# How to Effectively Use Your Federal NIH Grant Award

When you are awarded a federal NIH grant, it's essential to know how to use the grant award effectively. The post-award phase may seem overwhelming with various implementation and reporting requirements, but adhering to the grant terms and conditions is necessary. This blog post will guide you toward maximizing the use of your grant award by understanding the post-award phase.

## Follow Best Accounting practices

Once you have reached the post-award phase, adhering to fund accounting best practices is essential. Tracking and managing expenses in compliance with grant guidelines ensures the effectiveness and transparency of the project, which is crucial for future grant applications. It would be best to allocate direct and indirect expenses based on the approved budget. However, tracking program expenses and activities according to grant requirements may require significant time and effort.

## Understand The Reporting requirements

NIH requires recipients to submit progress and financial reports periodically. Progress reports should be submitted via the [Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) module.](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/rppr/index.htm) There are three types of RPPRs: annual, interim, and final. It is important to adhere to the deadlines specified by NIH for these reports.

These reports can be submitted through the [eRA Commons](https://www.era.nih.gov/about-era/services-for-applicants-recipients/reporting-requirements). They should encompass achievements pertaining to annual goals, upcoming project plans, documentation of manuscripts and publications produced by project contributors, modifications to the project's key personnel, current or projected project hurdles or delays, strategies for overcoming these challenges, noteworthy alterations concerning human or animal subject involvement, enrollment reports for clinical studies, and other relevant information.

## Adhere to NIH policies and regulations:

NIH has various [policies and regulations](https://grants.nih.gov/policy/index.htm) that govern the use of grants. These policies safeguard the credibility of research outcomes and maintain transparency, accountability, and adherence to ethical standards. Ensure that your research project aligns with NIH policies and regulations. [Review updates](https://grants.nih.gov/policy/PolicyNotices.php) on NIH policies, guidelines, and any changes concerning grant management continually.

## Hire The Right Staff

Apart from managing finances and adhering to reporting guidelines and NIH policies, having the right staff with the appropriate skills and expertise is also important. Identify workforce utilization plans and ensure that your staff's workload aligns with grant objectives. Many businesses have natural ebbs and flows, and finding the right balance may be challenging. Temporary staffing is an option for supplementing your staff during peak periods, such as research cycles or clinical trials, where additional resources may be necessary. A staffing agency that provides scientific and technical candidates for federal agencies can be a valuable resource when you need to hire quickly. Firms experienced in screening, interviewing, and managing contractor relationships can save your organization time and money.

## Closing Out Grant

When the grant period comes to an end, and if a subsequent competing segment is not funded, or if the grant is transferred from one institution to another, the NIH requires the submission of a [Final Invention Statement and Certification (HHS 568)](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/hhs568.pdf) within 120 days. In cases where the grant is ending, the Final Invention Statement and Certification, along with other closeout documents, can be submitted directly to the relevant NIH institute or center.

# Conclusion:

Effectively using a federal NIH Grant Award requires diligent efforts, understanding, and adherence to the post-award phase. Understanding the grant award budget, reporting requirements, adhering to NIH policies and regulations, working with your grant officer, and planning for the closeout phase are critical steps to ensure the optimal utilization of the grant award. By following these steps, grant awardees can maximize the positive impact of the project, advance research fields, and maintain transparency and accountability.

Disclaimer:

The purpose of this information is solely to provide general knowledge and should not be construed as legal advice. Consult with your legal counsel to ensure your specific workplace drug testing policies comply with the most current laws and regulations.

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