

From: COGR Administrator <administrator@COGR.edu>
Sent: Friday, March 20, 2020 5:56 PM
To: COGR LISTSERV <COGRLISTSERV@COGR.edu>
Subject: COGR COVID-19 update

COGR Membership,

The response to COVID-19 and its impact to the research community and at your campuses, has been an incredibly quick moving and evolving situation. The landscape seems to change daily, sometimes hourly. Where just two weeks ago we were discussing non-refundable cancellation charges and travel considerations, the conversation has expanded to research labs shutting down, entire institutions closing, worldwide travel restrictions, statewide shelter in place orders and much more.

First, we owe our thanks to Pamela Webb, Toni Russo, and COGR's COVID-19 response team, who have all done an extraordinary job of getting information and guidance out quickly to our membership. This workgroup released FAQs on [COVID-19's Impact to Federal Awards](#) late last week, and prepared a [joint association letter to OMB](#) this week to advocate for the expansion of OMB M-20-11 to include all financial assistance awards, and OMB did just that late yesterday (see below). We couldn't have done this without you!

Much has happened in the last few days, so I'm writing to update you on some significant changes regarding the federal response to COVID-19's impact on awards and proposals. Overall, we think that the agencies are moving in the right direction in terms of administrative flexibility. Here's the latest:

- OMB issued two important Memos to the federal agencies. Memo [M-20-11](#) directed federal agencies to implement flexibilities initially for COVID-related activities. OMB issued a follow up directive, [M-20-17](#), directing agencies to provide additional flexibility to recipients affected by the loss of operational capacity and increased costs due to the COVID-19 crisis.
- At this time, we are announcing a [slightly modified version of the FAQ](#), which provides a few updates which are noted. The revised FAQ includes new information related to the protection of human and animal subjects and is available on the site. We had planned on more extensive guidance, but we've put that on hold in light of yesterday's OMB announcement.
- NIH has already [issued guidance](#) about expanded flexibilities in the area of proposal submissions, travel costs and salary expenses. We are advocating that all federal agencies adopt the NIH policy on salary charges, in particular.
- Based on OMB M-20-17, we expect other agencies to issue new or revised guidance regarding the effects of the COVID-19 health crisis on sponsored awards. COGR is monitoring the agency response and we will continue to post notifications [on our website](#) as they become available.
- COGR teams are developing new tools that summarize key information across sponsors, such as extensions to proposal deadlines, travel costs, and, salary charges. We'll announce those tools as they become available.

- We are aware that DOD has recently [issued guidance](#) stating salary support for researchers may not be allowable in all cases. This guidance was announced prior to the OMB Memo, so it's not clear what the intent is here. COGR is working with its partners to address your concerns with DOD.

As the effects of the COVID-19 crisis are still unfolding and will likely be impacting research for quite some time, COGR has decided to incorporate relevant COVID-19 issues into the work of our [COGR Committees](#). I've asked [Kristin West](#), COGR's new Research Ethics and Compliance Director, to lead the COGR response. Please send your questions and comments to COVID19@COGR.edu.

Best,
Wendy

Wendy D. Streitz
President
Council on Governmental Relations
1200 New York Avenue, Suite 460
Washington, DC 20005
202-289-6655
www.cogr.edu