NSF Guidance on Financial Management of ATE Grants: What You Don't Know Can Hurt You!

 Michael Lesiecki - Welcome everyone today's webinar and NSF Guidance on Financial Management of ATE Grants: What You Don't Know Can Hurt You! Today is February 10, 2016; I'm your host Michael Lesiecki here at the Maricopa Community Colleges. As I mentioned, this webinar is being recorded within 24 or 48 business hours, I guess four days you'll get a link to the recording and the slides as well so you'll have that for your record. Let's go ahead and get started today, we had a few little glitches getting started with a webinar service disruption but we're doing fine. We'll hook up our last speaker in just a moment. Let's get going for today, let me tell you a little bit about the webinar details of this event.

Webinar Details
Michael Lesiecki- This webinar you're going to be in listen only mode using your computer or phone. Please ask questions via the question or chat window. As I mentioned the webinar is being recorded and you'll be sent a recording link.

Brought To You By
 Michael Lesiecki – This webinar is brought to you by the Centers Collaborative for Technical Assistance and our colleagues at Mentor-Connect with support from the National Science Foundation as you see on the slide.

The CCTA is Led By
Michael Lesiecki- What is the CCTA thing, was its led by five centers you can see their names here the National Convergence Technology center, SCATE, FLATE, Bio-Link, and MATEC networks here in our own district at the Maricopa system.

CCTA Purpose
Michael Lesiecki- The purpose of the Center's Collaborative is responding to requests from the Department of Labor to have the National Science Foundation ATE centers to provide technical assistance and services to labor grantees and others. Well this is open to the form of success coaching, in-person convenings, knowledge management, peer-to-peer learning and of course webinars like this one today.

CCTA Activities are Relevant for
Michael Lesiecki - These activities are relevant for all of us right whether you're Department of Labor grantee, National Science Foundation project or center, workforce-oriented folks, people in grants management, business offices all relevant to what we're doing.

Deliverables

Michael Lesiecki -What are the deliverables of the CCTA? Well topical webinars like this one and other online media including videos and transcripts, you can see the archives of these webinars and a variety of ways one of them is ATEcentral.net. Finally there will be other deliverables of our groups including regional discipline specific conferences, papers on documenting best practices and convening. You will hear more about those at the end of today's webinar.

Poll #1
Michael Lesiecki - So it's time for a poll, if you can listen to me talk, how about if I ask you a question? Let me put a poll up on the screen and I'd like you to respond if you could to; what is your affiliation? Are you a PI on a grant or maybe a main grant lead not really called a PI, or project staff member , you could be in grants management or maybe you not one of those that's fine. I see everyone's going ahead and putting their information, thank you. This is not a hard question, let's give a countdown to 3 let's see what the results are 3, 2, 1. Let's close the poll and now let's share the results, so look at that the majority of us are in grants management or the business office not surprised by the topic of today's webinar. Ok great let's go forward.

Facilitator
 Michael Lesiecki - It's my pleasure to introduce our facilitator for today, Elaine Craft. Elaine, go ahead.

Elaine Craft - Thank you Mike, I too want to welcome everyone to today's webinar and to mention that the two NSF ATE funded projects that have collaborated to make today's webinar possible Mentor-Connect and the Center's Collaborative for Technical Assistance. I serve as the principal investigator for Mentor-Connect and my colleague Ann Beheler serves as the principal investigator for the Center's Collaborative for Technical Assistance. As Mike described earlier CCTA provides technical assistance related to producing better outcomes once funded. Mentor-Connect on the other hand provides mentoring and an array of resources to help guide potential NSF ATE grantees in actually becoming grantees. Mentor-Connect provides a searchable online library of resources, 1 on 1 mentoring and a series of technical assistance workshops related specifically to the preparation of competitive grant proposals that conforms to NSF guidelines. Next week for example Mentor-Connect will be providing a webinar that includes step-by-step guidance in developing a budget and budget justification for an NSF ATE grant proposal, there will be more information about this opportunity later in the webinar. In today's technical assistance webinar you will have the unique opportunity to learn specifics about financial management of ATE grants that will answer common questions about help grant funding works at NSF. You will also receive information that will guide stewardship of these federal funds at your institution.

Presenter
Elaine Craft- It is my pleasure today to introduce you to our speakers; Dr. Celeste Carter is the lead program officer for the ATE program in the NSF division of undergraduate education. She will provide a framework for today's webinar and help you understand the two primary touch points with NSF that impact grantees. Also joining us today from the NSF division of grants and agreements is grants and

agreements specialist Mr. Rashawn Farrior. He has extensive experience working with NSF practices associated with making and monitoring grant awards. Now I'll turn the program over to Dr. Carter.

Advanced Technology Education (ATE) Program
(Inaudible)

Dr. Celeste Carter - I'm glad everybody can hear me this time, welcome to everyone. It's great to see the number of people that are logged onto this webinar and welcome to all of you. I'm going to start just with a brief overview of the Advanced Technological Education program, which is housed in the Division of Undergraduate Education at the National Science Foundation. This is a very interesting program because it is focused on community and technical colleges and it's also has a goal of educating entry level science and engineering technicians for high technology fields that drive our nation's economy. This was the 1st congressionally mandated program that Congress had NSF develop and that came out of the act that actually was a public law in 1992 SATA act. So the program just in a real nutshell cause I know everybody wants to hear from Rashawn, focuses on three different tracks there are projects, ATE center and a final track collating and collecting evidence about best practices and what actually works or does not work in technician education programs. If you look at the solicitation for the ATE program looking across those three tracks funding can be from a $150,000 all the way to $4,000,000 over the respective different types of projects or centers that would be funded. One of the interesting things I want to point out is I have pathways delineated ATE can support grades 7-12, two-year and four-year institutions part of it is dependent on what's in red down there, your industry partnerships. You want to have really strong education industry partnerships in ATE, so that the students that are coming through the program's industry is really going to look at them as a perspective employee and say that they have the educational background as well as the technical skills and competencies that they need to really kind of hit the ground running for whatever the industry is. The other thing is, and I know it was one of the questions that came in advance. The question was is there requirement that the ATE funds must be used at a 2 year institutions or do 4 year schools workforce development programs qualify? You do qualify but you need to be working with your community and technical colleges so at that point a 4 year institution could certainly be in the lead fiscal agent role but we would expect to see and reviewers would expect to see Community and Technical College faculty having some leadership on that project. There are some 4 year schools that included a 2 year school with in them that's something that just needs to be explained in the proposal itself. So with that there is a proposal deadline this year of October 6th 2016 so with that let me go on to just a brief introduction of a little bit about why we think this webinar so important for the (next slide thanks)

Program Officer Responsibilities
Dr. Celeste Carter - This talks a little bit, I'm not sure I go every single one, but these are some of the responsibilities that program officers the main person with the disciplinary scientific expertise that you can talk to. So one of the things you do when you come to NSF and I would say that faculty could think about coming here in a position called the Rotator, where you leave your institution for one to two or three years you don't lose anything as far as retirement benefits, because NSF makes and award to your institution for the time that you are here but you actually get to come to NSF and serve as a program

officer. So I can handle any of those questions about that at a later time, but some of the other things we do as a program officer we actually get to have input on advising or developing a new program or revising an existing one. Your colleague letters are another mechanism that NSF uses to solicit proposals for people there is a current ATE dear colleague letter out that you could look for the number is 16-007 and there are some other community college specific to dear colleague letters out relating to math education and Hispanic serving institutes so you can look for those on the NSF website NSF.gov. One thing that we can do at any time for you is if you submit to any program officer a one to two page synopsis of your project ideas, we can actually give you some feedback on it. Sometimes it's a boy you know this is a great idea but you're going to have to really beef up the faculty expertise we don't see where that exists in your institution or maybe we might be able to virtually network you with someone who has a similar project and you can actually see and leverage results from someone else. We form panels of the proposals, so we sort them into panels, we invite reviewers, and we oversee the entire NSF merit review process which is really the main mechanism that we use for thinking about what proposals will be going forward with a recommendation for award. And notice in that next bullet down I say we negotiate with you to make a recommendation for award I've been here as a permanent program officer for a little over six years now was a rotator before that I have never awarded a single proposal, so that's where Rashawn is going to come in. The other thing we get to do is we get to conduct outreach activities related to inform all of our communities about funding opportunities at the NSF. So I have one more slide.

New Performers Submit Proposal

Dr. Celeste Carter - If I can have the next slide and it looks a little bit confusing but this is something that's particularly important if you or your institution has never received an award from the National Science Foundation or you've never had it you haven't had an award within five years or you have never been reviewed by here we go with acronyms I have tried to explain them within this CAAR is cost analysis and audit resolution. So I'm going to look at the top part of this where it says you submit a proposal in that first blue arrow says it goes to merit reviews, say it reviews really well a panel of your peers gives you five excellents highly competitive proposal, so the program officer also reads your proposal and if we agree with all of those readings we're going to have two different things to do and the one that's most transparent you is we would send you an email saying that gee your proposal reviewed very well a few questions were raised and we would like your input on these questions if we begin a negotiation we intend to make a recommendation for award and will usually ask you to please submit your responses within a certain number of business days. These questions about the actual project itself , qualifications of your personnel, courses you intend to develop, what kind of professional development activities you want to do all of those types of things are what a program officer will ask you about. The other thing we do since you would be a new performer is will send your proposal to the division of grants and agreements and it's the grants officer Rashawn in the case of ATE, who is actually going to go over your proposal as well especially with an eye to the budget and is actually going to make the award. But what I want to point out here is that the first thing that happens when a new performer goes down to the division of grants and agreements is your institution is going to receive what is called a new performer packet hopefully you're able to complete that is about policies and procedures on a

number of different items that I will let Rashawn go into. You're going to complete it and return it to the division of grants and agreements then there's another section in the National Science Foundation call cost analysis and audit resolution they look at your package and pretty much what they're doing is they're going to come down and they're going to say yes or no your institution actually has all the policies and procedures in place to adequately handle federal taxpayer funds. So if we get a thumbs up, division of grants and agreements will notify the program officer and say go ahead you can actually make this recommendation for award. If CAAR says no your institution did not adequately respond to the new performer package then the division of grants and agreements is going to say hey this is going to have to be a decline and we will debrief the institution. So I wanted you to know that there are two completely separate things and let's say it was that proposal that got 5 excellents it's heartbreaking to all of us that we would have to say this was a decline because cost analysis and audit resolution did not see that you could handle funds. So that's my that's my intro for Rashawn so that he can pick this up and tell you even more the division of grants and agreements and what goes on. So Rashawn I'm going to, oh so if there are any questions maybe we could let Rashawn go.

Michael Lesiecki – Celeste lets do that. Rashawn let's do an auto check with you.

DGA Year in Review
Rashawn Farrior -Good afternoon everyone, I am happy to be a part of this webinar today once again my name is Rashawn Farrior, I am the grants officer for the ATE program I have been here for about eight years and grant officer for about 15 years.

Michael Lesiecki – Rashawn I'm going to interrupt, we're getting an echo and I wonder if you might have your computer speakers on?

Rashawn Farrior - Can you hear me now?

Michael Lesiecki - I'm still getting an echo I'll ask the other presenters to mute themselves. Go ahead Rashawn. Thank you.

Rashawn Farrior - Is that better?

Michael Lesiecki - That's perfect go ahead.

Rashawn Farrior - Ok wonderful, so like I was saying I have over 15 years of federal grant experience so it's great to be here and I wanted to before I went into my part I wanted to talk about what Celeste was talking about first since its fresh on everyone's mind. So once you if you're new awardee and you are in that process one of the biggest things that I could tell you is to make sure that whoever you have on that proposal cover page that's going be the business official or whomever that you designated as a point of contact make sure that person is adequately prepared for that new awardee package. That package is going to come in the form of email and make sure that every question and document that is requested,

you submit. I want you to be very mindful of the information that you submit is what the cost analysis and audit resolution branch will review. If you do not present all the documents in its entirety we're going to review the packet as what was presented. There's been too many instances where grantees did not submit all of the documents required and they ended up getting decline because we try to reach out to the grantee to get the information and either with the wrong person or they didn't understand and so they ended up getting declined. So we don't want that to happen, so the process can range depending on the time of year so for right now actually I have 30 new awardee packages that are actually coming my way so I'm overjoyed about that. So we are very busy, so I will give you a review of what we did last fiscal year we completed over 22 actions last year we're only a staff of under 30 and we are even think we're about 25 now and basically each person does around 1,000 actions each year. We also participate in what we call monitoring assistance with our program staff so we do a lot of outreach with them and we also, do what we call an advanced monitoring site visit review it is not an audit and Beheler has been through one and survived at Collin County Community College. So at a certain point I want her to speak on the actual process of what that was or that experience was for the college and basically, the site visit is really an opportunity for you to really just to pick our brains you have us for roughly a whole week and basically there's a lot of coordination between the universities, colleges, etc. with NSF staff prior to. So we give you a pretty much a three-month warning to say hey we're coming out here how about this month this week (blah blah blah) and then once we get out there we basically go through your policies and procedures with a fine tooth comb and basically help you see how you actually manage your federal award. While we are there that is your opportunity to ask any questions any roadblocks your experience any problems or questions you want to bounce off of us while we're there that's what we there for and once were there and we find something that may be problematic for you that maybe an auditor would find, what we would do then will give you a recommendation and with that recommendation is basically to say we recommend the following actions of change and we give you 90 days to respond and its basically almost like a plan of action, but it gives you an opportunity to make sure that the ship that your running is well oiled and your machine is running well. So I always like to tell grantees do not panic when you see an email from us saying we want to come and visit your institution it is not a bad thing I always tell grantees you would like to see me first before you see the office of the inspector general which is that what we call the OIG and if you see the OIG usually that is a bad thing that there's some kind of activity that might be deemed questionable and even on some levels criminal in nature. So you want to see me first because I'm going to help you and make sure that there is nothing that could get you in trouble.

Awardee

Rashawn Farrior - As the awardee there's certain obligations that you have as an awardee, you must follow certain policies and procedures so basically once you receive that award you are now adhering to all the terms and conditions of that award. You want to make sure that once you accept the award and when I say accept the award when you decide okay we want to take this award and we are going to draw down that first dollar of that awarded this ATE award you are now legally bound to NSF. So make sure that you are aware of all the roles and responsibilities of the grant and that you're ok with it and by all means if you have any questions when you get your award letter feel free to give me a call send me

an email saying Rashawn I don't understand this please let me know that's not a problem. Also the awardee will be responsible to make sure that all expenses all expenditures are allowable making sure that things are actually allowed allocable meaning that you can actually place them in certain categories and making sure that those costs are reasonable. Like I said before just making sure that you're complying with all the federal guidelines and statues. Next please.

Time and Effort

Rashawn Farrior - One of the other topics which is usually big with a lot of grantees is time and effort and basically with time and effort there's basically you want to make sure for one with all of your budget line items you want to make sure that you have policies procedures for each one so with time and effort that's dealing with salaries so you want to make sure that there is policies procedures that state how do you actually pay your salary and compensation for those individuals. Make sure that it's a part of your official payroll you must reflect 100 sponsors and non-sponsor, so if you have a federal award and non-federal award make sure that it can reflect that percentage level up to 100% and you should be able to reflect that across multiple activities of their doing of award with DOE Department of Energy or the PI has another activity with NSF they should be able to reflect each of those activities on a time sheet ok. Make sure that you should be able to charge the same amount to grant as your institutional salary so basically you can't charge the federal government more since it's a federal grant you must stay consistent with that rate. Make sure that all the related work is actually performed and then also one of the biggest things that we always see is when I go out to your institutions I can see sometimes where they'll actually have their time and effort reporting based on what was budgeted you can't do that you have to make sure its fine in the beginning if you want to do that but you want to make sure that you reconcile that with what is actual. So if you say you're going to 20% but in actuality only did 20 you have to make sure that is reflecting your actual effort level, effort on the project you can't use what was budgeted. Ok thank you, Mike next slide.

My Budget Review

Rashawn Farrior - So in my budget review there's a lot of things that I look at, so it's almost like you're getting a second review but also I'm looking at it from a different standpoint. So when I say I'm verifying all the PIs and CO-PIs, so basically what I'm looking at making sure that these individuals have not been debarred, they are actually allowed to work on a federal award and basically we have a system where we actually look through and see if these individuals have been debarred ok . Also I check the calendar month or summer months added so in that regard want to make sure that you have not exceeded the two month rule or anything of that nature and if you do that you have adequate justification of why we needed that additional month. I also look at just salaries and fringe benefits make sure I followed that and I usually look at that from the vantage point does it seem excessive for the amount of work performed and making sure that is actually allow. Equipment if your award has equipment I usually look at the equipment and make sure that the equipment is actually necessary, I look at your facilities and resource page to make sure that your institution actually perform and have the space to actually occupy that equipment and if it is necessary for the project. Because, sometimes what happens grantees will ask for piece of equipment but they may already have that equipment with

another project and so if that's the case, you may not actually need that piece of equipment because it's already been sponsored by another federal entity. Another issue I always look at is travel if the PI is traveling; I usually try to see exactly where they're going, what is the purpose of their presenting and basically seeing if it's allowable. Especially with international travel the program officer and I usually work really close together and they usually give us notes saying if this is a part of the project and it would benefit the overall program itself. With participant support costs this is one of our big items in that review I usually check the see exactly what are those costs because those costs are delegated out into four different categories you have stipends, you have subsistence, you have travel and you have other and with participant support costs you just want to make sure that those costs are allocated properly. Sub-awards I check with sub-awards just to make sure that once you submit the sub-award, I have sometimes problems with grantees or well grantees have problems submitting that sub-award part of their budget especially if it's after the fact; when I say that, they'll say well we couldn't add the sub-award to the to the actual budget pages. If you run into that problem what has happened is that sub-award entity has not been adequately registered with CCR I think that's one of the registration sites for the grantee as the sub-award to register and they would have to go into the registration and actually register as that which is the U.S. - contractor registration site. I also look at other direct costs and see if those costs that are in that particular budgetary line item is it reasonable is it allowable is it allocable. Okay and then the other one that I look at are indirect costs and I make sure that the base that you're using your applicable rate. I'll go in to that in another slide.

Participant Support Costs
Rashawn Farrior - So participants support costs is a unique line item category for NSF so these costs are really really geared toward the student so I just came from a site visit that where the institution actually put additional cost for safe travel for an employee of the institution under participants support. You can't be an employee of the university or college and put it under participant support so saying you have students and chaperones that are going to say a poster conference or someone's symposium or there's something of that nature those individuals that are escorting the student if it's the PI. The PI has a separate travel line item and so if there's any other employees that are attached to the grant they will have to use regular travel not participants support travel. So that's something I really want to take home to you guys. Also make sure that you have separate account codes it is imperative that you do this because those costs if I come out to your institution and I want to know you had twenty students to go to a conference in California I want to see their flight and hotel accommodations and I want to see how much all of that cost just for these twenty individuals. If you do not have a separate account codes for participant support costs it could take you days to extrapolate that information so it is very important that you have separate account codes. So if you were asked to pull out say just stipends for the particular fiscal year or even quarter or what have you. You could be able to drill down those numbers really fairly quickly because most PeopleSoft and other grant award making software can facilitate those needs. Also for the most part is generally participant support costs are generally excluded from the indirect cost rate so usually I would check your federally negotiated rate. And I think of my eight years here I've only seen one institution where it was not excluded but that was just, and I have be here awhile so that was very rare but it did happen one time so make sure that you do not included if you do

include it and I'm reviewing what I have to do is ask for you to revise the budget exclude those costs from your indirect and then still keep the bottom line at the recommended amount from the program offices so those are some things they can actually hold you up. Now the re-budgeting restrictions last year you could say re-budget items without NSF prior approval for participant support ok so saying if you wanted to put money in the line item say from travel to participant support that's fine if you want to do it from salaries to put in participant support that is fine. What has changed is if you want to change the lines or move funds between those particular participant support costs so if you want to move money between stipends and travel or from subsistence into travel or vice versa or other into stipends, you would need NSF prior approval and that approval will be submitted via fast lane and then it will take you to research.gov and that will be approved from the NSF cognizant program officer so that is something different. So I'm still trying to figure out what was the justification of the change but that's the change as we speak. Ok next slide.

Budget Changes

Rashawn Farrior - So one of the big things that we wanted to drill home is those changes with the new guide virtually all of those changes are still ok. You do not need NSF prior approval to move money from salary into say the PIs travel. You do not need NSF approval you wanted to move money from other direct costs into participants support cost. You do not need NSF approval if you want to move money between salaries for say the PI wanted to move money for the graduate students or technician you do not need to have NSF prior approval on any of those budget changes. We get a lot of phone calls and a lot of emails about well I know I can especially the PIs will call and say I know I don't need NSF approval I can but my office of sponsored programs is telling me they need something in writing what usually will happen is either the program officer or myself will simply state we cannot offer any approval on something that you already allowed to do. So this is something I want to make sure we are very clear on the only time you going to need NSF prior approval if you want to take money out of the participants support line and take it out or if you want to move money with in those four line items you would need NSF prior approval if you move any other money outside of those two scenarios you do not need NSF prior approval and you do not need an email from either myself in the grants office or Celeste as your program officer you are allowed to do that and its under your FDP partnership guidelines. So you have that authority so you are okay and other than that I think the slide pretty much says itself ok so next slide please.

Sub-award Issues

Rashawn Farrior - So some of the issues that I see when I'm looking at budgets especially with sub-awards sometimes grantees will say they have three sub-awards and they give me the justification of who's joining the project but I don't have a budget for every sub-award that you attach to your proposal there must be an accompanying budget and budget justification. Another issue that I always come about is incorrect or no indirect rate applied so make sure that if your institution has a federally negotiating rate most of those rates are either established either through your cogence agency so basically whoever has the most federal funds so it could be different agencies usually there are three the Office of Naval Research, NSF or the Department of Health and Human Services DHHS so those are usually the three

ones that you'll see and what I do is I look at that rate agreement and whatever rate you have on that rate proposal at that time that is the rate you should use you can't use a rate that's not there you can't arbitrarily just put a rate down cause that's going to make me ask you to submit a revision applying a correct rate so in another instance if you do not have a rate you can use what we call a 10% de minimis rate of modified total indirect costs and therefore will excluded your participants support but you can use that if you do not have a federally negotiating rate. I will talk about it in a few minutes. Other things I see if grantees do not exclude this is just with sub-awards if they have the first 25K and that's that 25,000 and sometimes they'll just include it all so be very cautious make sure you subtract that out . Also another thing that I see is the lack of policies and procedures this is very very important because you want to make sure that when you're dealing with sub-awards it is very clear lines of division and when I say that I want to make sure you understand so when you're coming up with your sub-award agreements make sure that you're stating everything and covering all bases you want to make sure that you have a statement of work, the period of performance, what is the actual duties, you want to make sure that you include all the flow down provisions so whatever the federal government requires you to do you have to then make sure that the sub-award would also do the same. Ok want to make sure that the yea I think that's it, you want to make sure that there's a termination. You can come up with the and yes I just saw your question Ann, yes you can charge the indirect on the first 25,000 but what happened saying I have situations where they don't even charge that so basically if it's a $50,000 award they would just literally say it was 50,000 for a sub they would include all of that they wouldn't take that first 25 out. So that is what I am saying on that ok. Thank you for that Ann. And that is it on that particular one, next slide please Mike.

Indirect Costs

Rashawn Farrior - Ok so indirect cost rates this is what I think maybe think maybe around two or three years ago basically the National Science Board here at NSF stated that there was no way that their grantees could run a grant without indirect costs because there are certain things they're just essential to run in a project, you need like computers and all these extra expenses so with that in mind all proposals and awards have to use their federally negotiate rate. And we don't and I'm saying we from the NSF perspective we did not saying if you have off campus or on campus instruction on research however you want to state it on your rate agreement NSF cannot tell you the grantee which rate to use that it that is determined by the grantee and then we must honor that rate, ok. So another, you must show your base and provide indirect calculation ok so you want to make sure that you provide the base to your calculation also explain any exclusions. One of the things that can hold up your grant is saying if you say I'm looking at your rate agreement and you're stating you have these exclusions ok but the one thing the biggest exclusion that is usually not identified is tuition remission please include the amount of the tuition for each year because that also I have to back out these numbers that you're providing me so I can say okay I see where the grantee came up with this number, if I cannot come up with that number then I have to call you to ask more information so it's very helpful if you could include specially with tuition remission in your budget justification to include the actual amounts for each one. And so I have spoke about this earlier also you can use to 10% of modified total direct costs if the grantee does not

have a federally negotiated rate, you can't use zero, cause if you use zero is deemed involuntary caution which is prohibited by NSF so you have to use a rate ok. Next slide please.

Frequent Errors on Budgets
Rashawn Farrior - So these are just frequent errors that I see on budgets and these are things that can actually slow up basically you getting your money because basically if this information is not here I have to ask for additional information and that can take up some time so here we go. No dollar amount associated for PI and Co-PIs there has to be some level of a dollar amount attached to each PI, sometimes you'll see oh well they're going to just be the PI but their not asking for anything type of salary, they have to associate some dollar amount to each one ok. Also no participant support accounts if you look at your budget and you putting into participants support you put the dollar amount down if you look on that budget page they have a number at the very bottom you have to include how many participants you have, so make sure you include that amount. Sometimes like I stated before that sub-awards are not excluded from the indirect depending on how many have if you have depending on if they are over that 25 K sometimes they don't exclude it or the indirect cost rate is not used correctly. So in that sense and if your indirect cost rate is only for salaries and wages what I see sometimes the grantee will use it on modified total direct costs so then I have to go back and ask for revised budget and say you know per your federally negotiated rate you can only charge on salaries and wages. So make sure you are aware of your federally negotiated rate and you're using it correctly. Also little to no budget justification on line items make sure that if there something that you think might need additional information on please provide it. If you're asking for a million dollars please make sure you have a million dollars' worth of justification because it's you'll be amazed at how many times I get very little to no budget justification for million dollar grant and it's my responsibility to make sure to make sure that we are basically paying attention and scrutinizing what has been requested from the grantees. So next slide.

Submit Notification & Request via FastLane
Rashawn Farrior - So notification so really quick I know you guys most of you love FastLane and we appreciated it FastLane is going away we don't know exactly know when but it is being phased out. So with these requests if you go to FastLane most of them are still there if you go in and requested it might send you and redirect you to research.gov. Research.gov is going to be the new hub for all request so for right now FastLane is still up and running so you can still use that site so FastLane is still up but this is how you submit notifications for changes of any administrative changes you may have. Next slide Mike.

Pathways to Success
Rashawn Farrior - Pathways to success is imperative that you guys have effective communication and when I say that, that it's across all fronts, I want to make sure that the Business Office has a great reputation and rapport with the PIs and the PIs should do the exact same to the office of Sponsored Research there's many times where PIs I will try to have me referee between the two entities and I'm not a referee and so is good if you guys can actually communicate and understand. Another thing

know the requirements of your award read your terms and conditions that uniform guidance the super circular and things of that nature make sure you understand what you are getting or about to get into if you have any questions about the terms and conditions of the award by all means please give me a call we can go over it if there's something you don't understand but always ask and I'll make sure that you are aware of what is being required. Good accounting practices making sure that you can segregate those different items of costs is always a good business practice make sure that you read the solicitation again. It's usually is a year from the point that you first submit that proposal to the moment that you get it, so it is imperative that you go back and read the solicitation see what requirements are expected of you from NSF so that will save you a lot of time and confusion and review the budget with the PI and that's where my office of sponsored programs and grants staff make sure before the PI receives the awarding you notify them and make sure you could if it's possible make sure you have like almost like a refresher course to walk the PI walk through the process make sure that they understand you are required of this, your progress reports are due at this time and all of those technical items that are so important so the PI is aware of what they are required to do. Always document document document make sure that you have great grant records to show correspondence things of that nature, between the program officer or myself that way if anything ever comes up and someone asked you a question on why did you do this well we had a conversation with the program office. So make sure you keep great documentation of the correspondence between program officer, myself, and your sub-awards if you have some awards. Next slide Mike

For More Information
Rashawn Farrior - For more information you can always come to our NSF home page which is NSF.gov. we are actually will be moving next year we're moving to a new location will be moving to Alexandria Virginia so we're excited about that move you can actually learn about that move and other things that are going on with NSF on our page about new solicitations, new grant opportunities so if you haven't visited the page please do there's a wealth of information there along with great tips and advice on the whole grant process. Next slide please

Rashawn Farrior - And as always ask early ask often. I love to make sure that there's no question that is too silly or you think maybe you know not necessary please ask me and that's it so thank you guys. If you have any questions please let me know.

Michael Lesiecki – Rashawn, its Mike we have got a little echo here I'm going to ask our other presenters to make sure you're on mute.

Questions
Celeste Carter- Hey Mike, this is Celeste.

Michael Lesiecki – Hello Celeste.

Celeste Carter -If you can hear me I wanted to go to a particularly to the one question that said if a particular consultant contractor or grant evaluator is named in the grant in the budget and the grant is awarded is the grantee at liberty to issue a contract to that particular party without obtaining other quotes or bids. Our PIs viewing that in that scenario NSF has as authorized use of that particular contractor and I wanted to kind of put in my two cents and ask Rashawn if he would comment as well. I just found out about a particular award and remember we go through the merit review process and one of the big things we're looking at is qualifications of your project personnel and that includes your evaluator and all of your contractors as well as your sub-awardee people. You get a rating based on what's in your proposal if you then go out and dump all of those people and bring somebody in that same gives a lower bid than they do for the same work. If we find out about that my standpoint is we probably wouldn't have made the award in the first place unless had equal or higher credentials than the people you name and so I was hoping that I don't know if you Rashawn could speak to that as well as my standpoint would be that you need to keep the people that were on your original proposal, unless there's somebody retires and then you ask for a change of PI or CoPI or change in your evaluator.

Rashawn Farrior – I would agree with you 100% on that one Celeste it's pretty much whatever your presenting as part of that project is how you were recommended so if there is some kind of change or something like that you have to talk to your program officer prior to making that change in that way everyone is in the line of communication so its imperative that you if you think about a change or you select a different contractor than what you originally stated would you pick or you picked a different consultant than which you stated in your original proposal it is necessary before you do that you consult with your program officer. So yes Celeste, I would agree 100%.

Celeste Carter- Thanks Rashawn.

Rashawn Farrior -Ann I wanted to see if you could speak on your experience with our site visit that we did with Collin County Community College if you could.

Ann Beheler- Thanks Rashawn! Am I echoing if I am then maybe everyone needs to go on mute because you were echoing too Rashawn at the end.

Michael Lesiecki – It was Celeste, and she has muted herself now so you ok Ann, go ahead.

Ann Beheler - Ok good well I am not going to take up the time because I know you want answers to questions but we're going to have to meet together and figure out how to address all these questions because we really only have six more minutes today. My comment would be that working with our business office and our grants accounting manager Cindy Cammuse, we went through all the regs to make sure that we had all the documentation ready to be accessed I won't say we created it we didn't we were already doing what we were suppose to do and Rashawn told me that he looked really really hard and try to find something wrong and he didn't find anything which is absolutely wonderful in my book and it works very very well. A couple of pointers I would say is we have a very detailed MOU with

each of our sub-awardees, we only give them a year at a time and there are performance criteria associated with that. We have policies and procedures for just about everything under the sun and specifically we have documented why we chose the sub-awardees we chose and what they were supposed to do and how we monitor those sub-awardees that was something that perhaps some folks hadn't thought about I'm sure you had the reason for why you would choose the sub awardee but it was important that all that the documented. Then I would say basically just necessary and reasonable cost of certainly not any hotel rooms that are a thousand dollars a day or something like that. Our costs were all necessary and reasonable and we followed the rules for participant support. So I'll just stop at that point Because we have a lot of questions and we're going to have to figure out how we want to handle all of them and get back to you.

Michael Lesiecki – Thank you Ann! I have a question, lots of chat about this contractor business and here's what we know at our system I thought I would just to it. That our business office says just because we have named somebody in the proposal does not forgo bid requirements that our institution might impose is that true Rashawn from your point of view?

Rashawn Farrior - Repeated question again and I had it on mute.

Michael Lesiecki – Our business office says just because we have named a consultant or an evaluator in our proposal that doesn't necessarily forego bid requirements that our institution might impose, that's correct isn't it

Rashawn Farrior – That's correct

Michael Lesiecki – So that's one side of the coin just because you've named them doesn't mean its approved now Celeste you made a comment that look you can't go in there and change them because we were evaluated on that basis so there is like a conflict there is isn't there Celeste?

Ann Beheler- I'd like a comment before Celeste jumps in, we all have the opportunity to do sole source and I would think that almost all of us would be able to go sole source if we'll had documentation at least even from this particular recording that in fact that Celeste and Rashawn and their groups expect the people that were in the proposal to be the one that are the awardees. I think that might be the out on that.

Michael Lesiecki – That's a good point. Celeste I'd like to unmute you but we're still getting an echo every time you come on so make sure your phone is hung up. I'm going to bring you back on for second Celeste let's try you to respond to them. Go ahead.

Celeste Carter- Ok is it echoing?

Michael Lesiecki – You're ok now.

Celeste Carter - Ok all right so my point is that you know everybody talks about the National Science Foundation merit review process as being the gold standard for the entire federal government and we really look at the qualifications of the people you named and most of the time if people if you're putting in your budget to be hired or to be named, and your proposal reviews well we're going to come and still ask you who are you going to use because if you let's say you're in evaluation and you come back and you say oh my evaluator is going to be my CoPI that's a big red flag that's a no no there's a distinct conflict of interest. And I think the idea that you name people in a proposal goes to the merit review process we're making a decision on whether or not to make a recommendation for award based on the qualifications of the people you named and if they are all then removed, I suppose what you can do is for every single time there's a change you file a formal change in FastLane so that we could see and you include the CV or resume of the person that your replacing someone with. It still gives us the option at that point that we can deny it; we can say no the person you named in the actual proposal has more qualifications to carry out this project than the person you just sent to us in this request. So I think I think it is and I understand that institutions have their own policies and procedures that you got to realize that one of the things we work with is we're trying to be as fiscally responsible with our federal taxpayer dollars as possible and if we're basing our recommendation on the people you named it seems to me there's some sort of obligation that those are the people you use.

Michael Lesiecki – That's a great comment, I hope my own sponsor research office is listening. Celeste I am going to you on mute for a second. Folks I think we should make this like a multiple part webinar series on this, Rashawn we're going to have you back and we will figure out a way to pull some of these questions some answers there are a lot of good ones. You know we're right at the conclusion of our webinar time today it's been so exciting. Rashawn I'm going to end with just one question and I know our own grants management office is listening to this answer. I love that discussion of we don't need to give you permission to do something you already have permission for, I like that. You alluded to FDP and so there are some chapter and verse out there I googled it while I was waiting here on I saw it said Federal demonstration project guidelines matrix is that it?

Rashawn Farrior - Yeah

Michael Lesiecki – Okay so that's something I could quote I saw that matrix, I could quote that to my business office saying hey look I don't really need to ask for this cause I got my own approval.

Rashawn Farrior –Correct

Michael Lesiecki – All right I like that. Thank you very much for that. Friends and colleagues this webinar is being recorded. The chat, we're going to analyze the chat questions and see if we can't do something in creating a response here. There's been just a huge interest in this topic today as we go forward I would like to let you know that next week there's another webinar co-sponsored with Mentor-Connect and Dr. Celeste Carter is back with us, she is going to talk about preparing a budget and a budget justification. You know Celeste one of the questions came up today is can we get samples of those

budget justifications maybe I hope you will address that next week. Rashawn you're right a detailed budget justification if you put in the details its going fly through if you put in nothing it's going to stop. Thanks very much for saying that so that's next week and there's the registration link folks. Mentor-Connect.org don't forget the hyphen because you won't get there otherwise. We have some more webinars coming up in this wonderful series a part 1 and part 2   the first one on February 25 we call it building communities of practice and it's quite an interesting topic you can see the description of the webinars there go ahead and go to your usual place ATEcenters.org /CCTA to register there. This summer if there's one conference you go to the entire year it ought to be Pittsburg PA for the high-tech conference now in its seventh year attracting somewhere between 600 and 700 people that are all focused on technology education we will have a special event associated with the CCTA that trails the conference so look for more information at highimpact-tec.org you can register for that conference and you can see them notice here on the bottom of the slide about the follow-up technical assistance convening. Since we have come to the close today you can see the thanks and I have to admit the NSF program officers they actually do respond to you, I have called up, I have emailed them other people have they will respond of course they have it might take them little time to get to you but their sincere when they say write to them, contact them as you can see there are emails here. Ask early ask often that is just a lovely saying and it's a guideline that I've tried to follow and I think it really works. I want to personally thank our presenters Dr. Celeste Carter and Rashawn Farrior from the grants DGA division, grant and agreement specialists. Rashawn thank you very much for the time today. Elaine Craft thank you for joining us at the beginning and Ann for talking about your wonderful experience with audits. So friends that officially concludes our webinar today it will be recorded, we will send you the link thanks very much, goodbye everyone.