

BEST PRACTICES FOR PRE-AWARD SUPPORT IN THE DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

This document describes best practices that should be followed, whenever possible, when seeking pre-award support from the Fisheries and Wildlife Financial Business Officer (FW FBO). It is understood that faculty may experience situations when these practices cannot be followed. However, adhering to them whenever possible should promote effective and efficient support to those faculty needing assistance from the FW FBO.

TIMELINES

- MSU requires that complete proposals are submitted to the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) at least 3 full business days prior to the submission deadline to be considered on-time by OSP.
- Ideally, OSP would like to receive your final budget at least 6 business days prior to the submission deadline and the solicitation 10 business days prior to the submission deadline. Note that OSP often asks for changes to the initial budget that gets submitted, and your ability to respond to those changes is important during this time.
- When possible, submit your budget to the FW FBO about **3 weeks** before the submission deadline to help in meeting OSP's deadline.
- This would change OSP's rule of 10-6-3 to 12-8-5 when working through the FW FBO.

FORMAT

- When possible, using the same budget format will help the FW FBO. OSP prefers the Grants.gov format. Templates can be found here: <https://www.cga.msu.edu/PL/Portal/Forms.aspx>
- However, given preferences of partners and/or requirements of specific funders, using the same budget format may not always be possible. When this occurs, please submit budgets to the FW FBO in an Excel spreadsheet (instead of a Word document). Formulas should be included within individual cells of the spreadsheet so that OSP can check how calculations were made (e.g., 35% fringe for a specific salary). Budgets created without formulas for checking are typically not accepted by OSP who may return a budget to FW when calculations are not included.
- Narrative budget justifications should briefly explain the math in a budget (e.g., number of samples and cost per sample, trip cost broken down into transportation and lodging, etc.). Narrative budget justifications should also explain IDC rates for clarity, especially for projects occurring under PERM. If the IDC rate used is less than the on-campus rate of 56.5% (or the off-campus rate of 26%), documentation will be required to support the lower IDC rate. RFPs may describe the lower IDC that funders will pay, as may existing agreements between FW and a given funder (e.g., MDNR and GLFC for PERM, cooperative agreement with USGS).
- Many faculty previously relied on Budget Builder to calculate salary and fringe rates for personnel included in a proposal, but budget builder no longer exists. Currently, the only way to properly calculate salary and fringes is through a PD (Proposal Document) in the KC system (Kuali Coeus - Research Administration System). The FW FBO can help in providing these figures, however KC is available for faculty use, and faculty are encouraged to begin exploring it to create draft budgets.
 - When requesting salary and fringe amounts from the FW FBO, clearly identify the type of position along with the starting salary for the individual who will be supported, the time period over which they will work, and the raise percentage they are likely to receive.

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- Remember that new PD's are required for ALL new money and budget adjustments. If you negotiate and submit a request directly to a funder, please contact the FW FBO so that a PD can be routed. In the event that you do not route a new PD, OSP will often receive awards or modifications/extensions after the fact and know nothing about them. This creates confusion and delays that can be avoided when a PD is already in place.

GENERAL

- In general, FW faculty should attempt to present a draft budget to the FW FBO that identifies cost associated with all elements of the budget, with the possible exception of salary for specific employees and fringe rates, which may need to be looked up. The FW FBO can check costs to ensure that they are correct if the cost is set by the university (e.g., tuition), and the FW FBO can supply budget figures for salary and fringe to ensure that the budget is correct and likely to be approved by OSP. The FW FBO cannot typically estimate costs for elements of the budgets not specified by the university (equipment, travel, etc.), and this step should be taken by the FW faculty.
- If FW faculty delegate budget building responsibilities to staff or students, please first spend time going over these practices with the delegate to better prepare them for the process.

RESOURCES

- The link below provides information pertaining to the rules and procedures on proposal submissions. It is also a great resource for an array of questions on budgets, travel, fringe, timelines, F&A, etc. <https://www.cga.msu.edu/PL/Portal/ProposalDevelopment.aspx>
- PI's are encouraged to use KC (Kuali Coeus - Research Administration System) to start building their own Proposal Documents. In KC you can learn how to use the budgeting tools to forecast salaries and fringes. KC also provides the ability to have multiple people interact with building and editing budgets.
- Training materials for the KC system are available here: <https://www.cga.msu.edu/PL/Portal/DocumentViewer.aspx?cga=aQBkAD0ANwA4ADcA>
- For additional assistance using this system, please contact the KC Help Desk at kchelpdesk@msu.edu or 517-355-2000. The FW FBO is also available for occasional assistance.