



Quick Start Guide

Overview of Grant
and Contract
Processes



MARSHALL UNIVERSITY
RESEARCH CORPORATION

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Introduction

In preparing proposals for funding and carrying out activities related to grants and contracts, the Principal Investigator (PI) is performing valuable work and has a wide array of responsibilities. The Marshall University Research Corporation (MURC) is here to administer the business side of the application, award and disbursement process, and to ensure compliance with fiscal, research integrity and university policy requirements.

One of the most essential, but often misunderstood and ignored principles of grant and contract preparation, execution and performance, is the division of responsibility between MURC and the PI. Many challenges that occur in grant and contract compliance and performance can be traced to breakdowns in this division of responsibilities early in the process.

If you have a question about an issue you encounter during the application process or the execution of your grant, the place to start is your pre-award and post-award officers. With a quick phone call, they can often determine who at MURC or the university is best situated to help with your issue.

Please remember that there are hundreds of PIs at Marshall University. Policies and procedures cannot be customized and varied with infinite flexibility, while still allowing MURC to continue to perform its responsibilities at reasonable cost.

To understand what is required from both parties—PIs and MURC—to make the process work, it is important to understand the following concept:

EVERY grant and contract is a legal agreement between the sponsor/funding agency and the Marshall University Research Corporation, acting on behalf of Marshall University. The agreement stipulates that the Principal Investigator will perform the work described in the Statement of Work for the stipulated budget in compliance with relevant terms and conditions.

This “Quick Start Guide” is an effort to help PIs navigate the many processes related to administering grants and contracts at Marshall University. The MURC staff encourages you to make use of the information and links available here, and to [contact us](#) with ideas, requests or questions.

We look forward to working with you!

Marshall University Research Corporation

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www.marshall.edu/murc

Summary of the Grant Process

The grant process is complex. The following is an overview of the steps in the process:

1. Opportunity Identification

You can identify a funding opportunity you would like to apply for in several ways—by using your own creativity and knowledge, by reviewing the opportunity announcements [circulated by MURC](#) and made available on funding agency web sites, and/or by checking the [Grant Forward](#) database.

Visit the [Funding Opportunities](#) page of our website for funding resources.

You are encouraged to discuss your proposal with the funding agency program manager well ahead of the submission deadline. This discussion helps ensure you are applying to the program or directorate most relevant to your proposal and can provide you additional useful guidance. E-mail often works well for the first contact with a program officer. Before getting in touch with the program officer, find out as much about the program as you possibly can.

2. Notification of Intent to Submit

When it becomes likely that you will be pursuing an opportunity you identified in [Step 1](#), you should immediately contact your assigned MURC pre-award grants officer regarding your intent to submit a proposal. If a grants officer has not previously been assigned to you, call the Grants and Contracts Office at 304.696.4836. You should be prepared to discuss specifics about the opportunity, including the agency, the specific solicitation to which you will be responding and the deadline.

Please provide as much advance notice as possible, even if you are not certain you will be submitting a proposal. The earlier you contact us, the more efficiently and effectively we can help you.

3. Assignment of Pre-Award Grants Officer

If you do not have a pre-award grants officer with whom you work on a routine basis, one will now be assigned by the Grants and Contracts Office. Obtain a copy of the solicitation or a link to the specific solicitation and share it with your grants officer as soon as possible to allow ample time for determination of eligibility. You should carefully review the regulations governing the relevant solicitation, paying particular attention to the review criteria and anticipated deliverables.

4. Proposal Preparation

4.1 Format

Many funding agencies have prescribed formats for proposal preparation, including required forms for text, biographical data and budget. Agencies often also have page limitations on the body (text) of the proposal. The Grants and Contracts Office has a number of program application forms on file; forms can also be obtained from the [Federal Register](#) or from the granting agency.

For agencies that do not have prescribed formats, we suggest using our [Tips for Writing Proposals](#). We also offer a regular schedule of free [grantsmanship professional development workshops](#), including “Proposal Development.”

4.2 Proposal Review

Colleague Review

An in-house peer review of your proposal as it is being developed also can be extremely valuable and is highly recommended. A review by established Marshall researchers, experts in the field and other colleagues will highlight strengths to emphasize in your proposal and will help identify weaknesses you can correct before submission. If you are interested in an in-house peer review, please contact either your dean or the Grants and Contracts Office.

Free Review Service for STEM Proposals

An external review service is available through the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, Division of Science and Research. This service provides free peer reviews for STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) faculty who are developing competitive proposals for funding from federal agencies. The commission engages qualified external reviewers from around the country to read draft proposals and provide comments and suggestions. All reviews are conducted under a non-disclosure agreement.

Researchers are asked to submit their draft proposals to the commission for review at least three weeks before comments are needed. Remember also to allow yourself time to incorporate suggestions from the external review before the proposal deadline.

For information about this service,

[contact](#) Dr. John Maher (maheri@marshall.edu) and he will put you in touch with

the right individual for your situation.

Mentoring

A mentor who will give you feedback about ways to improve your proposal is another key proposal preparation resource. Though less formal than external review, soliciting proposal assistance from a mentor requires planning and advance notice to allow the mentor enough time to provide useful feedback. Check with your

department chairman or dean for suggestions about colleagues who may be willing to serve as mentors.

5. Budget and Budget Narrative Preparation

5.1 Project Budget

Most funding agencies provide guidance for preparing the project budget in either the solicitation or in a separate application guide. The budget must be carefully constructed so that expenses are appropriate for the project and correctly categorized. MURC and most federal agencies divide costs into eight categories:

Salaries	Contractual or Consulting Expenses
Fringe Benefits	Travel
Supplies	Other
Equipment	Indirect Costs

However, some agencies may have their own categories and it is important to follow these agency-specific guidelines during the application process. Your grants officer will assist you with reviewing and interpreting these budget guidelines.

Important Note: The budget eventually must be completed to a sufficient level of detail to allow us to set up your project in the university's finance system, Banner, which will enable you to begin spending the grant funds. **Completing a detailed budget as early in the process as possible will save you valuable time getting started on your project once the award is made.** Your grants officer will help ensure your project budget is Banner-ready.

5.2 Budget Narrative/Justification

The budget narrative/justification is the vehicle used to explain the purpose of all grant expenditures and is essentially a narrative explanation of each line item in the budget. Often required by funding agencies, it also provides the detail needed to allow us to set up your project in the Banner system, as described above in Step 5.1

5.3 Data Sheet

We have constructed a [Data Sheet](#) to aid in preparation of the budget. The Data Sheet provides current and detailed information relative to items such as fringe benefit rates and health insurance costs for employees who will be involved in the project, compliance information for use with projects involving human or animal subjects or hazardous materials, and Facilities and Administration Rates (often referred to as "F&A" or "indirect costs"). In addition, the form provides important MURC organizational information such as the federal ID, DUNS number and congressional district information usually required for electronic grant submissions.

6. Authorization to Submit

6.1 Securing Approvals

Before your final proposal can be submitted to the funding agency, all university requirements must be satisfied, including obtaining approvals for any commitments the university must make to receive the grant.

The vehicle for obtaining these necessary approvals is the [Authorization to Submit Grant](#) form. This form ensures university approval of resources for the proposed project, certifying that commitments of cash, facilities, equipment and personnel have been examined for appropriateness and that the university has the ability to meet these commitments.

You are responsible for routing the Authorization to Submit Grant form through, and obtaining signatures from, the following:

- Yourself (as PI)
- Your pre-award grants officer
- Co-principal investigators (if applicable)
- Department chair(s)
- Dean(s)
- Provost/Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs (if applicable)

This form must be completed with all required signatures before your proposal can be submitted to the funding agency. You will need to give your department chairman and dean adequate time to review the proposal, budget and budget narrative; to approve the university commitments; and to sign the [Authorization to Submit Grant](#) form. Plan to deliver the form and supporting documents to the department chairman well in advance of the funding agency's submission deadline.

Once you have obtained all the above approvals, the Grants and Contracts Office requires five working days to process the proposal. They will route the proposal through the Marshall University Research Corporation for final approval.

6.2 Submission Checklist

Here is a list of things to consider *before* routing the [Authorization to Submit Grant form](#) for approval:

Substance and Merit

Have you ensured the substance and merit of the proposal, including the academic appropriateness and desirability? Projects will be accepted only when consistent with the following objectives: the education of the undergraduate, graduate and postdoctoral student; the advancement of

knowledge through research; the preservation and dissemination of knowledge; the creation of works of art; and the advancement of the public welfare.

Human Subjects

Are human subjects involved in the proposed research? If so, will their rights and welfare be protected? If you are not sure whether or not your proposed research will involve human subjects, contact the [Office of Research Integrity](#). If human subjects are involved, a review will be conducted by the appropriate [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#) in accordance with university, state and federal policy. The reviews conducted by the IRBs are coordinated by and through MURC.

Animals and Biohazards

Does the project involve [animals, hazardous or radioactive materials, recombinant DNA, infectious agents, or bloodborne pathogens](#)? If so, indicate that on page 2 of the Authorization to Submit Grant form and consult the [Data Sheet](#) for the appropriate contacts to establish protocols or biosafety level approvals. Familiarize yourself with timeline requirements for these approvals.

National Science Foundation Programs

Is the proposal to the National Science Foundation (NSF)?

Researchers employed through NSF grants will be required to successfully complete a [Responsible Conduct of Research online training](#) course before beginning work on the project. A researcher is defined as any individual, regardless of title or position on the grant, who is responsible for the design, conduct, or reporting of research that is funded by NSF. For all NSF awards, the Authorization to Submit Grant form requires you to confirm your familiarity with this policy and your intent to abide by its terms and conditions.

Public Health System Programs (includes NIH, HRSA, CDC and others)

Is the proposal to any agency under the federal Public Health System (PHS)?

Researchers on PHS-sponsored grants are now required to complete an online [Conflict of Interest education course](#). PHS defines a researcher as any individual, regardless of title or position on the grant, who is responsible for the design, conduct, or reporting of research that is funded by PHS or proposed for such funding.

Time and Effort Commitments

What are the commitments of faculty and staff time and the possible effects of these commitments on the teaching and other obligations of the personnel involved? The total commitments of time and effort cannot exceed the threshold established by the Marshall University Board of [Governors Faculty](#)

[Compensation from Grants and Contracts Policy](#). Effort committed to a project represents a good faith effort regarding the actual amount of time to be spent working on the project. Effort committed as cost share must be

tracked, regardless of whether or not it is required by the funding agency. For this reason, the voluntary commitment of effort as cost share is strongly discouraged. All faculty members have administrative commitments outside of teaching or research, so the maximum amount of effort pledged on grants should not exceed 95 percent of base salary.

Compensation

Does the proposal provide compensation IN EXCESS of regular salary for project personnel? Any such arrangements should be reviewed carefully with your department chairman, director or dean. Refer to the Marshall University Board of Governors [Faculty Compensation from Grants and Contracts Policy](#) and contact your grants officer for guidance about limitations on extra compensation.

Tuition Waivers/Release Time

Are requests for tuition waivers for student support or release time for PIs to work on the proposed grant activities clearly described?

Release time is time during which a faculty member is released from his/her normal duties to work on a specific grant project. You must get approval for release time from the appropriate dean or vice president before an award is accepted and activity begins.

Typically, release time will necessitate compensation for a teaching assistant to provide for replacement time in the classroom. These classroom replacement costs cannot be paid from grant funds, so other funds must be available to cover the compensation. The project budget needs to reflect the anticipated actual effort, rather than the cost of the teaching assistant. These costs will need to be negotiated with the appropriate dean. Replacement costs for classroom time, if applicable to your grant project, must be reflected in the appropriate boxes on the Authorization to Submit Grant form.

Although time and effort paid to faculty for grant projects generally represent a salary savings to the university during the grant period, MURC does not control how these savings are used. Please consult with the appropriate dean to determine if any specific college or department policies are in place that may more clearly define how salary savings from research projects are allocated.

Fringe Benefits

Does your budget reflect the appropriate fringe benefit rates based on the type of employees to be involved in the project? Consult the [Data Sheet](#) for current benefit rates and costs.

Facility Needs

What are the requirements for space and facilities? This is particularly important if your needs cannot be met with space and facilities already available to you.

Budget

Are all budget costs, including facilities and administrative costs, accurately determined; realistically estimated and stated; and not contrary to the policies of the university or the grantor?

Match and Cost Sharing Requirements

Does the proposal commit university funds for matching? Equipment acquisition? Other? Is cost sharing required? Explain who will meet these commitments and secure their explanation and initials on page 2 of the Authorization to Submit Grant form. If there are matching requirements, describe who will provide the matching dollars. (This is not the same as cost sharing in token amounts by a percentage commitment of the PI's effort, or that of other personnel. Matching funds are specific dollars that must be provided by the university.) Additionally, if the required match may allow a mix of cash and in-kind contributions, that must be separately stated and explained.

Voluntary cost sharing is strongly discouraged.

Subawards or Subcontracts

Is a subaward or subcontract included in the application budget? Subawards and subcontracts are distinct from service or consulting agreements. A subaward or subcontract is used to conduct a portion of your project critical to its success and is not a service routinely provided by the contractor. (In other words, the contractor's work is highly customized to your project.) On the other hand, service or consulting agreements are used to secure incidental work related to your project and are used for a service typically offered by the contractor to the public at large. Be sure to include the names of any sub-awardees or subcontractors. Refer to the Subaward and Vendor Contract Guidelines available on the [Policies, Procedures and Guidelines](#) page of our website.

Supplies

Are supplies to be purchased for the project? Have general office supplies been delineated from project-type supplies (e.g. lab supplies, slides, etc.) in your budget? Note that general office supplies are usually not allowable as direct costs.

Equipment

Will equipment be purchased? If so, a detailed description for each piece of equipment should be included in the budget and budget justification. Items less than \$5,000 and purchased separately (e.g. not bundled as part of a larger, interconnected item) should be classified as supplies.

Significant Financial Interest Disclosure

Have you filed a current electronic [Significant Financial Interest Disclosure \(SFID\)](#) with the Office of Research Integrity? This online form must be completed by all PIs and key research staff before any award may be set up for expenditures and must be re-filed annually.

Important: If you are applying for funding from NIH or any other agency under the Public Health System (PHS), new regulations require that the SFID form be completed by all PIs and co-PIs before proposal submission.

7. Submission to the Funding Agency

Once you have prepared the materials according to the sponsor's requirements, MURC will submit your proposal to the funding agency on your behalf.

The vice president for research/MURC executive director is the only person legally empowered to enter the Marshall University Research Corporation into a contract or agreement on behalf of the university.

Funding agencies have a multitude of paper and electronic submission systems, so it is a good idea to discuss the mechanics of submission with your grants officer well in advance.

In almost all cases, a submission that misses the deadline is rejected by the funding agency. You are responsible for making sure the [Authorization to Submit Grant form](#) and your proposal materials are completed and delivered to your MURC grants officer in a timely manner for submission. Do not assume that your grants officer will be available to help at the last minute unless you schedule that assistance in advance.

8. Evaluation

After MURC submits your proposal, it will go through an evaluation process within the funding agency. This evaluation process sometimes takes six months or more.

Take advantage of this time to take care of outstanding budget details and any appropriate [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#) and [Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee \(IACUC\)](#) approvals.

Be sure to acquaint yourself with MURC's [Purchasing & Receiving Guidelines](#) so you will be ready to initiate equipment purchases, etc., immediately upon award.

You should also become familiar with other potentially relevant [policies, procedures and guidelines](#), including travel and [purchase card \(P-Card\)](#).

9. Notification of Award

Formal notification of an award is contained in a Notice of Award from the funding agency.

Ideally, the agency sends the notice to both MURC and the PI, but that is not always the case.

- If you receive notification, please forward it to your MURC grants officer as soon as possible.
- If MURC receives notification, we will forward it to you immediately upon receipt.

If the Notice of Award reflects the exact budget, terms and conditions proposed in your submission, the notice is turned over to MURC's grants compliance administrators for implementation of the award, including creation of the appropriate accounts in Banner, the university's finance system.

If the Notice of Award contains terms and conditions *different* from those in your proposal, MURC will negotiate on your behalf with the funding agency regarding the final terms. When terms and conditions are agreed to by both sides, the funding agency will issue a revised Notice of Award. At that point, the final agreement will be turned over to MURC's grants compliance administrators for award implementation.

If the awarded amount differs from your proposed budget, you will need to revise the budget before accounts are set up and you begin spending grant funds.

10. Notification of Rejection

If your proposal is not funded, notify the Grants and Contracts Office and immediately write to thank the funding agency panel for reviewing your proposal, and request the reviewers' comments. Find out what the reviewers felt were weaknesses of the proposal, address those issues and plan to resubmit the proposal at the next deadline or submit the improved proposal to another program that funds similar projects.

If you plan to resubmit your proposal and have not already sent your proposal out for review, this is an excellent time to do so, as recommended in [Step 4.2](#).

In resubmitting, be certain your proposal addresses any new priorities outlined in the subsequent Request for Proposals. Remember that developing and maintaining a strong relationship with the program representatives at the funding agency can significantly

enhance your proposal's chance. The same applies to proposals submitted to foundations and corporations.

11. Transfer to Disbursement

11.1 Banner Account Set-up

If you elected to defer work on making the budget ready for Banner in the proposal development process (see [Step 5.1](#)), it is now time to fill in the budget details. This step must be completed before your award can be fully implemented and before any grant funds can be disbursed. (Your grants officer will work with you to help ensure the project budget is Banner-ready.)

During this step, you will also receive guidance as to any other outstanding items that may preclude implementation of your award.

Once all the necessary elements are complete, your grants compliance administrator will contact you with the Banner fund number you will use to spend funds as specified in the award.

11.2 Assignment of Compliance Administrator

When the notice of award is received by the Grants and Contracts Office, a grants compliance administrator will be assigned to you. He or she will contact you regarding how to proceed in order to implement the award. At this stage, you should identify any departmental support who will be assisting you in the administration of the project and who will require Banner access.

12. Advance Funding

Sometimes there are delays in receiving a final Notice of Award or in getting an award implemented. The hiring of personnel and purchase of equipment often cannot wait, so there is a mechanism for advance funding when an award is expected.

MURC will advance funding to you if a relevant unrestricted university account is offered to guarantee funding of the transaction if grant funding is ultimately unavailable.

The period of the advance is limited and determined at the discretion of MURC. Typically, advance funding cannot extend beyond three months.

Please refer to MURC's [Advance Funding Request Guidelines](#). The mechanism for requesting advance funding is the [Request for Advance Funding](#) form.

13. Performance

13.1 Financial Administration

13.1.1 Purchase Requisitions

MURC enters requisitions for grant-related purchasing but does not execute the purchasing. Purchasing is performed by the [Marshall University Office of Purchasing](#).

Please refer to the MURC [Purchasing & Receiving Guidelines](#). You or a responsible member of your organization should become familiar with these guidelines.

Questions about purchasing requisitions should be directed to your office's [assigned purchase representative](#) or 304.696.3157.

13.1.2 Travel

There are a number of details to consider when traveling on grant funds. Please review the MURC [Travel Policy and Procedure Manual](#). Note that some awards require compliance with the Fly America Act for foreign travel. Consult with your grants compliance administrator well in advance of any proposed foreign travel.

A completed [Travel Authorization/Direct Bill Request Form](#) must be submitted *before* travel so it can be ensured that travel expenses are reimbursable from grant funds. If un-reimbursable expenses are incurred, they will be the responsibility of the traveler or department.

Questions about travel should be directed to Susan Ross at rosssu@marshall.edu or 304.696.6203.

13.1.3 Purchase Card (P-Card)

A major addition to the ease of doing business on grant projects is the availability of the MURC purchase card option for purchases less than \$5,000.

Cardholders are responsible for having the card account properly reconciled with the correct documentation by the monthly deadline. If the deadline is not met, the account will be defaulted to the account pledged at card issuance to allow the timely assignment and invoicing of grant expenses.

Please refer to the [Purchase Card Policies and Procedures Manual](#).

In certain cases, it may be possible to raise the P-Card transaction limit temporarily to accommodate a single purchase, particularly if the P-Card has a limit below \$5,000.

Questions about the purchase card should be directed to Rebecca Hill King at hill286@marshall.edu or 304.696.2770

13.2 Personnel and Payroll

For most non-university personnel associated with grants, the locus of employment is MURC and employment is at-will and grant-dependent.

It is imperative that you, as a supervisor:

- become familiar with the [MURC Human Resources Policies and Procedures](#) and the Personnel Action Request forms (PARs) for [salaried](#) and [hourly](#) employees, which are required for all personnel actions, including employment, resignation, retirement, transfer, and salary or funding source changes;
- work with MURC human resources representatives for issues with hiring, discipline or termination;
- assure proper leave administration and signing off on all time sheets; and
- make certain all relevant job-specific and general human resources training is completed.
- Make sure all offers of employment are approved by HR and that the offer is limited to that described

Questions about MURC employee benefits should be directed to Coria Kent at kent1@marshall.edu or 304.696.6320.

Questions about payroll should be directed to Tammy Brumbaugh at brumbaught@marshall.edu or 304.696.2830.

Human resources support is provided to MURC by [Marshall University Human Resource Services](#).

14. Intellectual Property

The university has intellectual property obligations to the federal government and its funding agencies under the [Bayh-Dole Act](#).

The university also has a specific [Marshall University Board of Governors Intellectual Property Policy](#). Under this policy, the university owns all intellectual property created by university and MURC employees with (non-trivial) use of university resources. Employees of Marshall University and MURC must sign an assignment of rights***

Marshall University and MURC employees are obliged to [disclose inventions](#) in a timely manner and must delay publications until disclosure has been completed and decisions have been made about title.

For assistance with intellectual property matters, contact Amy Melton, [Marshall University Technology Transfer Office](#), at tto@marshall.edu or 304.696.4365.

15. Reporting

15.1 Financial Reporting

Financial reports required by your funding agency will be provided to the agency by MURC's Finance Office. These reports may include proof of performance and billings to the various agencies. You will be asked to assist with providing match documentation if applicable to your award.

15.2 Progress Reporting

You will be responsible for providing the required progress reports to the funding agency. You are best equipped to judge percentage of completion on your project and to determine whether or not you are meeting the specific outcomes required by your funding entity. Failure to provide progress reports in a timely manner may result in delays in receiving reimbursement for your expenditures and/or the denial of payment. You should provide MURC with a copy of all progress reports submitted to your funding agency.

15.3 No Cost Extensions

Many agencies allow for an extension of the grant period if warranted, but extensions must be requested and approved by the funder before the end of the original grant end date. The method for requesting extensions is usually specified in the award terms and conditions. Your MURC grants officer should assist with extension requests. Any notice of an extension must be documented at MURC to ensure proper reporting and closeout.

16. Award Closeout

There are a number of steps necessary to close out your grant once all project activities are complete.

16.1 Reports

You must submit all required programmatic reports to the agency and to MURC.

You will also need to provide MURC with a listing of any outstanding financial obligations and adjustments incurred but not yet posted to Banner, along with any supporting documentation. Please communicate any outstanding invoices to MURC's finance director to ensure complete and accurate payment prior to the deadline established by your funding agency.

16.2 Cost Share/Match

Please provide any [Cost Sharing Report](#) forms with supporting documentation to your grants compliance administrator.

16.3 Cost Overruns, Residual Funds and Transfers

Any cost overruns or corrections will be transferred to either a cost recovery account or to the correct account. Unused funds may be returned to the funding agency.

16.4 Personnel

You will need to submit Personnel Action Request forms (PARs) to either terminate employment or change the funding source for any employees who are being paid from your grant funds.

- [PAR for Salaried Employees](#)
- [PAR for Hourly Employees](#)

How the Contract Process Differs

Contracts are a little different from grants because although they sometimes are competitive, they often are not peer-reviewed.

As a PI, you may be responding to an EOI (expression of interest) or an RFI (request for information), or you may be preparing a task under a Task Order Agreement or Master Agreement.

The steps below are critical processes that must be completed in a timely manner.

Defining the Statement of Work

Discussion of your proposed contract with the responsible program manager or sponsor well ahead of the submission deadline is highly encouraged. As you start those discussions, you should inform the Grants and Contracts Office. Lisa Daniels will assist you with the development of your contract. You can reach her at 304.696.3368 or adkins244@marshall.edu.

Working with private corporations tends to develop less formally, and many times occurs through contacts developed by the PI.

You should feel comfortable disclosing any potential contract activity to the Office of the Vice President for Research and should establish contact between the potential sponsor and the vice president as soon as possible.

Discussion and negotiation of the terms of the contract must be handled by MURC. The more lead time provided for negotiation, the better the result will be for the PI and the university.

Preparing the Budget

You can work with the Grants and Contracts Office to develop the direct cost portion of the budget. Discussion of the budget with the sponsor should be handled by MURC.

Depending on sponsor preferences and requirements, Facilities and Administration Rates (F&A) for contracts may be handled in various ways. Be sure to discuss this with the contract officer early in the process.

The budget eventually must be completed to a sufficient level of detail to set up your project in the university's finance system, Banner, which will allow you to begin spending the contract funds. **Completing a detailed budget as early in the process as possible will save you valuable time getting started on your project once the award is made.**

Obtaining Permission to Submit

When dealing with a contract, rather than a grant from a federal funding agency, issues of F&A, intellectual property and rights reserved by the sponsor can be much less standardized.

The Grants and Contracts Office and the Technology Transfer Office will be involved in the contract negotiations as appropriate.

Before the contract can be finalized, all university requirements must be satisfied, including obtaining approvals for any commitments the university must make to receive the contract.

An [Authorization to Submit Contract/Agreement Form](#) must be completed, with all required signatures, before the contract can be finalized.

Special Situations

Foreign Nationals

Foreign nationals are a special category of employees, and the university and MURC have specific obligations with respect to their employment. After an offer of employment is made, it must be determined through the federal government's W-9 process whether or not the prospective employee is authorized to work in the United States. If the prospective employee is not a citizen or a permanent resident, the university, through [Human Resource Services](#) and the [Office of International Student Services](#), provides the certifications and information necessary for the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service to obtain the individual's appropriate visa status.

It is important that you are aware of your employees' visa statuses and deadlines at all times, and that you notify MURC human resources, university human resources and the Center for International Programs if any visa-holding employees resign, leave or are terminated.

For assistance, [contact](#) the Center for International Programs at iss@marshall.edu or 304.696.6265.

Earmarks

Earmarks are congressionally directed funds provided to the institution for specific programmatic or construction purposes.

These funds are requested via submission of proposals or white papers through the vice president for federal programs and the Office of the President.

The format of the white papers or proposals is dependent upon the office to which it is being submitted. The vice president for federal programs will provide guidance to you.

Once funds are appropriated by Congress, the responsible federal agency will notify the university that it is eligible to apply. This application process also has formats and requirements that are agency specific.

The university requires that these applications include an institutional PI, usually the president, a senior academic official or the vice president for research/MURC executive director. The technical or scientific originator is the project director and is responsible for providing the usual budget, budget narrative and Authorization to Submit Grant form. University approval for submittal and the budget and hiring plan are required, as on all other grant applications. No commitments can be made internally or externally until these approvals are received.

The time between notification that the university can apply for the funds and the award of funds is much shorter than in typical competitive solicitations, so considerable up-front work must be done to plan the project before the award is made. Often, the award comes in later and for less than expected, so a great deal of rework may also be involved.

One characteristic of earmarks is similar to competitive awards — They are only expendable over a limited period of time. Unlike many competitive awards, they are usually not renewable.

Earmarks should be viewed as seed or startup funds, and each project director should have a sustainability plan in place to identify how the initiative will continue post-earmark. The project director has two jobs—attending to the requirements of the earmark funding and executing the sustainability plan.

Facilities and Administration (F&A) Rates

The direct costs of a research project reflect only a portion of what it actually costs the university to carry out your project.

Indirect, or Facilities and Administration (F&A), rates are not a tax or a fee. They are an allowed, rigorously audited provision for the university to recapture the costs of conducting, administering, and facilitating grant and contract activity.

These F&A rates are established by a rigorously documented, zero-based process approved by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

In some cases, F&A rates are limited by sponsors, but may be negotiable.

All grants and contracts must include the appropriate sponsor-allowed [F&A rate](#) in addition to the direct costs.

Under no circumstances should the PI enter into discussions with a sponsor over F&A rates or waivers. In cases where the agency sponsor communicates F&A costs below the university's federally approved rate but cannot provide a policy or regulation as a defense for such limitation, MURC *may* negotiate a rate acceptable to both the sponsor

and the university. In most cases, however, rate limitations with no justification provided will not be accepted by MURC.

The F&A funds available for distribution are allocated back to the dean's office or center (50 percent), to MURC (25 percent) and to the Office of the President (25 percent) to help recoup the cost of administering and facilitating sponsored research.

In the absence of an agreed-upon F&A rate reduction between MURC and the agency sponsor, you may request a waiver of some or all of the allocations, in the following order:

1. Dean's Office or Center (50 percent)
2. MURC (25 percent)
3. Office of the President (25 percent)

Complete waivers of the F&A rate require approval of the president. Only the portion of the F&A rate allocated back to the department and/or the dean can be waived with dean/provost approval.

Waiver approvals are independent of each other (i.e., the dean's approval for waiver of their allocation of indirect cost recovery does not constitute or imply approval by MURC or the Office of the President of their respective allocations). Waiver requests should only be considered as a rare exception rather than a frequent or routine process.

Please do not circumvent this process by negotiating a rate directly with a sponsor. Subsequent awards arising from such negotiation may be forfeited at MURC's discretion or may be modified to provide for full F&A rate recovery. If neither of these options can be taken, the difference between the awarded rate and the negotiated rate for F&A may be charged to the applicable dean or department head's cost recovery account.

Who Do I Call?

In general, if you have a question about an issue you encounter during the application process or the execution of your grant, the place to start is your pre-award and post-award officers. With a quick phone call from you, they can often determine who at MURC or the university is best situated to deal with your issue. The following are some of the key staff contacts you will likely need.

→ Grants and Contracts Office

Director of Grants and Contracts/Associate Executive Director: Joe Ciccarello - 304.696.4837 or ciccarello@marshall.edu

Pre-Award/Development

The pre-award staff will help you with all aspects of your grant proposal, including ensuring the sponsoring agency's guidelines are followed, the budget is correct, all in-house approvals are secured and everything is submitted properly. If you are a new PI, we will be happy to meet with you personally to explain the process and answer any questions you may have.

The following is a list of grants officers who can help you, broken down by college:

School of Medicine, Marshall Institute for Interdisciplinary Research

Lisa Daniels, CRA - 304.696.3368 or adkins244@marshall.edu

College of Science, College of Information Technology and Engineering

Chris Schlenker - 304.696.4307 or schlenker@marshall.edu

Kelly Stump - 304.696.6320 or stump4@marshall.edu

Anastasia Artayet Shepherd - 304.696.5152 or artayet@marshall.edu

Funding Opportunity Identification

Marshall University subscribes to [Grant Forward](#) a powerful tool that combines funding and collaboration opportunities for researchers and graduate students across all disciplines.

Formerly separate Community of Science (COS) databases, Pivot is pre-populated with profiles of researchers at Marshall and other institutions, and matches them to current funding opportunities in the COS database. Users can search for a funding opportunity and instantly view matching faculty from inside or outside Marshall. Pivot also allows individuals to create unique funding searches, choose to receive weekly e-mails based on those searches and track opportunities.

A campus coordinator is available to help faculty members obtain accounts, create user profiles and learn to use Grant Forward.

Coordinator: Kelly Stump - 304.696.6320 or stump4@marshall.edu

Post-Award/Compliance

After a funding agency issues an award to Marshall University, the PI is assigned a post-award grants compliance administrator. This grants compliance administrator helps you ensure you are spending your grant according to the designed budget and relevant regulations. Members of the compliance staff include:

Grants Compliance Administrator: Rebecca Hill – 304.696.3792 or hill286@marshall.edu

Grants Compliance Administrator: Lindsey Taylor – 304.696.4838 or starcher41@marshall.edu

Grants Compliance Administrator: Kayla Perry - 304.696.6598 or price100@marshall.edu

→ Finance Office

Chief Finance Officer: Jennifer Wood, CRA (including transfer charges, stipend requests and service/contractual agreements) - 304.696.2829 or wood@marshall.edu

Financial Administration

Travel and Payable Accountant: Susan Ross (including travel reimbursements) - 304.696.6532 or rosssu@marshall.edu

Personnel and Payroll

Human Resource Coordinator: Coria Kent (including PEIA, Guardian, TIAA-CREF and annual/sick leave) - 304.696.6320 or kent1@marshall.edu

Senior Payroll Administrator: Tammy Brumbaugh - 304.696.2830 or brumbaught@marshall.edu

→ Office of Research Integrity

The Office of Research Integrity ensures all research conducted at Marshall University meets regulatory and policy standards with regard to human subject research, use of animals and conflicts of interest in research. Contact the office with questions concerning research integrity or to find out how to apply for approval to conduct research through one of the university's Institutional Review Boards.

Director: Bruce Day, CIP - 304.696.4303 or day50@marshall.edu

Conflict of Interest Coordinator: Amy Melton - 304.696.4365 or amy.melton@marshall.edu

→ Technology Transfer Office

This office is responsible for administering university-produced intellectual property and its transfer to the commercial sector, and for reviewing material transfer and non-disclosure agreements. It also reviews intellectual property-related terms in all research contracts.

Assistant Director: Amy Melton - 304.696.4365 or amy.melton@marshall.edu

→ **Office of the Vice President for Research/MURC Executive Director**

The vice president for research/MURC executive director has final signature authority for all research activity at Marshall University.

Vice President for Research/MURC Executive Director: Dr. John Maher

Executive Office Manager: Amanda Plumley - 304.696.6271 or
plumleya@marshall.edu