Subaward Business Process Improvement Project Update

Jul 6, 2015

In May 2015, Research Management Services (RMS) conducted a Business Process Improvement (BPI) workshop focused on streamlining the management of outgoing subcontracts at UCSF using a Lean Six Sigma approach. The goal of the workshop was to reduce the average time from receipt of the complete Subaward Request to execution of a fully signed subcontract. A pilot to begin testing process improvements will run from July 1 to September 30.

The group, composed of representatives from departments and key administrative units, has recommended the following key areas of improvement:

1. **Improve process and forms**? In an effort to address inefficiencies such as redundant and inaccurate data entry and multiple handoffs, the BPI recommended that RMS Research Service Coordinators (RSCs) own the subcontract process at both the proposal stage and the subcontract request stage. Changes will include using a new Subaward Commitment Form (SCF) to efficiently collect information from subrecipients at proposal submission time. Information from the SCF will be uploaded with the relevant proposal record in eProposal, enabling a portion of the compliance intake process to start at the Just In Time (JIT) stage for NIH proposals. The RSC/Associate will initiate the Subaward Request Form (SRF), which has been updated to capture only the information not contained in the SCF, thus eliminating redundant entries. RMS Teams C, I, and G will pilot the new forms and intake process from July 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015.

2. **Optimize resources**? The undifferentiated queue for all subrecipient and transaction types was identified as a key contributor to the lag in subaward processing time. The BPI recommended reallocating the Subaward Team workload according to subrecipient type to allow simple transactions to be separated from the more complex and time consuming transactions. Additionally, it was recommended that certification for Subaward Analysts be developed to allow delegation of signing authority so that simple transactions can be approved by multiple signatories rather than all transaction requiring the Subaward Manager?s endorsement. The reallocation of subaward requests will be piloted from July 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015. For more information on the reallocation of the Subaward Team workload, [click here](#).

3. **Develop metrics**? Metrics will be identified to track improvements in the cost, quality and speed of the new subaward process. Performance dashboards will also be implemented.
4. **Implement new technology**? The paper process currently in place requires time to print, scan and enter information into systems. The BPI recommended utilizing existing and new technologies to automate and simplify this process. This will include testing Docusign use between the Subaward Team and the subrecipient’s Institutional Official, developing web resources for UCSF staff and subrecipients, and deploying an electronic system for managing subcontracts at UCSF.

During the pilot phase, the BPI workgroup will be evaluating the process, reviewing feedback, and making any updates or revisions as necessary.

For more information on Subaward Business Process Improvement (BPI) project, see the Update to the Office of Sponsored Research (OSR) Advisory Board or contact Marge O?Halloran, Director ? Research Management Services.