



Five Strategies for Grants Compliance

You got a grant, and your project is funded- Yay!

You got a grant, and your project is funded- Oh no!

Although our opening is meant to be lighthearted, may hit close to home for some. Securing a grant is exciting, but with it comes great responsibility. Grant funds are expected to be spent in full as outlined in grant applications and proposals and similarly, grant objectives are expected to be implemented as planned. **The risks to not complying are numerous:** damage to agency and personnel reputation, loss of future funding, and most importantly, not achieving objectives meant to have positive impact on those you serve. **These five strategies can help agencies meet the challenges of grants compliance:**

1. **Understand, Understand, Understand.** Pay attention to the detail of the grant terms. Read the funder's letter or notice of funding award (federal gov't.) carefully, and note if any grant reports are required, and if so when. If not outlined, ask if there are any restrictions to announcing the award. For the majority of Federal Awards, the [Office of Management and Budget \(OMB\) compliance supplement](#) is a key resource for compliance requirements.
2. **Notify, Notify, Notify.** Make sure the key stakeholders (e.g., board members, staff involved in the grant, collaborating agencies, support letters providers, etc.) are notified before the grant announcement is made public via social media or the press. Notify appropriate departments, especially the finance office who will work to comply with spending and accounting procedures.
3. **Monitor, Monitor, Monitor.** A grant Project Manager (PM), the person responsible for managing and implementing the grant, should have been identified before submitting the grant, but if not, do so immediately! The PM should set up a kickoff meeting as well as regular monitoring meetings with the project team to ensure the following of policies and procedures and the meeting of project goals, activities, and budget requirements.
4. **Adhere, Adhere, Adhere.** In addition to following the funder's requirements, make sure you are following your agency's own policies and procedures. Many organizations use purchase orders and set up specific project budget codes for internal control. Work closely with your finance office to understand the system in place for budget monitoring. We recommend that PMs retain copies of all purchase orders and receipts and track expenses (spreadsheets work great!) to reconcile project spending with the finance office.
5. **Document, Document, Document.** Keep records of all project activities, outcomes, personnel time and effort, spending, timelines, and correspondence. Plan to do what you said you would, but funders understand changes happen. Funders are open to project activity and budget modifications, as long as pre-approval was sought. In fact, they tend to appreciate the opportunity to discuss project issues and help you find solutions. Even if there are no changes or problems, keep in regular contact with the funder. We even suggest sending a progress report even if it's not required. Funders will appreciate knowing the impact of their support as well as your stewardship.

For **grant preparation services** and **assistance with grants compliance** please visit sheerstrategy.com or contact us at (215) 680-0684 or at maddyschiering@sheerstrategy.com.