

EVMS Grants Accounting

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) During an Emergency/Pandemic Outbreak?

1. Is Grants Accounting office open?

Due to COVID-19, Grants Accounting (GA) is working remotely until further notice. GA is working to ensure continuity of services for the research community, and continue to set-up and perform regular maintenance and administration of sponsored project grant accounts.

We encourage the research community to reference the COVID-19 Resources on the EVMS website for updates.

2. How can I reach Grants Accounting staff?

Staff continue to be available by e-mail and are responding to voicemail messages.

3. Will Grants Accounting continue to bill/invoice Sponsors, submit financial reports, and draw down Federal funds?

Yes. Grants Accounting continue to perform all administrative procedures, including billing, financial report submissions, and draw down of funds on a normal schedule.

4. Is Grants Accounting still accepting invoices from subrecipients and subcontractors?

Yes. Grants Accounting continue to receive subrecipient invoices via the grantsaccounting@evms.edu mailbox. We will continue to perform the required monitoring activities and forward invoices to the Principal Investigator and Business Manager, when applicable, for further processing.

5. Will I still be able to make T&E adjustments?

Yes. Continue to submit requests via T&ECentral@evms.edu. Grants Accounting will respond as normal.

6. Am I still required to certify time?

Yes. Many employees are working remotely, and should have VPN access to log into ERAMS and certify as normal. In the event that this is/was not an option, Grants Accounting will work with Principal Investigators to adopt other options. As a last resort, and depending on the fluidity of the current crisis, Grants Accounting may adopt an alternative/delayed schedule for all certifications.

7. What should I do if I am conducting an EVMS sponsored project for which the COVID-19 conditions will likely halt or slow progress to completion within the funding period?

Please contact both Sponsored Programs at osp@evms.edu and the Sponsor's point of contact, as each case will be assessed and addressed based on the project circumstances and needs.

8. Will my grant have to pay for project-related costs incurred during a reduction in operations if we aren't able to work on the project (e.g., animal per diem)

In general, the answer is "Yes," your grant will likely be required to cover the costs incurred during a reduction in operations -- provided EVMS would likewise require a non-sponsored fund to pay for the same cost in similar circumstances. Put the other way around, if the institution would not allow a certain cost to be incurred on a non-sponsored fund during a reduction in operations, the institution will not allow the same cost to be charged to a sponsored project. This practice adheres to the federal government's Uniform Guidance (2 CFR §200.403) requirement that costs be incurred "consistent with policies and procedures that apply uniformly to both federally financed and other activities of the non-Federal entity."

9. I am a principal investigator working remotely from home during self-isolation. Can my effort still be charged to my federal grant?

In general, "Yes". If the PI or project staff is working remotely and contributing to a sponsored project, then effort can be charged to that grant.

The usual grants management requirements apply. If a PI or project staff cannot contribute to their current project but can contribute to another sponsored project, their effort must be moved to that funding source.

10. I am a principal investigator and am required to work from home as a result of COVID-19. Can I charge supplies relating to telework (i.e., such as a laptop, printer, office supplies, etc.) to my grant?

No. These types of expenses are considered administrative costs (indirect costs), and generally are not appropriate as a direct cost unless specifically approved by the sponsor. A reduction in operations at EVMS does not change this fact. If you need to work remotely from home, please consult with your department to identify whether computing resources are available.

11. Can I continue to pay personnel costs, including benefits, under my award in the event I have to temporarily suspend work?

This will depend on several factors, including the Sponsor's current guidance on administrative flexibilities for grants, contracts and cooperative agreements in response to COVID-19 Pandemic. Because some Sponsors have limitations, the following questions should be addressed.

- 1) Can work continue even though access to labs or working on site is limited?
 - a. If **yes**, you can continue charging the grant as normal.
 - b. If **no**, go to #2.

- 2) Does the Sponsor allow charging salaries and fringes under unexpected or extraordinary circumstances if in accordance with institutional policy? Please refer to Sponsor [matrix](#) to assist with finding applicable guidance. **Note:** *Not all Sponsors have provided guidance.*
 - a. If Sponsor allows, determine if your current available/remaining budget is sufficient to support the same level of salaries and benefits during this down period and upon re-starting the project?
 - i. If **yes**, you may charge the grant in accordance with the Sponsor's guidelines.
 - ii. If **no**, additional questions that will need to be addressed include:
 - How long can you support personnel costs and not impact completion of the deliverables?
 - Is there an opportunity for additional funding?
 - Is the Sponsor offering any relief or supplements due to COVID-19?
 - b. If Sponsor does not allow, or if budget funds are limited, determine if the current personnel are essential to completing the project upon restarting core activities.
 - i. If **yes**, do you have departmental funds (incentive account, department funds, chairman, etc.) to support cost?
 - a. If **yes**, work with the Department Chair to obtain the appropriate approvals and submit any necessary T&E changes to T&E_Central@evms.edu.
 - b. If **no**, contact Human Resources to determine what leave or alternative options are available.
 - ii. If **no**, discuss opportunities to reassign employee to another project with the Department Chair. If no other opportunities are available, contact Human Resources.

12. I had planned to travel to a conference to present my federally funded results, but the conference was cancelled due to precautions regarding COVID-19. May I still charge the travel-related costs to the grant? Can I charge trip cancellation insurance to my federal grant? Can I return early from a trip if I'm worried about being exposed to COVID-19 grant?

Not all non-Federal Sponsors have provided guidance on this topic, and Grants Accounting will, on an ongoing basis, continue to gather and share this information as it is published or voluntarily provided. We encourage Principal Investigators to reach out to their respective Sponsor's point of contact for quicker feedback.

Similarly, Federal agencies have different authorities, and there might not be complete uniformity between agencies, components of agencies, and even between programs. The safest course of action in all cases is to contact the grants manager and program officer for the award to determine how the financial assistance award will be treated.

Please click on the applicable link(s) in the [matrix](#) for Sponsor-specific information.

13. For Federal awards, can recipients that are not covered under Streamlined Non-competing Application Process (SNAP) carry forward unobligated balances on their active awards that are affected by COVID-19?

Yes, as outlined in NOT-OD-20-086, recipients that are not under SNAP have the discretion to carry forward unobligated balances on their active grants for immediate efforts to support activities related to or impacted by COVID-19 as long as the charges are allowable costs and are within the scope of the original award.

14. Can recipients that are not covered under SNAP request a no-cost extension for awards affected by COVID-19? Is prior approval required?

As outlined in NOT-OD-20-086, recipients that have active non-SNAP grant projects may extend the final budget period of the approved project period one time for a period of up to 12 months without requesting prior approval, by notifying the funding IC.

Recipients can send any additional questions related to COVID-19 nihghr@mail.nih.gov. NIH will continue to update these FAQs.

15. Can we still hire post-doctoral fellows from other countries?

Please contact Human Resources for further guidance.

16. If an employee is unable to perform duties due to illness or inability to work remotely, can I still charge salaries/wages to the grant?

The employee would use whatever paid leave is available. Once exhausted the leave would be unpaid. Please contact Human Resources for further guidance.