**6/13/22 Virtual Office Hours Recap - You’ve Been Awarded an NSF Grant, Now What?**

**Q: Once a grant has been funded, what kind of supplements are available, and how competitive are those funds?**

A: There are a wide variety of supplements available (e.g., Research Experience for Undergraduates, Research Experiences for Teachers, Research Opportunity Awards, Career-Life Balance, and more) once you have received an award. Check out the NSF [DEB webpage](https://www.nsf.gov/bio/deb/suppopp.jsp) and core solicitation for more information. Reach out to a cognizant program officer if you plan to apply for a supplement.

**Q: How do I write a report when none of my research has worked as planned?**

A: Be honest. Describe what has happened and why. Provide information on the issues and how you plan to move forward with the project in the future.  Many great scientific breakthroughs followed long periods of initial failure!

**Q: Do research sabbaticals need to be communicated to PO, and how might decreased spending associated with that be handled (i.e., is it ok to extend the duration of a grant project?)?**

A: If a research sabbatical is going to take you away from the funded project, reach out to your managing program officer to describe how the project will proceed in your absence. You will also likely need to submit a notification of your sabbatical (or any other adjustments in allocation of your time) through FastLane. If you need to extend a grant’s duration, you can request a No Cost Extension (NCE). The first NCE is handled primarily through your institution, and you should work with your Sponsored Research Officer (SRO).

**Q: How long should/can the annual report be? Are figures and pictures acceptable in an annual report?  or is it all text?**

A: Reports should be concise, but complete enough to convey the work done on the project and respond to each prompt. You cannot embed figures or tables into the report text itself, but you can upload figures and tables as separate pdf documents in addition to the report.

**Q: How should collaborative projects handle annual reports?**

A: Collaborative research proposals are treated as separate awards, and thus need separate reports. The annual reports from collaborating PIs can share duplicate text for many sections but should then also describe institutional-specific outcomes and issues (e.g., student training, who participated, etc.). Collaborators ideally should coordinate the content of their reports and the timing of submission, as it is very helpful during review to have all the pieces at one time.

**Q: What are the most common reasons you must return an annual report for revision?**

A: Common reasons include not appropriately and accurately listing all products, not including a DOI for all publications, not listing people who contributed to the project in the participant section, and not including information on the broader impact activities. Data products contributed via publications or submitted to data repository should also be included in the annual report. Check out the DEB Blog on [how to write a great annual report](https://debblog.nsfbio.com/2022/01/05/12-13-21-virtual-office-hours-recap-how-to-write-a-great-annual-report/) for more information.

**Q: What do you suggest for drafting travel budgets, given that costs keep going up? And what should PIs do if they run out of travel costs because their budgets were based on pre-COVID travel costs?**

A: You should draft budgets based on current costs and include justification for why that travel is needed to complete your research and dissemination objectives. Once you receive an award, you are free to reallocate funds for travel costs or other areas where you see fit.

**Q: How do proposed budgets generally compare to awarded budgets? In other words, how much are PIs usually asked to cut from their proposed budget?**

A: Decisions to modify a budget request are made on a case-by-case basis. Budgets should include what you need to complete the project, but you should not inflate the budget in anticipation of a cut. Instead, budget carefully and provide detailed budget justification so we know how funds will be spent. See the DEB Blog post on [budget justifications](https://debblog.nsfbio.com/2022/06/13/writing-budget-justifications-2/) for more information.

**Q: Can you give some thoughts on what you think makes a good budget justification?**

A: The budget justification is meant to describe how money will be spent and why those costs are necessary to complete the project. A detailed justification shows that you’ve thought through the project in detail and understand how the work will be accomplished. Structure the budget justification to match the structure of the budget itself (typically including the same section names and headers, like “A: Senior Personnel”, “D: Equipment”, etc.). There should be very clear connections between project activities as described in the proposal narrative and the associated costs in the budget. Check out the blog post on [budget justifications](https://debblog.nsfbio.com/2022/06/13/writing-budget-justifications-2/) for more information.