

Contractual Frequently Asked Questions

- **“When do I need a subaward vs. service agreement?”**

Subaward: Use when another institution or organization will perform a significant portion of the project’s programmatic work. They carry out tasks under your project, follow federal or sponsor requirements, and you must monitor their performance.

Service Agreement / Contractor: Use when you are purchasing goods or routine services (e.g., lab testing, consulting, equipment services) from a vendor or contractor. They do **not** perform programmatic research.

The subaward vs. service agreement checklist is available to help with your determination. If you need additional assistance, please reach out to your Pre-Award Officer.

- **“How long does contract processing take?”**

Typical processing time varies by complexity, sponsor requirements, and review needed.

Simple grants or contracts: ~1 week.

Subawards, federal contracts, or complex agreements: ~2 weeks or longer.

Again, these times can vary. Subaward processing can vary significantly depending on how quickly we receive all required documents from the subrecipient.

Tip: Submit proposals and documents as early as possible to allow time for compliance and budget review.

- **“What documents are required at proposal stage?”**

Common documents needed include:

- Proposal budget and justification
- Scope of work (SOW) or project description
- PI and key personnel effort commitments
- Subrecipient commitment forms (if applicable)
- Conflict of Interest disclosures
- Institutional approvals (e.g., IRB/IACUC if needed)

Note: Some sponsors may require additional forms, so check their specific guidelines.

- **“What is subrecipient monitoring?”**

Subrecipient monitoring is the process the University uses to ensure that subrecipients are using funds appropriately and complying with federal and sponsor requirements.

It includes:

- Reviewing financial reports and invoices
- Tracking project progress and deliverables
- Performing risk assessments
- Ensuring the subaward terms and conditions are met

Monitoring is federally required for all subawards (2 CFR §200.331).

- **“How do I submit invoices for subrecipient payment?”**

Subrecipients usually submit invoices to MURC using the forms or process specified in their subaward agreement.

Invoices must include:

- Project name or award number
- Invoice period
- Description of work completed
- Budget categories and totals
- In many instances, supporting documentation is also required

Once reviewed and approved by the PI/department, the University processes the payment according to the terms of the subaward.

- **“Who signs contracts?”**

Only John Maher, VP of Research or a signatory he designates can sign contracts and subawards.

PIs cannot sign agreements on behalf of MURC, but they are responsible for reviewing scope, budget, and compliance issues before submission.

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