TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Researcher Guidebook For Sponsored Projects

Texas A&M University Sponsored Research Services

Fall 2023

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# Research at The Texas A&M University System (TAMUS)

*Note: Within this handbook, the term **"university"** is meant to include the Texas A&M System Members/Agencies served by Sponsored Research Services. Other system universities may have rules and regulations not covered here. The term **"SRS"** is meant to indicate Texas A&M University Sponsored Research Services*

Purpose: As a Principal Investigator (PI) at a Texas A&M University System entity, you are ultimately responsible for all aspects of your research, including compliance with university and federal policies. The university is committed to making every effort to assist you with this responsibility. This guide has been created to help you understand what to expect from the research administration support provided by Texas A&M University (TAMU) Sponsored Research Services (SRS) to TAMUS researchers.

Introduction: TAMUS members contract with SRS to provide research administration services in support of their researchers and sponsored projects. SRS provides research administration services to the Texas A&M System members headquartered in Brazos County, as well as the Texas A&M Galveston and Texas A&M Qatar campuses. In addition, SRS supports pre-award and post-award services for some of the System's regional campuses.

Finding Your Contact at SRS

The life cycle of a project is divided into pre-award and post-award categories. Your SRS contact at each stage is determined by your department/college/agency. To find your Proposal Administrator, Contract Negotiator, or Project Administrator, search the "My Contact" section of the SRS website, https://srs.tamu.edu/my-contact/.
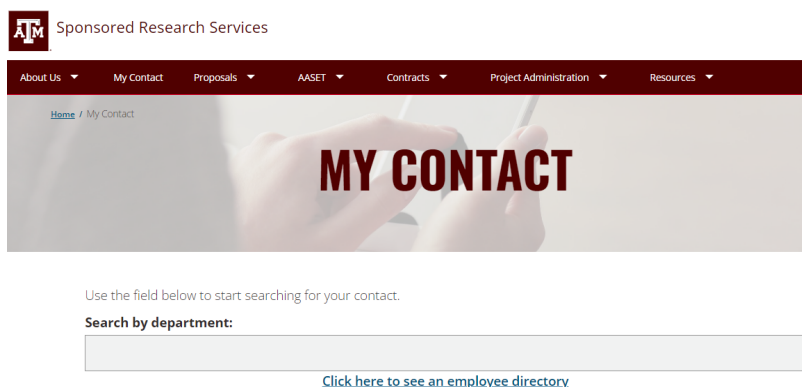
The PI's SRS contacts can also be found on their Maestro dashboard. See section on Maestro.

Our Vision
A Winning Team
TAMUS Researchers and
TAMU Sponsored Research Services

Minimize the administrative burden of the research process.
- Delivering the best possible service
- Improving communication through the research community; serving as a liaison
- Maintaining trust-worthy, open-minded relationships

Uphold high ethical standards.
- Ensuring compliance at all levels
- Providing cost-effective service within SRS and project budgets
- Developing a culture of mutual respect

Exhibit leadership in research administration.
- Collaborating to develop consistent and efficient procedures
- Engaging in training and professional development
- Maximizing the benefits of technology

The goal of Sponsored Research Services (SRS) is to minimize the administrative burden of the research process by providing faculty a single place for submission and management of their research proposals and projects. SRS offers services in the following areas:
- Proposal preparation and submission
- Contract negotiation
- Award intake and project establishment
- Project management / post-award actions
- Sponsored billing /prepares financial deliverables
- Support for business services required to conduct and complete the sponsored project.

SRS Leadership Team

This is the SRS executive leadership team.   Our Executive Director is Kristi Billinger.   The three Associate Executive Directors oversee support for the various members served by SRS and have responsibility for SRS functional Areas.

**Areas of Responsibility**
Jim Joyce is over the contract negotiator team for all members.

Julie Bishop has responsibility for Texas A&M AgriLife, the Health Science Center, Texas A&M Transportation Institute, regional institutions, System Offices and the SRS AASET and Sponsored Billing.
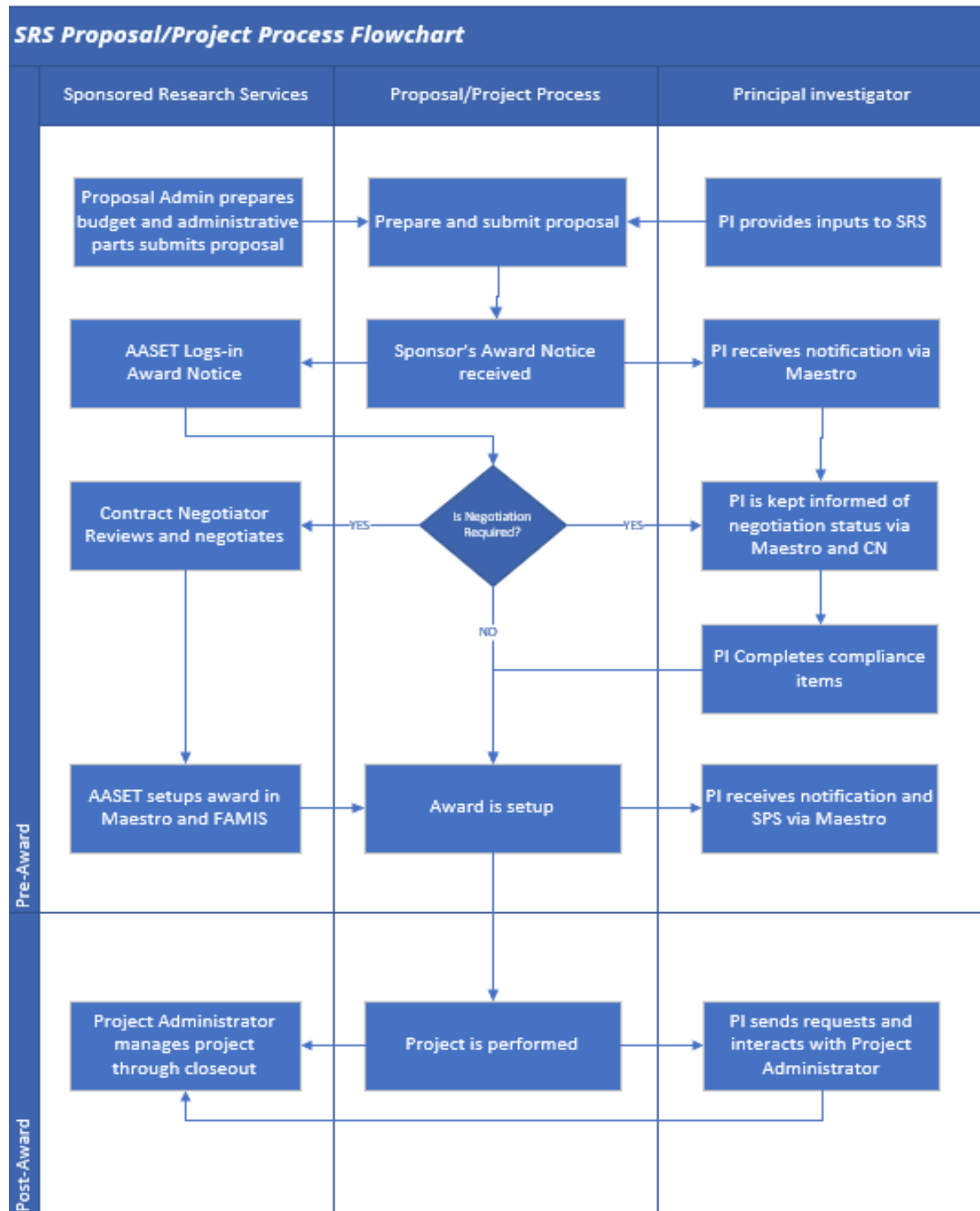
Crissy Stratta has responsibility for TAMU, TAMUG, Qatar campus and Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station.

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Sponsored Project Life Cycle
and the
SRS Functional Areas

- **Proposal Administration**
- **Award & Account Set-Up Expediting Team (AASET)**
- **Contract Negotiation**
- **Project Administration**
- **Sponsored Billing**
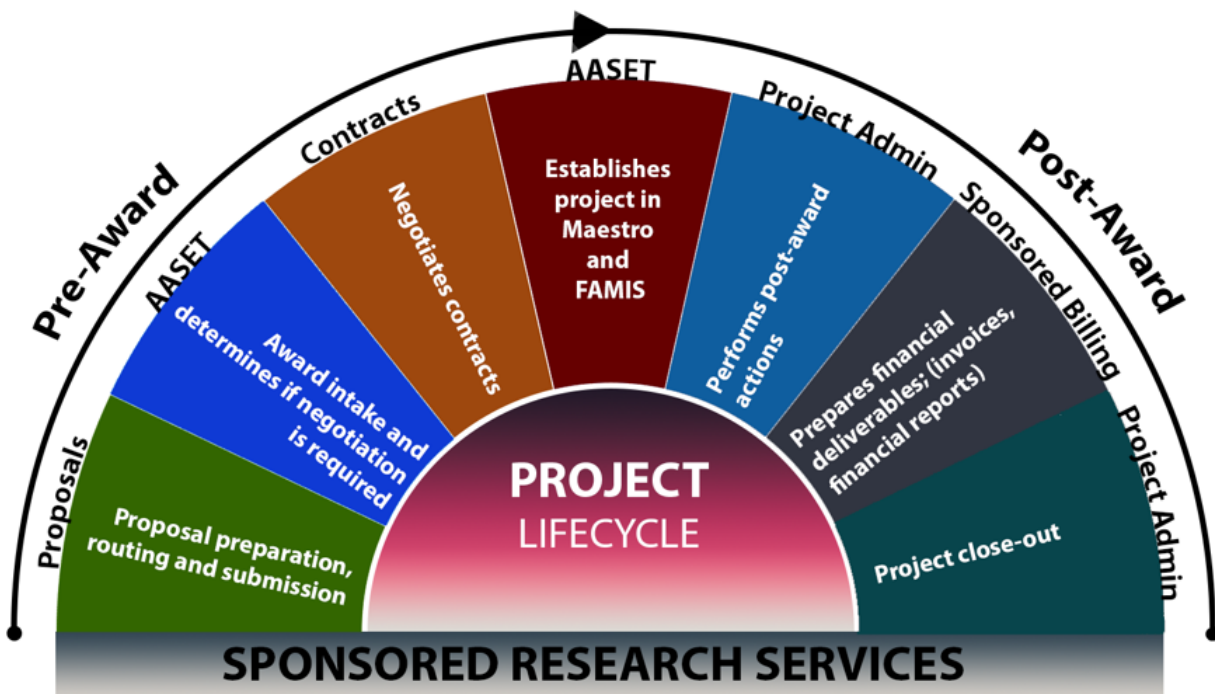
This process flowchart follows the path from proposal creation through project closeout with the inputs from SRS and PI throughout the process.

SRS Proposal/Project Process Flowchart

Sponsored Research Services	Proposal/Project Process	Principal investigator
Proposal Admin prepares budget and administrative parts submits proposal	Prepare and submit proposal	PI provides inputs to SRS
AASET Logs-in Award Notice	Sponsor's Award Notice received	PI receives notification via Maestro
Contract Negotiator Reviews and negotiates	Is Negotiation Required?	PI is kept informed of negotiation status via Maestro and CN
	NO	PI Completes compliance items
AASET setups award in Maestro and FAMIS	Award is setup	PI receives notification and SPS via Maestro

Pre-Award

Sponsored Research Services	Proposal/Project Process	Principal investigator
Project Administrator manages project through closeout	Project is performed	PI sends requests and interacts with Project Administrator

Post-Award

Proposal Administration

Proposal Preparation and Submission

SRS Proposal Administrator Services

Proposal Development
- Work with faculty (or designee) on budget preparation.
- Interprets sponsor RFP/Guidelines.
- Inform and assist faculty on any prior approvals that may be needed.
- Complete all administrative information in application package.
- Upload administrative documents required by the sponsor.
- Review proposal for compliance with sponsor's guidelines, RFP, or solicitation as well as System member rules, SAPs and System Policy.

Proposal Routing
- Routes each proposal for external funding for approval by all investigators, department head or unit director, dean or appropriate vice president, and Member administration or designee (i.e., VPR, CFO, CEO, Vice Chancellor, etc.)
- While System member approval is required prior to proposal submission, in the event that appropriate officials have not approved, SRS ensures the proposal routing has been initiated and the PI approval has been obtained.

Proposal Submission
- When final documents are received and time allows, SRS provides a thorough quality review.

DIVISION OF RESEARCH
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Proposal Administrators (PA) at SRS assist researchers with the preparation and submission of proposals to sponsors for external funding. Services include budget development; completion of most administrative sections of the proposal; ensuring that the proposal is compliant with A&M System policies, System member's requirements, state and federal regulations, and the funding opportunity's specific terms and conditions. The Proposal Administrator will enter proposal information into the MAESTRO system where it will route for review and approval to appropriate stakeholders. After review and approval, the PA submits the proposal to the sponsor and tracks the successful receipt of the proposal.

The Process:

> When you are ready to start a proposal, *contact your Proposal Administrator at SRS.* Proposal Administrators (PA) are assigned by departments or research centers. See My Contact section of the SRS website.

> ***Is it necessary to contact SRS to submit your proposal rather than submitting yourself?*** Yes, and there are several reasons:
>
> - For the protection of the researcher and the protection of the institution.
>
> - The federal government has rules that the applicant and institution must follow. SRS has trained personnel that will guide you on regulations during each phase of the project.
>
> - The researcher's intellectual property (IP) is a very valuable commodity. SRS contract negotiators will review and terms and conditions to ensure that the IP rights of the researcher and the university or agency are protected.
>
> - Since the award will be made to the institution and not to the individual PI, it is appropriate that the institution review and approve the proposal before it is submitted.

PI Eligibility

Eligibility to act as a University PI, Co-PI, or Co-Investigator on a sponsored project is limited to University employees (faculty or faculty-equivalent research position), excluding positions for which student status is a requirement. A recommendation for an exception from the department head and dean is required prior to routing to the VPR or member designee for approval. For more information and request form can be found here, https://vpr.tamu.edu/research-administration/pi-eligibility-on-sponsored-agreements-proposals-and-projects/.

Limited Submissions

Many funding agencies issue requests for proposals that limit the number of applications they will accept from an institution. The manner in which sponsors limit applications varies, but usually consists of one or more of the following: limiting the number of proposals which may be submitted; limiting the type of institutions that can apply; and/or limiting PIs by stage of career.

Texas A&M University, working in partnership with The Texas A&M University System agencies, has established a process to identify limited submission opportunities and internally select applicants to submit full proposals in response to a particular program. This process is handled by the Division of Research. For more information, see . https://tamu.infoready4.com/CompetitionSpace/#limitedsubmissions. Questions should be directed to limitedsubmissions@tamu.edu. For TAMUS regional institutions, PIs should follow the process established by their institution.

SRS Proposal Submission Guidelines

- Researchers are asked to contact SRS pre-award staff with their intent to submit a proposal a minimum of 3 weeks prior to the sponsor deadline.

- SRS requests the following documents 5 business days in advance of the sponsor deadline:
  - Budget and budget justification
  - Draft abstract or statement of work
  - Relevant approved waivers
  - Subcontract documents
  - Biosketch, Current & Pending
  - Data Management Plan
  - Facilities & Equipment

- Technical portions of the proposal should be submitted to SRS in **final format no later than 1 business day** prior to the sponsor deadline.

- For proposals that follow the timeline above, the proposal will receive a complete and thorough quality review.

  - PIs will receive any necessary or suggested changes, and SRS will work with the PI to make changes prior to submission.
  - SRS pledges to submit on-time proposals, with limited exceptions, prior to the sponsor's deadline. Proposals with the required materials submitted to SRS within the timeframe outlined above will receive priority over proposals received with shorter lead time.
  - SRS staff will make every effort to submit all proposals. In the event that a proposal is received outside of the requested timeframe, the investigator will assume the risk for proposals found to be non-compliant or those that do not meet the sponsor's deadline.

- Agency deadlines – Unless the deadline is specifically defined as earlier than 5 p.m. by the sponsor, the submission deadline for SRS is 5 p.m. local time on the sponsor's specified deadline date (even if the sponsor allows submissions beyond 5 p.m.).

- Approvals – If a proposal is submitted to the sponsor without SRS or System Member review, the proposal may be withdrawn if it is determined to be non-compliant with the System Member rules, standard administrative procedures or guidelines.

The SRS Proposal Administrator needs the following information from the Principal Investigator to get started on logging in and creating a proposal in Maestro.

- Sponsor name
- Proposal guidelines
- Due date of submission
- Proposal title
- Project start and end dates
- Names and contact information of any collaborators

Required PI Action: Your proposal will then be logged into the Maestro system by SRS. Once the proposal routing is initiated the PI will receive a notification to go into Maestro and approve the proposal. At this point the PI is prompted to complete the PI compliance items for human subjects, animal research and international collaboration. The PI proposal credit and incentive percentages (TEES only) will need to be reviewed and changed if needed. The PI has to have a current Financial Conflict of Interest, (FCOI) on file to allow the proposal to be approved.

The Budgeting Process

Your SRS Proposal Administrator will help you prepare the budget for the sponsor. To get started, simply send your Proposal Administrator an outline of what budget items are needed.

- Personnel – percentage of time or months for each person on the budget
  - o PIs and other personnel working on the budget are expected to request budgeted effort from the sponsor.
  - o Include titles of to-be-named personnel – technicians, PostDocs, graduate students, undergraduate students, etc.
- Travel – any expected travel for conferences, collaborations, etc. Include destinations if known, number of people traveling, days, etc.
- Materials and supplies – amount per year you expect will be needed
- Equipment – any planned purchase of equipment
- Publication costs
- Consultants
- Subawards – If other institutions will be involved, this information needs to be disclosed early in the budgeting process. Information is required from the other institution, and their approval process takes time. Needed:
  - o Budget and budget justification
  - o Statement of work
  - o Letter of collaboration (if required by sponsor)
  - o Subrecipient Information Form – will be sent by the SRS PA to the sub

With this information, your SRS Proposal Administrator will prepare a budget spreadsheet and email that to you for review and suggested changes.

Cost Sharing

All PIs and departments proposing cost sharing commitments must obtain approval following the process set-up at their institution.

Cost sharing (or matching) is that portion of project costs not reimbursed by the sponsor. Cost sharing requirements should be stipulated in the sponsor's guidelines. Texas A&M University System Members have regulations regarding cost sharing. As a general rule:

- Offering cost sharing when it is not mandated by the sponsor will require prior approval from the System Member. Some will not approve any voluntary cost sharing.
- Most System Members will not allow cost sharing on proposals to for-profit sponsors.
- All sources of cost sharing must be identified at the proposal stage.
- It is the responsibility of the PI to solicit and obtain cost sharing commitments.
- Any third party cost sharing will require documentation from the providing entity.
- If cost sharing is mandated by the sponsor and subrecipient institutions are involved in the project, those institutions are expected to bear their portion of the required cost sharing.

Per cost principles outlined in the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) "Uniform Guidance", any cost sharing must meet the following criteria:

- Verifiable from the recipient's records
- Not included as a contribution for any other federally assisted program
- Necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient accomplishment of the project or program objectives
- Allowable under applicable cost principles
- Not paid by another federal award, except as authorized by statute
- Provided for in the approved budget when required by the federal awarding agency

If your project requires cost sharing, discuss early with your Proposal Administrator.

Proposal Routing and Approvals

When the budget is finalized and necessary routing documents are received, the routing process can start. Before your proposal is submitted to the sponsor, the final budget, any cost-sharing documentation, and draft text will be submitted through Maestro for electronic approval. Proposals generally route through the PI, Department Head or Director, Dean, and System Member designated office. Your proposal must receive all administrative approvals prior to final submission. Your proposal administrator will start the routing process in Maestro after the budget is finalized and documents necessary for routing have been received from you. Generally, these are the budget, budget justification and summary or statement of work.

Components of the Proposal – Who is responsible?

Generally, your SRS Proposal Administrator will handle budgetary and administrative sections of the proposal. The Principal Investigator is responsible for the technical portions.

Principal Investigator	SRS Proposal Administrator
Review of funding opportunity guidelines	Review of funding opportunity guidelines
Budget Justification	Budget
Summary, Statement of Work	Sponsor budget forms
Technical narrative	Coordinate obtaining subcontract documents
Biosketches	Coordinate approvals for waived indirect costs (IDC) and cost sharing if needed
Current & Pending support if required	Initiate and route proposal in Maestro
Data Management Plan	Electronic application if submitted by SRS
Facilities & Equipment section	Submits proposal on behalf of member
Other required technical sections	

All final documents must be received in final format required by the opportunity guidelines.

SRS Quality Check

SRS has a team that quality checks each proposal prior to submission if given the requested adequate time. SRS pledge to the research community:

- Proposals in final format received at SRS by the timeline outlined in the Proposal Submission Guidelines on Page 6 will receive a complete and thorough quality review.
- For proposals completed and submitted to SRS within Proposal Submission Guidelines timeframe, SRS will work with the PI to make necessary changes to ensure that the proposal is administratively compliant.

Submission

Once all pieces of the proposal are finished and ready for submission, your SRS Proposal Administrator will submit on behalf of the institution. Some sponsor's submissions systems require proposals to be submitted by the PI. In those cases, after submission, please send a copy of the final submitted product to the Proposal Administrator for saving in Maestro.

Benefits to Submitting Early

- Provide time to correct any items discovered during the quality review.
- Ensure there are no glitches with electronic submission systems / Time to correct any issues that are noted by sponsor's compliance system.
- Proposals with the required materials submitted to SRS within the timeframe outlined above will receive priority over proposals received with shorter lead time.
- SRS staff will make every effort to submit all proposals. In the event that a proposal is received outside of the requested timeframe, the investigator will assume the risk for proposals found to be non-compliant or does not meet the sponsor's deadline.

Proposal Collaborators/Subawards

A subaward agreement is a formal written contract made between the Texas A&M University System Member and another institution or organization to perform an intellectually significant portion of a sponsored project's work. It does not include payments to a contractor or payments to an individual that is a beneficiary of the program.

A subaward must include a clearly defined statement of work (SOW) to be performed by the subrecipient's personnel, using its own facilities and resources. The subrecipient takes full responsibility for adhering to the terms and conditions of the subaward including those flowed down from the prime sponsor and assumes creative and intellectual responsibility as well as financial management for performing and fulfilling the subrecipient's SOW within their approved budget. Subawards should be disclosed in the technical section of the proposal to show a clear delineation of the work to be performed by each institution.

If your project will include a subaward, it will be handled at each stage of the project by SRS personnel:

Proposal stage

- Proposal Administrator will seek documents from the subrecipient institution to include with the proposal and for internal purposes. Documents required:
- Budget and budget justification
- Statement of Work
- Subrecipient Commitment Form completed, signed by institution, and returned to SRS

Distinguishing Between a Subaward and a Procurement Action

Distinguishing Between a Subaward and a Procurement Action

Note: *It can be difficult at times to accurately determine whether a true subrecipient relationship exits. Please work with your proposal administrator to determine if a subrecipient relationship exists.*

*The agreement is likely a **subaward** if you can answer "yes" to the following about the entity:*
- Determines who is eligible to receive what Federal assistance
- Has its performance measured in relation to whether objectives of a Federal program were met
- Has responsibility for programmatic decision making and has a key/substantive role identified in the proposed project
- In accordance with its agreement, uses the Federal funds to carry out a program for a public purpose specified in authorizing statute, as opposed to providing goods or services for the benefit of the pass-through entity
- Will have potentially patentable or copyrightable technology emanating from the activities of this entity
- Will be providing cost sharing or matching funds

*The agreement is likely that of a **contractor or vendor** if you can answer "yes" to the following about the entity:*
- Provides the goods and services within normal business operations
- Provides similar goods or services to many different purchasers
- Normally operates in a competitive environment
- Provides goods or services that are ancillary to the operation of the Federal program

AASET – Award and Account Set-up and Expediting Team

Award Acceptance

If you receive a sponsored research agreement please forward it to SRS at awards@tamu.edu.

Helpful Reminder: Don't sign the agreement! There is a delegation for signature authority for all agreements and contracts. Individuals not specifically delegated to sign specific types of contracts are not authorized to sign on behalf any Texas A&M System Member.

The Award and Account Set-up and Expediting Team (AASET) performs the intake role of award documents from sponsors and establishes sponsored projects and accounts in MAESTRO and FAMIS to ensure data security for all system members managed by SRS.

Most funding agreements will come directly to SRS in response to a proposal prepared and submitted by SRS, on behalf of principal investigators (PIs). AASET logs the award into Maestro and determines if the award should be routed to Contract Negotiation for review and/or acceptance or if it is ready to proceed for award and account establishment.

Once an award has been accepted by SRS, on behalf of the system member, AASET sets up an account in FAMIS and links the financial account and proposal record to the project record in Maestro. Proposals are linked to the project record to maintain a consistent record of the statement of work and researchers involved in the project. Funds are loaded to the FAMIS financial account and spending restrictions, if applicable, are noted on the project record in Maestro.

As part of award and account establishment, AASET ensures compliance requirements are cleared prior to releasing the established project to Post Award.

Items Required to Release Funding

Maestro Tasks: Reporting Codes (Research projects only), PI Compliance Statement, and Personnel tasks must be completed in Maestro. Step-by-step instructions can be provided, if needed.

Proposal: The Setup Admin will verify a proposal has been routed and approved.

Financial Conflict of Interest (FCOI): FCOI Annual Disclosure and FCOI Training in TrainTraq must be completed for all personnel paid on the project. Step-by-step instructions can be provided, if needed.

Compliance: All compliance items must be approved by the member compliance office.

Transition to Project Administration

AASET releases the project to the Project Administrator (PA) for a thorough quality review once the project is established. The PA will release the Sponsored Project Summary (SPS) once the review is complete.

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Contract Negotiation

Contract Negotiation

SRS Contract Negotiator Services

- Review and negotiate the terms and conditions of agreements or modification to ensure compliance with applicable Texas A&M System policies, member rules/guidelines, and federal and state regulations.

- Review and address any exceptions included in the Request for Applications (RFP/RFA) at the time of proposal preparation.

- When necessary, negotiators engage the TAMUS Office of General Counsel, TAMUS Vice Chancellor for Research and the appropriate member offices to determine optimal agreement terms and mitigate high risk clauses.

- Seek member approval for cost sharing, project termination/suspensions, and non-standard terms.

- Track agreements through to full execution.

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The principal investigator (PI) is primarily responsible for the management of the project. Therefore, it is critical that the PI reviews and understands the terms and conditions of the specific award.

Contract Services Provided BY SRS and System Member

SRS	*System Member
• Contracts and subcontracts for following entities: • Federal • State • Non-profit • Industry • Certifications/Assurances for SRS Proposals and Negotiations • Amendments to contracts and subcontracts	• Unfunded Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) • Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDAs) • Material Transfer Agreements (MTAs) • Gifts, Contributions and Loans

*SRS prepares and negotiates these for TAMU.

Subawards at Negotiation Phase

Subawards are issued only after a fully executed award is received by SRS from the prime sponsor.

If the subrecipient was not proposed in the original proposal, sponsor approval may be necessary prior to issuance of the subaward. Prior approval may also be necessary even if the subrecipient was proposed in the original proposal. In some very rare instances, prime sponsors request to review and approve the proposed subaward prior to SRS's release of the subaward to the subrecipient.

In preparing to issue a subaward, SRS gathers information about the subrecipient and reviews the subrecipient's financial status and internal controls. Our subaward contract negotiator drafts the subaward and adheres to the prime award agreement's terms and conditions and flows down the appropriate clauses.

Once the subaward draft is complete, it is sent to the PI for review and approval. Once approved, SRS sends it unsigned to the subrecipient for review. The subrecipient may want to negotiate changes or request clarification of the terms and conditions. Once negotiations are complete and the signed subaward is received, SRS executes it on behalf of the respective A&M System Member, returns the fully executed document to the subrecipient, and distributes the fully executed subaward to the PI.

How can we partner together to complete negotiations in a timely fashion?

The following list of items will be required to complete negotiations:

- Proposal: A Contract Negotiator (CN) will verify a proposal has been routed and has been approved. If one has not then it will be prepared and routed at negotiations.

- Terms & Conditions (T&C): A CN will negotiate T&C if they do not adhere to System Policy. Non-standard T&C may require PI and Member approval.

- Financial Conflict of Interest (FCOI): Verify FCOI has not changed since the proposal was submitted.

- Security Compliance: If specific security requirements are part of the agreement. CN will notify the designated security officer for that system.

- Animal, Human and Biohazards Compliance: If applicable an IACUC, IRB or IBC may be needed.

- Export Control if there are non-standard conditions with publications, exports, and intellectual property.

Project Administration

Project Administration

SRS Project Administrator Services

Project management by the Project Administrator throughout the lifecycle of an award includes, but is not limited to:

- Performing project compliance on each project to ensure System member's policies, state and federal regulations, and sponsor terms and conditions are being followed

- Providing researchers with project burn rate, budget forecasting, and ensuring expenditures and revenue are in balance

- Reviewing expenditures for allowability, allocability, and reasonableness

- Assisting researchers with preparation/submission of sponsor required reports

- Ensuring timely closeout of an award

- PA's work closely with Sponsored Billing; especially in preparing the final invoice

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Once the award is set up, the project administration team is responsible for monitoring sponsored project accounts. The project administration team also provides expenditure monitoring to ensure allowability and compliance with federal regulations, sponsor specific requirements, state and university system policies and procedures. Your Project Administrator (PA) will work with you throughout the life of the award.

Each sponsored research project established is assigned to a Project Administrator (PA) based on the location of the principal investigator (PI) and the department.

Project Monitoring – Managing Research Accounts is a *Collaborative Effort*

During the life of the project, Project Administrators will:

- Assist in determining available account balances
- Review costs (such as payroll, travel, invoices, etc.) for allowability, allocability and reasonableness
- Verify and monitor cost share
- Communicate with the sponsor (For example: extension requests, budget reallocation, carry forward, etc.)
- Compliance verification
- Monitor subawards (invoicing, cost share, review of amendments, etc.)
- Adhere to budget restrictions and contract terms
- Review/approve timely payroll/non-payroll corrections on research accounts
- Finalize expenditures, invoicing/draw downs, and deliverables so accounts can be closed in a timely manner

Adding Personnel to Project Payroll

Personnel may be added to your research project payroll by the Business Administrator in your department. Once added, the action will route to the SRS Project Administrator for review/approval.

Purchasing/Travel

As with project payroll, these transactions are generally started in your department with the Business Administrator. Your SRS Project Administrator will review and approve the actions.

Interim Funding

Interim funding is financing provided by a principal investigator's respective, Texas A&M System Member and/or department for expenses incurred before the fully executed award document has been received from the sponsor. Interim funding may also be required, when necessary, to bridge time before the next year of funding is received. Interim funding guidelines vary by System Member, please contact your project administrator to determine if interim funding is appropriate.

Cost Transfers

A cost transfer is an expense that is transferred from one account to another after the expense was initially recorded in the financial accounting system. Project sponsors expect the grantee institution to establish and maintain adequate financial management practices and policies so that costs are appropriately charged at the time incurred and significant adjustments are not generally required. The federal government has established policies

concerning the assignment of costs to federally sponsored agreements, including the general government policies outlined in 2 CFR Part 200 Uniform Guidance as well as federal and nonfederal agency-specific policy requirements.

To comply with the cost allowability and allocability requirements outlined in the Uniform Guidance (200.400 - Subpart E - Cost Principles) , the institution must be able to explain and justify all charges transferred onto federal awards, whether the costs are transferred from some other federal account, a non-federal account, or a University account. Any necessary cost transfers should be completed in a timely manner and with a complete explanation, as these are, per the principles outlined in the Uniform Guidance (200.400 - Subpart E - Cost Principles) , critical factors in supporting allowability and allocability.

Cost transfers should be processed within 90 days of the original expense.

> ### *Post-Award – Project Compliance is a Collaborative Effort by Department, PI, and SRS Project Administrator*
>
> - Guidance for spending funds in accordance with the authorized purpose, proactive monitoring, and internal controls.
>
> - The avoidance of:
>   - Fraud, Waste and Abuse
>   - Institutional mismanagement of Federal funds
>
> - Ensuring proper stewardship of funds
>   - Financial management systems
>   - Monitoring
>   - Adherence to terms and conditions of the award

Subawards at Project Administration Phase

When your project is initially set up, a separate support account is established for each subaward.

During the life of a Subaward, the Project Administrator:
- Will Review invoice checking account number, total agreement amount, period of performance, back up documentation, cost sharing if required, and class invoice.
- Once reviewed, approve the invoice and collect PI certification. The PI will need to approve subaward invoices.

Subrecipient Monitoring

SRS is required to monitor the programmatic and financial activities of its subrecipients as part of the terms and conditions of its prime awards and as required by the federal government.

Progress reports and other technical deliverables must be reviewed by the A&M System PI and discussed with the subrecipient as needed. These reports are usually incorporated as part of the deliverables along with the technical reports submitted to the sponsor by the PI. SRS is responsible for obtaining the other reports required by the subaward terms and conditions, such as invention reports or audit reports.

Subrecipients will send invoices according to the terms and conditions of the subaward. Your Project Administrator will review the invoices to ensure that costs are allowable according to the subaward document. The PI will be asked to review the invoices prior to SRS processing payment to the subrecipient. A sample invoice will normally be provided to the subrecipient with the subaward agreement.

Technical Reports

Most grants and contracts require the submission of a final report of the research accomplished during the period of performance. Some sponsors also require the submission of interim or annual reports. Such reports may vary–from a brief summary and list of publications to a complete compilation of the project and its results. The specific requirements are stated in either the award document, or, in the case of many grants, a policy manual referenced in the award. It is the principal investigator's (PIs) responsibility to prepare and submit the technical/programmatic reports to the sponsor in a timely manner. Copies of technical deliverables may be submitted to SRS via Maestro.

Reporting of Inventions

Most sponsors require that discoveries and inventions be disclosed to the sponsor upon conception or reduction to practice. Many sponsors require reports of inventions at regular intervals, generally annually. The PI is responsible for adhering to a sponsor's invention reporting requirements and to The Texas A&M University System policies regarding the disclosure of inventions.

At the completion of the project it is often necessary to certify whether or not an invention has been made during the course of the project. SRS will notify the PI when invention reports are required and will supply the necessary forms. However, it is the responsibility of the PI to report an invention to the Texas A&M System Technology Commercialization at Texas A&M Innovation - Texas A&M Innovation (tamus.edu)

Final Inventory of Equipment

All federal contracts and many grants require a final inventory of equipment purchased, fabricated, or furnished by the sponsor during the period of the project. Non-federal sponsors may have other requirements.

Cost Sharing

For awards that required cost sharing (https://srs.tamu.edu/contracts-and-grants/cost-sharing/), an accounting of the cost-shared amounts will need to be provided.

Consequences of Untimely Reporting

It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to submit timely technical/programmatic reports to the sponsor. Among the actions sponsors can take when annual and/or final reports are not received by their deadline are:

- The loss of expanded authorities on current and future awards. This would include budget revisions and no-cost extensions.
- Delays in receiving payments or sponsor refusal to pay outstanding invoices.
- Sponsor designation of the University as a high-risk awardee.
- Agency may refuse to review new proposals.
- The loss of external funding from that sponsor, *not only to the individuals involved but to other University investigators as well.*

Project Closeout

The last step in a grant or contract's life cycle is project closeout. The key feature to any close is the **on-time** submission of all technical, financial, and other reports as required to the sponsoring agency.

The principal investigator (PI) will be notified prior to the termination date of the project. The SRS project administrator will communicate with the PI to determine if a no-cost extension will be requested or if an extension with additional funds is pending.

Sponsored Billing

Sponsored Billing Services

- Utilizes accounting transactions from the Texas A&M University System financial system, FAMIS, and the research administration enterprise-wide system, Maestro:
  - Prepares, analyzes, reconciles, and submits accurate, timely financial deliverables (i.e. invoices, financial reports) and special reports/forms (e.g. HUB, property, Release of Claims, closeout, Small Business etc.)

- Reviews sponsored research award documents to determine billing and reporting requirements and schedules
  - Creates and tracks required deliverables and schedules in the Maestro Sponsored Billing Module

- Assists in resolving reconciliation problems, financial deliverable issues, and collection of outstanding invoices

- Effectively communicates with Principal Investigators and Department/Unit staff to resolve financial deliverable issues and provide sponsor required information

- Works collaboratively with all SRS functional areas, A&M System Member Representatives, Department/Unit Staff, and PIs

- Effectively communicates to facilitate effective and efficient submission of financial deliverables

Financial Deliverables

SRS Sponsored Billing is responsible for preparing and submitting financial deliverables (e.g. invoices, financial reports, Letters of Credit) according to the award terms and conditions. Sponsored Billing Research Administrators work very closely with Project Administrators, the PI, and departmental staff to ensure that the financial deliverables are accurate and submitted on time.

Additionally Sponsored Billing is responsible for the collection of outstanding invoices. Collection efforts begin as soon as the invoice is considered past due and continue every 30 days until the invoices are paid or another resolution is reached. Sponsored Billing works closely with A&M System Member Representatives, PIs, and Project Administrators to resolve any issues related to outstanding invoices.

Services Provided by Sponsored Billing

- Invoicing – Sponsored project invoicing for cost-reimbursement, fixed-price, and fixed rate research projects. The sponsor award document dictates the type and frequency of invoicing.
- Financial Reports – Preparation and submission of financial reports required by sponsors.
- Letters of Credit (i.e. Drawdowns) – Under the terms of some awards, expenses are reimbursed by drawing down funds using the sponsor's electronic payment system.
- Collections – Monitor outstanding invoices and contact sponsors at least every 30 days seeking a payment status update.
- Small Business Disadvantaged Business Reports and HUB Reports

Research Compliance

The designated Research Compliance office at your institution or organization should be contacted for the following research compliance items:
- **Human Subjects Research**
- **Use of Animals in Research**
- **Research Involving Hazardous Materials**
- **Use of recombinant materials (rDNA) and synthetic nuclelc acids**
- **Research Integrity**
- **Conflict of Interest**
- **Export Control**

Intellectual Property

It is Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) Policy that title to patents and copyrights developed under sponsored programs remain with TAMUS. The Texas A&M Innovation is the TAMUS office is the office supporting inventors and commercializing innovations across the Texas A&M University System. Their website is
Texas A&M Innovation - Texas A&M Innovation (tamus.edu)

Maestro

Maestro is an enterprise-wide system that supports researchers and research administration across The Texas A&M University System. In Maestro, researchers can review and approve their proposals prior to submission, review their accounts once awarded, add research keywords to their personal profile, search for colleagues with a specific area of interest, or search for funding opportunities. *Access to Maestro is required for proposal submission*. Maestro may be accessed through the TAMUS Single Sign On. https://sso.tamus.edu/ A Researcher Dashboard has been created for the PI to manage their proposals, projects and accounts. The PI's SRS contacts can also be found on their dashboard.   Below is a screenshot of the dashboard.

Maestro Researcher Dashboard