Questions discussed in the main room

1. **What is the average funding amount for ACS?**
   PRF grants are fixed-value funding. The Doctoral New Investigators are $110k, and for the established researchers going into a new direction, the New Direction (DNI) is $125k - no overhead allowed on either.

2. **What is the difference between the grant officer contact and the application endorser for DocuSign?**
   There are contact data fields for the grant officer assisting the principal investigator. In many institutions that person is the endorser but not always. The endorser must be the person who has the authority to sign on behalf of the institution. When the grant officer is not authorized to sign, optional contact data fields for the endorser are available to transmit the DocuSign signature request to this individual instead of the grant officer.

3. **Are there any limitations to what a grant officer can do on behalf of the Principal Investigator?**
   The system is designed to help principal investigators by allowing grant office staff—as long as they have been approved to access the PRF Portal and have access to the application or grant in question--to facilitate all the processes except for the signature transmitted through DocuSign.

4. **Any new changes to the guidelines this year?**
   There are no changes to the guidelines. However, there are a couple of important updates to remember. First, the New Direction grants increased value from 110k to 125k. Second, the next submission window starts on August 14th, about a month earlier than usual.

5. **What are the requirements for equipment purchases over $5,000 and retaining a title for the acquired equipment?**
   The rule is that you cannot spend more than $5,000 from PRF on capital equipment and the system will not allow an entry that exceeds that amount. However, if the cost of necessary equipment is higher than $5,000, you can use matching funds.
   When you enter your budget justification, you have to justify the purchase. The title for the equipment stays with the grantee.

6. **Which Travel are you expecting in the research proposals?**
   The travel category in the budget includes travel to meetings for faculty and/or students. These meetings can be the ACS National meetings, regional meetings, or specific meetings in the field. However, travel to a site to gather results on special instrumentation from national labs or other universities would be considered under fieldwork.

7. **How do you suggest managing subrecipients if a proposal involved a third party?**
We don't have a category for subcontracting. Our resources are mainly for students, staff, supplies, and travel. In instances where outside facilities are used for doing particular analyses, like sophisticated Mass spectrometry or crystallography; those should be treated under the supplies category.

8. **Does ACS intend to update the proposal submission portal to allow for AOR access to proposals & documents?**
Due to security requirements, anyone needing access to an application or grant must have been approved for PRF Portal access and granted privileges to the application or grant. Guidance for obtaining portal access can be found here: https://www.acs.org/funding/grants/petroleum-research-fund/applicants/salesforce-registration-help.html . Grant office staff other than the PI or the grant officer on the application form must request grant access via email to prfsupport@acs.org. Following that, you will have the same ability that the PI or the designated Grant officer has.

Breakout Room Q&A

Program related questions

1. **What is the start of the grant year?**
The official start of the grant year is September 1 and the end of the year is August 31. For grants awarded in October, upon request, the grant funding can begin as early as January. However, note that if funding is started early, the first grant year is not equal to a calendar year. For example, if the grant is started on January 1, the first grant year is 20 months long as the end date is fixed Note the start and end dates of the second year are fixed as September 1 and August 31.

2. **What are the "new" criteria for New Direction (ND) grants?**
The proposed research must be substantially different from the PI's previous research. A conversation with a program officer is encouraged to evaluate the proposed specific topic in view of previous work prior to preparing an application.

3. **Is preliminary data required?**
Preliminary data is not required. As these grants are seed money grants, extensive preliminary data, particularly for ND grants will render the proposal uncompetitive.

Portal related questions

1. **Is it mandatory for Grant Officers to have individual portal accounts?**
   At present, it is mandatory for all portal users—grant officers and Principal Investigators—to have a user account. A user account requires an ACS ID and the submission of a pre-registration form for PRF Portal Access. The pre-registration form requires the ACS Username and the ACS Customer/Member Number. There can be a slight delay in approving the pre-registration in order to verify contact information. Guidance can be found here: https://www.acs.org/funding/grants/petroleum-research-fund/applicants/salesforce-registration-help.html .

2. **We are from a large Canadian institution and have a team of reviewers that are involved in the application submission review process. Would you recommend that all members of the team have user accounts?**
   At present, all individuals that need access to an application for review or editing purposes must have an account as defined in #1 above.   The Office of Research Grants will be conducting a focus group in the Fall to evaluate requirements for Grant Office activities. To participate, please send an email to PRFInfo@acs.org.

3. **Can more than one person at an institution be given signature privileges?**
   The signature names for DocuSign are specified on the application form—Principal Investigator, Grant Officer, and Co-Principal Investigator (if applicable). There are additional fields and a checkbox to select an institutional endorser if the Grant Officer is not authorized to perform that function. Guidance on the DocuSign process can be found at: https://www.acs.org/funding/grants/petroleum-research-fund/applicants/salesforce-registration-help1.html . We have also added a button to cancel the DocuSign transmission so that you can change the DocuSign contacts and emails if necessary (See Figure 7 in the aforementioned link).

4. **How can you support the review of application submissions by a large institution team?**
   The information entered into the application can be downloaded as a pdf using a menu option. Complete the DocuSign transmission and download the Signature sheet from DocuSign as a pdf. Combine the application and DocuSign pdf with the technical proposal pdf and any other supporting pdfs that the applicant intends to submit to create a review package. This review package can then be forwarded to the team prior to clicking the submit button.

5. **Is there a way to find out who you have listed as approvers for an organization?**
   At present, there is no mechanism for retrieving this information by a portal user. You can request that we generate a report showing all portal users or contacts specified on the application forms. This would require a custom report to be created.

6. **We have a separate office that prepares the financial reports. Should they create accounts?**
   Anyone who needs to access an application or grant to perform an action must have access to the portal and the application/grant in question. Privileges to existing applications or grants can be obtained by sending an email to PRFSupport@acs.org and specifying the application/grant number.

7. **Do both the Principal Investigator (PI) and Grant Officer (GO) need portal access to submit an application?**
We assume that a PI and GO will be working in tandem to complete a proposal submission. However, a GO can perform all steps necessary for submission of an application except for accessing the email of the PI, institutional endorser, and Co-PI to complete the DocuSign signature transmission. The DocuSign transmission must be completed in order to submit the application.