resources for human services and expect merely a report on whether or not the program and service providers did what they said they would do. Funders want to know what benefits are gained from the services provided.” (Yuen and Terao, Practical Grant Writing and Program Evaluation, 2003)

Inputs

Activities

Outputs

Outcomes

LOGIC MODELS

Logic Models are a tool used for evaluation of programs. A basic logic model consists of inputs, activities, short term outcomes, and long term outcomes. Several federal agencies have a logic model that they prefer to have used in grant proposals that are submitted to them, including the Department of Education. Examples of these logic models are available on the www.msun.edu/grants website.

GRANT WRITING

GRANT REVIEW PROCESS

Once the application submission deadline passes, the awarding agencies get to work reviewing the applications. The specific process for reviewing an application varies based on the type of grant you applied for. The generally applicable steps are as follows:

- Initial screening to ensure application is complete
- Programmatic review and assessment of the substance of the applications
- Financial review of proposed budgets
- Award decision and announcement

Initial Screening of Application

In the initial screening, sometimes called a basic minimum requirements review, the agencies will check each proposal to ensure it includes all the required elements to qualify for the grant. What the specific requirements are will vary for each grant, but common elements are eligibility, program narrative, and budget attachment. The key for the initial screening is that the agencies are looking for the presence of the required element, not the quality of the element. If your application does not meet all of these basic requirements, then your application is likely to be rejected.

Programmatic Review and Assessment of Applications

The remaining applications undergo a thorough review and assessment for their technical and programmatic quality and competency. Again, this varies depending on the type of grant you applied for. For discretionary grants, the review is conducted by independent experts who assess the applications using the uniform rating or scoring system established by each awarding agency.

A common format is a peer review panel of at least three people, who assess and score each application independently. Then, the peer review panel will convene to discuss the merits of the applications. A series of policies and assurances are in place to maintain a fair, objective process based on material facts in the applications and without conflicts of interest (COI) for the peer reviewers. The federal agency staff monitor and participate in this review process.

Financial Review

While an application may have technical and programmatic quality, your budget also needs to be well-documented and reflect the requirements of the grant program. The federal agencies conduct a cost analysis, reviewing each line item and the overall proposed budget to ensure compliance with statutory and financial regulations. Additionally, the financial review also factors in the total budget for the grant program in relation to how much money each application requests.

GRANT SCORING SYSTEM

Grants are scored using a scoring system where each section of the grant is worth a pre-determined amount of points. The scoring system for the grant can be found in the grant application. It is important to examine the scoring system and design your application to maximize the number of points awarded. Grants are highly competitive. It can easily be a matter of 1 or 2 points that determines which grants are funded and which are not.

The scoring system will determine where you put the largest amount of effort in your grant application. For example, if the scoring system has a maximum score of 100, and the project narrative is worth 40 points, you should anticipate spending a large amount of time on that section. That section should also account for approximately 40% of the application pages. If the evaluation is set for 20 points, the evaluation should receive 20% of the effort and page space for the evaluation, and so on.

If an invitational or optional priority is available, PI's should seriously consider addressing them in their program design and application. Invitational or optional priorities usually come with bonus points in the scoring system.

Tie breakers- In some grants, such as Department of Education grants, they offer tie breakers that are used to determine funding allocations in cases where multiple proposals receive the same final score. For institutions of higher education, those tie breakers are often determinations of need for their student population, such as the percentage of their students who qualify for financial aid. If one institution has a higher percentage of low income students than the other tied institutions, the tie breaker will tip the scoring in their favor. Read the application carefully to determine if there is a tie breaker, and make sure to include that information in your application to give your proposal the best chance at getting funded.

MSU-NORTHERN GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS

Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs- The first step in the grant application process is to work with the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs. This office can help you find potential funders, develop your program design, put together a timeline and budget, and many other services.

Proposal Clearance Form- Before grants can be submitted to any funding source, the Principle Investigator is responsible for filling out and gathering signatures on the Proposal Clearance Form. The Proposal Clearance Form is available on the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs website www.msun.edu/grants under the link to forms. This form provides information about the grant, and should be accompanied by a copy of the proposal and its

budget. Required signatures include the Chancellor, the Provost, the Vice Chancellor of Fiscal Affairs, the Director of Financial Services, and the Grants Manager. Grants cannot be submitted without all necessary signatures on the form. In order to ensure that you have enough time to get all of these signatures, it is suggested you have the form filled out and signed well before the grant is due to be submitted. After gathering signatures, the Proposal Clearance Form should be turned in to the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs.

Grants that are submitted through Grants.gov, NSF Fastlane, or FundingMT need to be submitted through the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs. Montana State University-Northern has accounts set up with these sources, and Principle Investigators are not allowed to set up their own accounts. In order to ensure that your grant is submitted on time, it is important to coordinate submission with the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs. They will also require a complete digital copy of the application and all needed files. To facilitate grant development and the submittal process, you can set up a shared folder with the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs to transfer files and to work on documents.

GRANT APPLICATION SECTIONS

PROJECT NARRATIVE

The project narrative gives an overview of the purpose of the grant, the grant activities, and the research and statistics that are being used to support the grant application.

BUDGET

The Grant Budget will include all money spent during the course of the grant, including indirects and any cost sharing.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The Budget Narrative gives a detailed account and justification for each expense

EVALUATION

The grant evaluation outlines how the grant seeker intends to prove or disprove the effectiveness of the grant program. There are many different types of program evaluation that can be used. Resources for program evaluation can be located at the MSU-Northern library.

CERTIFICATIONS

Lobbying Certification

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Drug Free Workplace Certification

The grantee certifies that it will provide a drug-free workplace by:

(a) Publishing a statement notifying employees that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the grantee's workplace and specifying the actions that will be taken against employees for violation of such prohibition;

(b) Establishing a drug-free awareness program to inform employees about—

(1) The dangers of drug abuse in the workplace;

(2) The grantee's policy of maintaining a drug-free workplace;

(3) Any available drug counseling, rehabilitation and employee assistance programs, and

(4) The penalties that may be imposed upon employees for drug abuse violations occurring in the workplace.

(c) Making it a requirement that each employee to be engaged in the performance of the grant be given a copy of the statement required by paragraph (a);

(d) Notifying the employee in the statement required by paragraph (a) that, as a condition of employment under the grant, the employee will—

(1) Abide by the terms of the statement; and

(2) Notify the employer of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace no later than five days after each conviction;

(e) Notifying the agency within ten days after receiving notice under subparagraph (d)(2) from an employee or otherwise receiving actual notice of such conviction;

(f) Taking one of the following actions, within 30 days of receiving notice under subparagraph

(d)(2), with respect to any employee who is so convicted—

(1) Taking appropriate personnel action against such an employee, up to and including termination; or

(2) Requiring such employee to participate satisfactorily in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a Federal, State, or local health, law enforcement, or other appropriate agency;

(g) Making a good faith effort to continue to maintain a drug-free workplace through implementation of paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d), (e) and (f).

Title III and V Certification- This certification is applied for yearly to ensure that MSU-Northern retains its ability to apply for some grants through the Department of Education (most notably the Strengthening Institutions Program and the Native American Non-Tribal Serving Institutions Grant).

APPENDIX

GLOSSARY OF GRANT TERMS

Administrative Regulations- Regulations that implement (1) guidance from the Office of Management and budget (OMB) contained in circulars that apply to the administration of all federal grants and cooperative agreements, (2) Presidential Executive Orders (where regulation is necessary), and (3) legislation that affects all applicants for or recipients of federal grants and cooperative agreements; see also EDGAR (defined below).

Application Control Center- The area of the Department of Educational [in the Grants and Contracts Service (defined below)] that is officially authorized to receive applications for discretionary grants and cooperative agreements.

Application Notice- A notice published in the Federal Register that invites applications for one or more discretionary grant or cooperative agreement competitions, gives basic program and fiscal information on each competition, informs potential applicants when and where they can obtain applications, and cites the deadline date (defined below), for a particular competition.

Application Package- A package that contains the application notice for one or more programs and all the information and forms needed to apply for a discretionary grant or cooperative agreement.

Appropriations Legislation- A law passed by the Congress to provide a certain level of funding for a grant program in a given year.

Assurances- A listing of a variety of requirements, found in different federal laws, regulations, and executive orders that applicants agree in writing to observe as a condition of receiving federal assistance.

Audit Funding- A conclusion about a monetary or nonmonetary matter related to an auditor's examination of an organization, program, activity, or function, which frequently identifies problems and provides recommendations for correction action in order to prevent their future recurrence.

Audit Resolution Process- The process by which the Department determines whether costs under a grant that have been identified in an audit report as questioned or unsupported are actually allowable or unallowable and initiates action to have recipients return unallowable expenditures.

Audit Resolution Specialist- The Department staff member who reviews audit reports on recipients' projects and develops the proposed recommendations to management for settling cases of expenditures not allowed under discretionary grants or cooperative agreements; these recommendations become the basis for decisions issued in the program determination letter (defined below).

Authorized Representative- The individual who has the legal authority to sign contracts, certificates, etc. for grants. This person is legally bound by any accepted award or contract. At MSU-Northern, the Chancellor is the authorized representative.

Authorizing Legislation- A law passed by the Congress that establishes or continues a grant program.

Budget Modification- A change in any portion of the budget during the fiscal year.

Budget Period- An interval of time into which a project period is divided for budgetary purposes, usually 12 months.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance- Publication and database produced by the General Services Administration that lists the domestic assistance programs for all federal agencies and gives information about a program's authorization, fiscal details, accomplishments, regulations, guidelines, eligibility requirements, information contacts, and application and award process; also called the CFDA.

Certification- A statement, signed by an applicant or recipient as a prerequisite for receiving federal funds, that is (1) meets or will adhere to certain conditions and/or (2) will undertake or not undertake certain actions.

CFDA Number- Identifying number for a federal assistance program, composed of a unique two letter prefix to identify the federal agency ("84" for the Department of Education), followed by a period and a unique three-digit code for each authorized program.

Closeout- The process during which the Department determines that the recipient has performed all required work of a discretionary grant or cooperative agreement and undertakes all necessary administrative actions to make any final fiscal adjustments to a recipient's account.

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) - Compilation of all final regulations issued by federal agencies and published annually by the National Archives and Records Administration; divided into numbered "Titles"; Title 34 contains the regulations of the Department of Education.

Competitive Review Process- The process used by the Department of Education to select applications for discretionary grants and cooperative agreements for funding, in which applications are scored by subject-area experts and the most highly scored applications are recommended for funding.

Continuation Grant- Additional funding awarded for budget periods following the initial budget period of a multi-year discretionary grant or cooperative agreement.

Cooperative Agreement- A type of federal assistance; essentially, a variation on a discretionary grant (defined below), awarded by the Department when it anticipates having substantial involvement with the recipient during the performance of a funded project.

Cover Letter- A letter sent with, and explaining the contents of, another document or packet of documents.

Deadline Date- The date by which the Department must receive a discretionary grant or cooperative agreement application for it to be considered for funding.

Discretionary Grant- An award of financial assistance in the form of money, or property in lieu of money, by the federal government to an eligible recipient, usually made on the basis of a competitive review process.

ED- The acronym for the U.S. Department of Education (i.e., Education Department).

ED Board- An electronic bulletin board service (BBS) of the Department of Education that gives information on discretionary grant, cooperative agreement, and contract opportunities at the Department.

EDGAR (Education Department General Administrative Regulations)- Administrative regulations governing ED discretionary grant and cooperative agreement programs found in Parts 74, 75, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, and 86 of Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations (defined above); a book issued by the Department that contains a reprint of these regulations.

Employer Identification Number (EIN) - The number the Internal Revenue Service assigns to every employer; used by the Department as the basis for the entity number (defined below).

Entity Number- The number the Department creates, using the employer identification number (defined above), to identify a recipient (as distinct from the award itself) in its dealings with the Department; enables the Department to be able to establish an account and to identify the correct recipient to receive the funds awarded under a discretionary grant or cooperative agreement.

Federal Register- Daily compilation of federal regulations and legal notices, presidential proclamations and executive orders, federal agency documents having general applicability and legal effect, documents required to be published by act of Congress, and other federal agency documents of public interest; prepared by the National Archives and Records Administration for public distribution by the Government Printing Office; publication of record for ED regulations.

Financial Operations Division (Accounting and Financial Management Service)- The administrative unit of the Department of Education that makes payments of federal funds to recipients of discretionary grants and cooperative agreements and receives recipients' completed SF-272 reports. (See financial report, below).

Financial Report- A document the recipient sends to the Department showing the amounts and/or types of expenditures made under an ED discretionary grant or cooperative agreement; usually made on a federal form, SF-272; for some grants, the financial report is also made on another federal form, SF-269.

Formula Grant- A grant that the Department is directed by Congress to make to recipients, for which the amount is established by a formula based on certain criteria (e.g., population) that are written into the legislation and program regulations; directly awarded and administered in the Department's program offices (defined on the next page).

Funding Priorities- Activities, identified by the Department in advance of a discretionary grant or cooperative agreement competition, that applicants are asked to include in an application so as to receive preference in the review process; they include absolute priorities (the applicant must address them in order to be considered for funding), competitive priorities (the applicant can choose whether or not to address them and the application might receive additional points for doing so, depending how well the applicant addresses the priority), and invitational priorities (the applicant is encouraged to address the stated priorities, but the application does not receive extra points for doing so).

Grant Application Reviewer ('Reviewer') - An individual who serves the Department by reviewing new discretionary grant and cooperative agreement applications; also referred to as "field reader" or "peer reviewer."

Grant Award Notification- Official document signed by the grants officer stating the amount and the terms and conditions of an award for a discretionary grant or cooperative agreement.

Grant Program- For the purposes of this booklet, a program of discretionary grants and/or cooperative agreements administered by the Department of Education.

Grants and Contracts Service (GCS)- The organizational unit of the Department of Education that has authority for overseeing the Department's assistance (grants) and procurement (contracts) processes; holds responsibility for the related functions of establishing indirect cost rates and developing automated systems for processing grants and contracts.

Grants Division- The administrative unit of the Grants and Contracts Service (defined above) responsible for negotiating, awarding, administering, and closing out all of the Department of Education's discretionary grants and cooperative agreements.

Grants Officer- The only person in the Department of Education who has the authority to award its discretionary grants and cooperative agreements and to establish or revise their terms and conditions.

Grants Specialist- The staff person in the Grants Division (defined above) who reports to the grants officer and who negotiates discretionary grants and cooperative agreements and handles the details of administering them on a daily basis.

Indirect Costs- Costs of an organization incurred for common or joint objectives, which cannot readily and specifically be identified with a particular grant project or other institutional activity. Examples include janitorial services, lighting, and heat. As a state agency, MSU-Northern is obligated to pursue the maximum amount of indirect costs allowed by the grant. A copy of or indirect cost agreement is available under “forms” on our website msun.edu/grants

Letter of Inquiry- A Letter of Inquiry is a document that is sent to the funder to express interest in applying for a grant. This letter can help determine if the funding source is a good fit for your proposal. The letter should consist of six parts- the introduction, the organization description, the statement of need, the methodology, other funding sources, and a final summary.

Letter of Support- A letter from an individual or representative of an organization that gives support to a program or activity.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU or IMOU)- a formal agreement between two or more parties. Companies and organizations can use MOUs to establish official partnerships. MOUs are not legally binding but they carry a degree of seriousness and mutual respect, stronger than a gentlemen's agreement. An IMOU or Internal Memorandum of Understanding occurs between individuals or departments of the same organization.

Monitoring- Activities undertaken by ED staff members to review and evaluate specific aspects of a recipient's activities under a discretionary grant or cooperative agreement; they include (1) measuring a recipient's performance; (2) assessing a recipient's adherence to applicable laws, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the award; (3) providing technical assistance to recipients; and (4) assessing whether a recipient has made substantial progress.

Negotiation- Pre award discussions conducted by the Grants Division (defined above) to establish the conditions and amount of a discretionary grant or cooperative agreement; based on recommendations from the cognizant Principal Office, a cost analysis of the applicant's budget, and a review of proposed activities.

Notice of Proposed Rulemaking- An announcement published in the Federal Register (defined on the preceding page) of proposed new regulations or modifications to existing regulations; the first stage in the process of creating or modifying regulations.

Obligation- An entry made by a grants officer in the Department's automated accounting system that authorizes the Financial Operations Division (defined on the preceding page) to make payments of federal grant funds to a recipient.

Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars- Administrative policy documents that give instruction to federal agencies on a variety of topics, including the administration of federal grants and cooperative agreements.

Payment Identification Number (PIN) - A number associated with a recipient's entity number (defined above), which enables the recipient to draw down cash payments authorized by a discretionary grant or cooperative agreement award.

Performance Report- A report of the specific activities the recipient of a discretionary grant or cooperative agreement has performed during the budget period or the project period.

Principal Officer- The Department official who is head of one of the six principal offices listed above; holds the rank of assistant secretary or its equivalent.

Program Office- A subunit of a principal office that conducts the daily work of administering ED discretionary grant and cooperative agreement programs, including the review and ranking of applications.

Program Officer- Program office staff person responsible for (1) developing program regulations (defined below), application notices, and application packages (defined above); (2) overseeing the review and ranking of applications submitted under their programs; (3) providing detailed funding recommendations to the Grants Division for applications; (4) participating in negotiations, as necessary; (5) providing technical assistance to applicants and recipients; (6) monitoring funded projects; and (7) making recommendations to the Grants Division about recipients' requests for revisions to project activities and budgets.

Program Determination Letter (PDL) - An official written notice from an authorized Department of Education management official to an audited recipient that sets forth the Department's decision on findings in an audit report, including all necessary actions and repayment of funds for which the recipient is responsible.

Program Regulations- Regulations that implement legislation passed by Congress to authorize a specific grant program; they include applicant and participant eligibility criteria, nature of activities funded, allowableness of certain costs, selection criteria under which applications will be selected for funding, and other relevant information.

Project Period- The total amount of time (sometimes several years) during which the Department authorizes a recipient to complete the approved work of the project described in the application; project periods of more than one year are divided into budget periods.

PR/Award Number- The identifying number for a discretionary grant or cooperative agreement award, composed of seven parts (e.g., H029A31234-01C):

Principal office designator (H)

CFDA numeric suffix of the program (029)

Alphabetic subprogram identifier (A)

Last digit of the fiscal year of the competition (3)

Unique application identifier (1234)

Fiscal year of the funding (01)

Sequential order of the most recent funding action in a Fiscal Year (C)

The first five parts remain the same throughout the life of the project period while the last two parts change by budget period.

Regulations- Federal rules of general applicability that are authorized by federal laws or other federal authority and contained in the Code of Federal Regulations.

RFP- Request for Proposal- is a document that solicits a proposal, often made through a bidding process, by an agency or company interested in procurement of a commodity, service or valuable asset, to potential suppliers to submit business proposals.

RFA- Request for Application- A type of solicitation notice in which an organization announces that grant funding is available, and allows researchers and other organizations to present bids on how the funding could be used.

Slate- The official list of recommended applicants and award amounts in a discretionary grant or cooperative agreement competition.

Standard Form 424 or SF-424 - A standard grant application form, sometimes referred to as the application "cover page," used by the Department of Education and other federal agencies.

GRANT ACRONYMS

AAAH American Association for the Advancement of Humanities

AAAS American Association for the Advancement of Science

AAALAC American Association of Animal Laboratory Accreditation Council

AAC Association for American Colleges

AACD American Association of Counseling and Development

AACUO Association for Affiliated College and University Offices

ACC Application Control Center

ACE American Council on Education

ACLS American Council for Learned Societies

ACO Administrative Contracting Officer

ACS American Cancer Society

ACYF Administration for Children, Youth and Families

ADAMHA Administration on Drug Abuse, Mental Health and Alcoholism

AFDC Aid to Families with Dependent Children

AFOSR Air Force Office of Scientific Research

AHA American Heart Association

AID Agency for International Development

AOA Administration on Aging

ARI Army Research Institute

ARO Army Research Office

ASAP As soon as possible

AUTM Association of University Technology Managers

AVA American Vocational Association

BAA Broad Agency Announcement

BIA Bureau of Indian Affairs

BLS Bureau of Labor Statistics

CAS Cost Accounting Standards

CASB Cost Accounting Standards Board

CASE Council for the Advancement and Support of Education

CBD Commerce Business Daily

CFDA Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance

CFR Code of Federal Regulations

CIES Council for the International Exchange of Scholars

CPB Corporation for Public Broadcasting

CO Contracting Officer

COP Certificate of Proposal

COS Community of Science

COGR Council on Governmental Relations

CURI College and University Resource Institute

CWS College Work Study

DA Departmental Administration

DARPA Defense Applied Research Projects Agency (formerly ARPA)

DC Direct Costs

DCA Division of Cost Allocation (HHS)

DCAA Defense Contract Audit Agency

DCE Direct Cost Equivalent

DEA Drug Enforcement Administration

DEAR Department of Energy Acquisition Regulations

DFAR Defense Federal Acquisition Regulations

(D)HHS Department of Health and Human Services

DOD Department of Defense

DOE Department of Energy

DOEd Department of Education

DOT Department of Transportation

EDGAR Educational Department General Administration Regulations

EDI Electronic Data Interchange

EEO Equal Employment Opportunity

EFT Electronic Funds Transfer

EO Executive Order

EPA Environmental Protection Agency

ERIC Education Resources Information Clearinghouse

ERA Electronic Research Administration

ERS Economic Research Service

ESEA Elementary and Secondary Education Act

ETA Employment and Training Administration

F & A Facilities and Administrative Costs (formerly Indirect Costs)

FAR Federal Acquisition Regulations

FDP Federal Demonstration Partnership

FIE Federal Information Exchange

FIPSE Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education

FMC Federal Management Circular

FOIA Freedom of Information Act

FR Federal Register

FSR Financial Status Report

FY Fiscal Year

FYI For your information

GA General Administration

GAO Government Accounting Office

GEPA General Education Provisions Act

GPRA Government Performance and Results Act

GPO Government Printing Office

GSA General Services Administration

GSL Guaranteed Student Loan

HEA Higher Education Amendment

HEARS Higher Education Administrative Resource Service

HED Higher Education Daily

HENA Higher Education and National Affairs

HHS Department of Health and Human Services

IACUC Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee

IACP Institutional Animal Care Program

IDC Indirect Costs (now called Facilities and Administrative Costs)

IG Inspector General

IHE Institution of Higher Education

IRB Institutional Review Board

IR&D Independent Research and Development

IREX International Research and Exchanges Board

LAR Laboratory Animal Resources

LEA Local Education Agency

MTA Material Transfer Agreement

MTDC Modified Total Direct Costs

NA Not applicable

NASA National Aeronautics and Space Administration

NCES National Center for Educational Statistics

NCURA National Council of University Research Administrators

NEA National Education Association

NEA National Endowment for the Arts

NEH National Endowment for the Humanities

NFAH National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities

NIA National Institute on Aging

NIAAA National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

NIDA National Institute on Drug Abuse

NIE National Institute on Education

NIH National Institutes of Health

NIHR National Institute for Handicapped Research

NRA National Rehabilitation Association

NRSA National Research Service Award

NSF National Science Foundation

OERI Office of Educational Research and Improvement

OFCC Office of Federal Contract Compliance

OMB Office of Management and Budget

ONR Office of Naval Research

OPRR Office of Protection from Research Risks

ORM Office of Regional Management

OSHA Occupational Safety and Health Administration

OSI Office of Science Integrity

OSTP Office of Science and Technology Policy

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

OTA Office of Technology Assessment

PA Program Announcement

PETA People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals

PHS Public Health Service

PI Principal Investigator

PUI Primarily Undergraduate Institution

RDA Recombinant DNA

RFA Request for Applications

RFP Request for Proposal

RFQ Request for Quotation

SBA Small Business Administration

SPA Sponsored Programs Administration

SPIN Sponsored Programs Information Network

SRA Society of Research Administrators

SRO Sponsored Research Office

SEA State Education Agency

SRA Society of Research Administrators

TDC Total Direct Costs

TGA The Grant Advisor

UBIT Unrelated Business Income Tax

USC United States Code