



# Grants Management in an RFA

Office of Grants Administration

CTDD Network Pre-application Meeting

April 24, 2012

# Office of Grants Administration

- a.k.a. “OGA”
- Headed by the Chief Grants Management Officer
  - Holds delegated statutory authority from the Secretary of HHS, NIH Director, and NCI Director to negotiate and make grant awards
- Staffed by Grants Management Specialists
  - Who hold delegated authority from the Chief GMO to negotiate and make grant awards
  - (And the Operations Branch which should be behind-the-scenes from a grantee’s perspective.)
- OGA has sole authority to commit the NCI to a grant. No other office can make a binding promise.

# A Grant is a Contract



Between the  
NIH and the  
University,



that OGA signs for the NIH,



so the investigator can complete research.

# Grants vs Cooperative Agreements

- Cooperative agreements have significant ongoing government involvement in
  - Scientific activity
  - Design of project
- Other grants don't have this involvement
- Uniform Grants and Cooperative Agreements Act of 1977 governs both grants and cooperative agreements
- From the administrative perspective, cooperative agreements are no different than grants of equivalent size and complexity
- For investigators and program officers, they are quite different

# Making Life Easier

- The same laws, regulations, and policies apply to these projects as to any other NCI-funded research
- Please work with Sponsored Projects in designing and submitting applications and responding to requests

# Help is a Phone Call Away...

- The Office of Grants Administration is always available for technical assistance
  - We do not administer grants.gov, nor do we have a “special” contact with the Help Desk.
  - We can, and do, interpret policies while an application is being written
    - Page limits
    - Cost restrictions
    - And anything else in an RFA

# Details Matter

- Up-to-date reviews
  - IRB
  - IACUC
- Other Support that demonstrates no overcommitment
- Budget justifications that explain everything
  - All costs
  - All variations and fluctuations
- Resolving IRG/study section concerns
- Please, have these items ready to go!

# OGA's Activity

- Prepare, negotiate, and finalize awards
  - Only OGA can commit funds for the NCI
- Maintain the official file
  - Please copy on all significant correspondence
- Ensure regulatory compliance
  - Cost allowability, debarment, eligibility, documented reviews ...
- Pre- and post-award
  - Ask us anything except scientific details

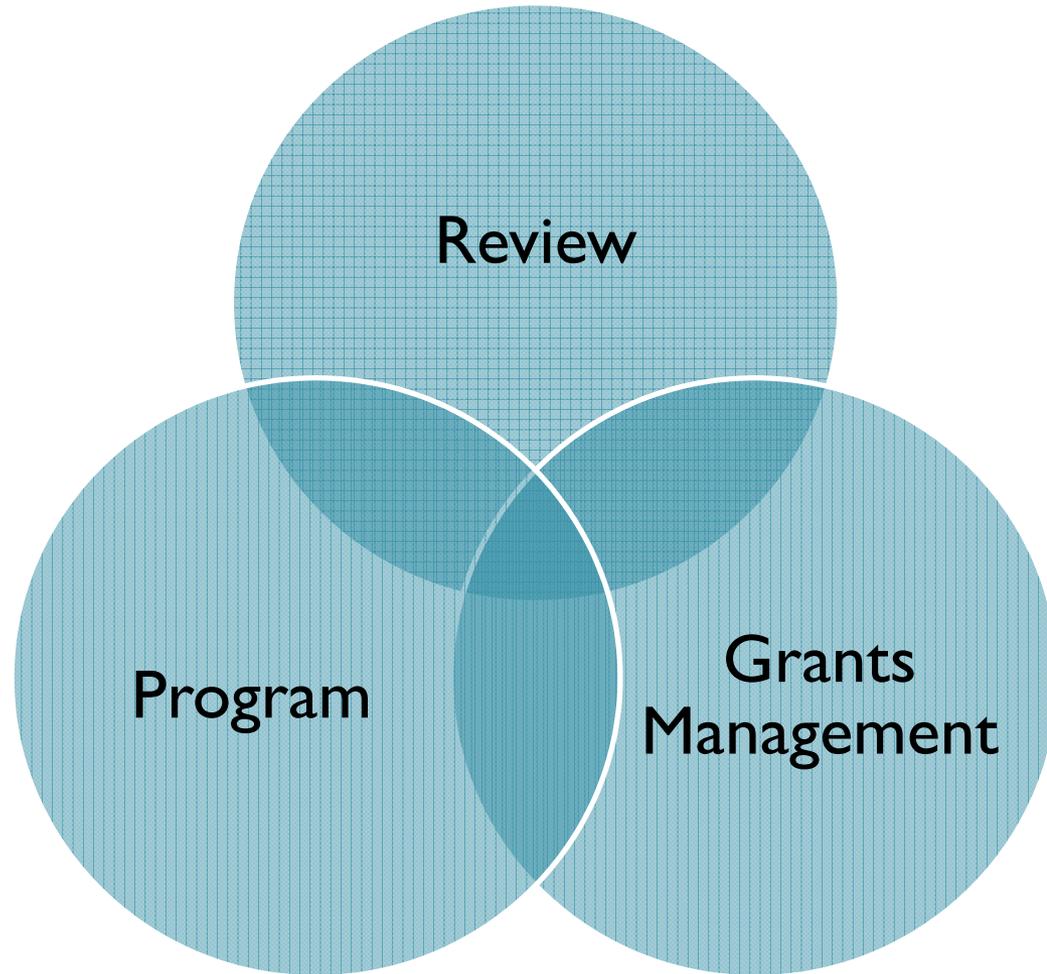
# The RFA

- Details of the who (eligibility)
  - Program and Grants Management review eligibility
- Details of the what, why, and how (science)
  - Program creates and enforces these standards
- Details of the how much (funding) and when
  - Grants Management ensures compliance
  - OGA calculates the awarded budget based on the most recent negotiated rates, current legislation, annual funding plans, and other factors
  - OGA negotiates the start date for mutual convenience
- Everything in the RFA is in addition to the usually-applicable laws and regulations

# Behind the Scenes

- RFAs operate a bit differently from conventional R01 awards
  - Usually, a designated sum of money for the entire RFA
  - Divided between the selected projects
    - Funding is not uniform for all funded projects
  - All of the projects funded by an RFA start at the same time
- Other than the funding, OGA will ask for the same materials we would for an R01

# The Extramural Team



# The Grants Team

NCI Grants  
Management

NCI Program Director

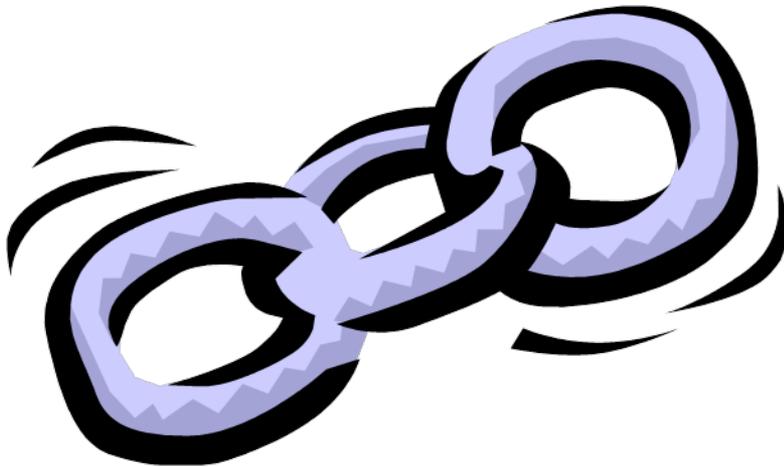
Cooperative  
Agreement

University Sponsored  
Projects

Principal Investigator

# Getting it done

- OGA is the last link in the chain of events before the Government commits taxpayer money to a project.
- We cannot make an award until anything involving another office is done.



# Three common causes of delays

- **Inconsistencies**
  - If any items in a grant application, the summary statement, the program director's review, or additional materials from the grantee are inconsistent, grants managers will point out the need for all items to agree.
  - Sometimes a third party or expert office is needed for resolution
- **Wrong amount of information**
  - All costs need independent justification to pass the *Washington Post* test: it must look good on the front page.
  - Too much information causes delays: we don't need the letter from the IACUC, just the date that the committee approved the project. If the letter is provided, we will read it and follow up any points raised in it.
- **Unobligated balances**
  - If the award isn't spent timely, we have to ensure that Federal cash isn't being mismanaged.
  - Remember that unobligated balances are funds that don't have liabilities against them—not the cash balance in the account.

# The two-key system

- Before the award, initial or continuation, both Program and OGA must review the file and certify that funding is proper



- Grants Managers and Program Officers are continually discussing matters. One office will usually take the lead on a question, but please keep both sides in the loop.