

July 6, 2020

Dear researchers and research administrators,

I am writing to inform you of a change in government (OMB) policies regarding payment of idle individuals from federal grants. Early in the pandemic, flexibilities were allowed that enabled us to continue to pay laboratory staff from grants even if they were unable to work from home and were unable to make substantive contributions to the goals of the project provided this was consistent with payment to idle staff from non-grant funding. This OMB policy is no longer in effect, as of June 16th. The new language now indicates that payment from grants would only be possible once the university has taken steps “to exhaust other available funding sources to sustain its workforce.” As of now, there are no guidelines about what it means to exhaust other available funding sources, but the general intent appears to be to exclude payments from grants to any worker who is not actively contributing to the project goals. So far, [NIH](#) and [NSF](#) have issued guidance that mirrors the OMB policy, with no additional clarification.

Implications

While the vast majority of our research operations are back up and running, there may still be research staff who are not contributing fully to project goals. It appears that we can no longer continue the policy of maintaining full salaries for idled or partially idled workers paid from grants. We are urging you to ensure that all individuals being paid from grants are contributing fully to the research project going forward. In the event that this is not possible, please contact your HR business partner for guidance.

We have requested that you complete the COVID 19 Impact to Sponsored Program Survey for the months of March, April and May 2020. You will be receiving a survey for June by July 15th to be returned by July 31st. It is especially critical that you complete the June survey as OMB is expecting documentation of this new requirement.

We will keep you informed if we receive any additional clarification from our federal partners.

Best,



Rick Waugh
Vice Provost for Research