

A. INTRODUCTION

This position is located in the _____ Administrative Office. The incumbent is responsible for staff analytical, planning, and evaluative work concerned with the efficiency and effectiveness of the administrative and operational aspects of the Area's Extramural Research Agreements Program. The incumbent is also responsible for management oversight, administration, and execution of the Area's extramural research agreements.

The work encompasses all phases of pre-award and post-award activities including negotiation, award, administration, and close-out for a variety of complex (competitive and noncompetitive) extramural awards such as research support agreements, specific cooperative agreements, trust fund and reimbursable cooperative agreements, grants, assistance type cooperative agreements, and memoranda of understanding in support of the Area's extramural research program and/or extramural buildings and facilities construction projects.

B. MAJOR DUTIES

Plans, schedules and conducts studies to streamline or re-engineer appropriate Area extramural agreements systems, policies and processes to reduce customer and employee workload. Analyzes findings and makes recommendations on substantive changes in work methods, records and files, business processes and procedures for administering program services and automating work processes in the Area's Agreements Program. Validates study results with customers. Organizes and delivers briefings to Area managers to encourage understanding and acceptance of findings and recommendations. Shares and collaborates on findings and best practices with Headquarters' staff and other Area offices.

Reviews and analyzes proposed extramural projects to ensure that there is legal authority to perform and enter into an agreement. Consults with Area program managers to obtain additional information and clarification. Determines the legal and fiscal requirements necessary to protect the agency's interests, and determines the appropriate award instrument based upon the principle purpose of the intended relationship, applicable Federal statutes, Departmental regulations, and ARS policy.

Develops and formulates terms and conditions for each proposed extramural agreement award utilizing in-depth knowledge of various assistance and non-assistance award instruments, applicable statutory requirements, and Area programmatic and management needs. Analyzes requirements to determine unique issues requiring programmatic and/or administrative clearances, modification(s) to standard award procedures, and

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development of unique terms and conditions of award to meet specialized requirements. Ensures that all extramural agreements awarded in the Area are in compliance with applicable statutes, governing regulations, and agency policy.

Evaluates and analyzes programmatic and budgetary plans to ensure that adequate resources are committed for successful completion of extramural projects. Is fully responsible for all final negotiations with cooperators and/or grant recipients which may involve complex issues dealing with ARS and cooperator rights to intellectual properties, adequacy of liability and insurance coverage, funding arrangements and payment schedules, changes in key personnel, budget revisions, allocable costs, prior approvals, suspension and termination clauses, etc. Has final approval to commit agency resources and obligate funds, at an unlimited dollar amount, for extramural agreements within the Area.

Determines appropriate functions and responsibilities for ARS's technical representative for each extramural award based upon the specific programmatic and administrative requirements that are unique to each agreement. Provides written delegations of authority to Authorized Departmental Officer's Designated Representative (ADODR) to ensure that appropriate technical oversight of extramural projects is conducted and performed in accordance with agency expectations and is consistent with the terms and conditions of the award. Takes proactive measures to ensure that extramural agreement deliverables are received in accordance with the terms of the award.

Performs liaison activities between ARS offices and the Office of the General Counsel, Office of Inspector General, other Departmental staff offices, and other government agencies, as appropriate, clearing or obtaining decisions and opinions regarding the legality of various extramural agreements. Incumbent has full responsibility for assuring compliance on all extramural agreement matters, and final decision on resolving noncompliance issues, with the exception of those issues that must be adjudicated by the ARS Administrator or the REE Chief Financial Officer.

Provides technical advice and assistance to Area program staff and field location offices as well as non-Federal entities regarding ARS extramural agreement authorities, types and purposes of a wide range of agreement instruments, and pre-award and post-award actions required to initiate and or close-out an extramural agreement activity. Provides support and assistance to the Area management units in solving a variety of extramural agreement issues and problems, including those requiring significant departures from traditional approaches.

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Reviews CRIS project statements to determine potential for and need for extramural agreements in achieving the identified research objectives. Carries out agreement planning, and in conjunction with agency scientist and program managers, develops strategies to be used in the execution of extramural agreements relevant to the research program. Prepares recommendations and findings for the use of appropriate extramural agreements.

Develops, coordinates, and conducts training for Area Director's staff, Location Administrative Officers and their staffs, and staff of both Federal and non-Federal scientific communities in applying new or revised Agency, Department, and Government-wide policies and procedures pertaining to extramural agreements.

Develops and implements Area-wide procedures to supplement existing directives to meet unique management requirements of the Area extramural agreements function. Consults with Area customers and managers to identify developing trends and gaps in policies, procedures, and operational deficiencies. Recommends alternative solutions to inefficient operations impacting delivery of extramural agreements service in the Area.

Participates with the Extramural Agreements Division in identifying key extramural agreement issues of importance to the Agency and recommends solutions to headquarters and Area management.

Interprets OMB and Departmental guidance concerning extramural agreements and extrapolates portions pertinent to ARS operations. Participates in the conduct of management reviews of location extramural agreement functions to assure conformance with policies, to provide guidance in problems associated with implementing extramural agreement programs, and to promote efficient and effective operations.

Participates in meetings, conferences and work groups, as designated, to disseminate information prudent to agreement policies and procedures and/or to assist with managerial problem-solving activities such as National Program review meetings and location program review meetings.

Maintains the agency's official files for all Area extramural agreements. Utilizes the automated Agriculture Research Information System (ARIS) and the Research Agreements Tracking System (RATS). Maintains ARIS actions on all sibling CRIS' related to the implementation and administration of cooperative agreements.

Provides advice to Area personnel in matters involving budget and fiscal, procurement, property, safety and health, buildings and facilities construction projects relative to extramural agreements. Serves as a resource and official point of contact for the Area's

cooperators providing expert advice and guidance in administrative matters. Advice and procedures are furnished to determine minimum steps to be taken to ensure compliance with governing statutes and regulations.

Reviews Area ARMPS submissions; provides advice to the Area Director, Area Administrative Officer, Area Budget and Fiscal Officer, the Location Coordinator, and the Location Administrative Officers on the feasibility of proposed extramural projects and the administrative requirements for successful project completion.

Assists Program Managers in identifying potential relations with cooperating entities that have associations with minorities such as universities that have been designated as HBCU'S and HACU'S.

Assists in identifying opportunities for ADP applications for the extramural agreement function within the Area and ARS nationwide. Serves as the functional specialist and liaison to technical specialists during software development improvement, etc.

C. EVALUATION FACTORS

1. Knowledge Required by the Position (FL 1-7: 1,250 pts)

Knowledge and skill in applying analytical and evaluative methods and techniques to conduct studies and develop recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Area's Extramural Research Agreements Program.

Ability to develop and present recommendations, information and reports based on an in-depth analysis and technical evaluation of issues and situations to advise program managers in decision making processes involving extramural agreements.

Knowledge of agency research objectives and goals related to the various research programs within the Area to determine responsiveness and applicability of extramural agreements in support of the Area's research program.

Thorough knowledge of ARS organizational structures, lines and extent of authority, and Area management policies, as well as the ability to integrate this knowledge into the overall management of the Area's extramural agreement program.

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Extensive knowledge of research program objectives and management goals at the location, Area, and National level to provide technical advice and assistance to operating managers/supervisors in utilizing the extramural agreement program.

Knowledge of and skill in applying cost accounting principles and practices to a variety of cost centers and funding sources associated with extramural agreements.

Ability and skill in communicating, orally and in writing, to maintain effective relationships with research, contractor, Area personnel, cooperators, other employees in Administrative and Financial Management, and similar groups within and outside of the Federal sector.

Knowledge of the Federal statutes and Government-wide policies, Federal and Departmental rules and regulations, principles, practices, and concepts related to the ARS extramural agreements program.

Knowledge of Federal contractual and assistance policies, procedures, and requirements in order to evaluate a wide variety of extramural agreements and to determine their applicability to coverage under formal contract administration.

General familiarity with related functional areas such as acquisition, property, records, ADP/information processing, and budget and fiscal management. Extramural agreements interface with all these functional areas and consideration of their functional requirements is required when formulating any extramural agreements.

Skill in formulating unique agreement documents that are technically sound and are in compliance with applicable policy and law.

Skill in the use of negotiation techniques to negotiate agreement terms/conditions and changes to existing agreements.

2. Supervisory Controls

(FL 2-4: 450 pts)

The incumbent works under the administrative guidance of the Area Administrative Officer. Extramural Agreements Program evaluation projects are discussed with the AAO to develop mutual study plans, scope and deadlines. Within the parameters of the approved project plan, the incumbent is responsible for planning and organizing the study, estimating costs, coordinating with Headquarters' staff and line management personnel, and conducting all phases of

the project. Completed projects, evaluations reports and recommendations are reviewed by the AAO for compatibility with organizational goals, guidelines, and effectiveness in achieving intended objectives. Completed studies of business processes involved in the Extramural Agreements Program are also reviewed critically by staff and line management officials whose programs and employees would be affected by implementation of the recommendations.

Operational assignments are given in terms of general objectives and functional goals. The incumbent is the technical authority for Area's extramural agreements program. The incumbent is expected to carry out and complete all projects independently and keep supervisor informed of any matter which is potentially controversial. The incumbent is responsible for planning and implementing assignments and for exercising judgment to resolve both procedural and technical problems. The incumbent interprets policies on own initiative based upon experience in the assistance area. Work is reviewed primarily for results achieved. The methods used in arriving at the end result are not reviewed in detail.

3. Guidelines

(FL 3-4: 450 pts)

Administrative guidelines for program evaluations cover program goals and objectives, ARS Strategic Plans, productivity targets, and similar objectives. The incumbent may refine or develop more specific guidelines such as methods for the measurement and improvement of effectiveness and productivity in the administration of the Agreements Program Guidelines for extramural agreements include public laws, legislative committee reports, GAO decisions, Executive Branch policy and administrative guidance, other Executive Agency regulations, Departmental regulations and decisions, Judicial Branch decisions and orders, proposed legislation and regulations, and current policies and procedures. The application of the guidelines leaves much to the judgment of the incumbent who must interpret, extrapolate and adapt guidelines in many situations based on understanding of research objectives, precedent practices and preferred approaches.

The incumbent must devise negotiation approaches, modify or extend existing guidelines, write new clauses or provisions to cover specific situations. Incumbent must exercise judgment and ingenuity in applying these guidelines, singularly or in combination. Because of the unique authority under which ARS establishes and administers its extramural agreements, these may not always be sufficiently applicable thus requiring incumbent to adapt or, based upon knowledge and expertise, recommend alternatives within available resources.

4. Complexity (FL 4-5: 325 pts)

Program evaluation studies require developing detailed plans, goals, and objectives for the long-range implementation and administration of the program and developing criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of the Area Agreements Program. Decisions are complicated by conflicting program goals and objectives due to changes in legislative or regulatory guidelines or variations in the demand for program services.

Incumbent is required to perform duties involving program administration, providing technical expertise to a diverse population of Federal Government officials, as well as non-Federal officials with different and often countering viewpoints and positions. Incumbent develops innovative and creative solutions to technical or managerial issues and exercises initiative, originality, and sound judgment which requires interaction with funds management property management, safety and health concerns, personnel considerations, and negotiation skills to implement alternatives to existing clauses, regulations, procedures, etc. The incumbent frequently performs as a team leader for significant and complex agreements where cooperators utilize multiple entities to accomplish research objectives. Changes in the nature of the research program, approaches and technology utilized to achieve desired objectives frequently occur.

A complex variety of methods, functions, projects, programs and tasks (gathering, analyzing, negotiating, developing, awarding, administering) are required to efficiently, effectively and successfully manage the program.

5. Scope and Effect (FL 5-4: 225 pts)

The purpose of the program evaluation work is to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the Area's extramural agreements program operations and the delivery of services at the operating level. The work affects the plans, goals, and effectiveness of the Area's research program at various locations. The purpose of the program evaluation work is to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the Area's extramural agreements program operations and the delivery of services at the operating level. The work affects the plans, goals, and effectiveness of the Area's research program at various locations.

The needs of ARS, its partner agencies, and the Department cannot be met without the use of the resources of the non-Federal sector. The incumbent's work results in the Area being able to use the resources of non-Federal sources and thus

contributes toward the accomplishment of the Agency's program mission. The purpose of the work is to serve as the lead in managing the Area's extramural agreements program. In this capacity the incumbent performs as lead negotiator, and ensures compliance and monitors accomplishments. The work affects a wide variety and divergent research programs that are local, regional and national in scope. The timely receipt of critical services and research information affects the cooperative work of other public and private organizations.

6. Personal Contacts and (FL 2-3: 145 pts)
7. Purpose of Contacts

Contacts are with coworkers and associates, research scientists, cooperators, contractors, staff members of the Area Office, Administrative and Financial Management, National Program Staff, the Administrator's Office, and other Federal agencies. Contacts with University officials routinely involve Deans, Director of Sponsored Programs, Vice Presidents of Finance, and heads of administrative functions. Occasional contact may occur with the University President, and the general public. Outside contacts include consultants, contractors, state and city officials, business executives.

The purpose of contacts for program evaluation studies are to obtain and exchange factual information and to influence Area, Headquarters and university managers and other officials to accept and implement findings and recommendations on program effectiveness. The incumbent may encounter resistance due to such issues as the cost of automating processes or other resource problems.

The purpose is also to plan, coordinate, advise on and recommend solutions to operating problems or work or actions that affect the conduct of program and administrative functions concerning the extramural agreement program. The incumbent exchanges information of mutual interest, suggests alternative approaches to meeting objectives, and often performs as lead negotiator. Due to the differences in operating culture between the federal government and universities difficulties may arise in obtaining acceptance or recommendations or resolving controversial issues that affect the execution and operations of extramural agreements.

8. Physical Demands (FL 8-1: 5 pts)

Work is mostly sedentary; however, some walking, standing and bending are required.

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9. Work Environment

(FL 9-1: 5 pts)

Work is usually performed in an office setting; however, reviews require visits to sites where programs are conducted.

TOTAL POINTS: 2,855

GRADE CONVERSION: GS-12 = 2,755 – 3,150 pts

D. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS (Check if applicable)

- Supervisory Responsibilities (EEO Statement)
- Training Activities - Career Intern, Student Career Experience Program
- Motor Vehicle or Commercial Driver's License Required
- Pesticide Applicators License Required
- Safety/Radiological Safety Collateral Duties
- EEO Collateral Duties
- Drug Test Required
- Vaccine(s) Required
- Financial Disclosure Required
- Special Physical Requirements/Demands
- Other:

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