

RECOMMENDATIONS TO FUNDERS: PROMOTING EQUITABLE APPROACHES TO PROJECT STAFF DESIGN

The following statements and questions are suggested additions to notices of funding opportunities (NOFO) and grant application guidelines. By incorporating these statements and questions, which focus on the experiences and support of contingent workers, granting organizations can signal against the further exploitation of contingent, grant-funded laborers and encourage more ethical labor practices at grantee institutions.

Introductory Section or Program Description

To shift perception of program purpose, consider adding this or a similar statement to the program's description to bring the experiences of workers into focus alongside project outputs.

- This program seeks to build capacity by supporting project staff and promoting professional development and mentorship to all members of the project team.

Project Narrative

Questions and prompts such as the following can be added to proposal narratives to encourage the thoughtful inclusion of equitable labor practices throughout project design. It may be appropriate to require or encourage a preliminary position description for any grant-funded positions that includes some of the information below.

- Describe the quality of training and mentoring to be provided for grant-funded staff.
- For any staff hired on this grant, provide a justification for the salary range, job classification, and benefits offered, and explain any differences from the salaries, classifications, and benefits of permanent staff.
- Temporary grant-funded positions should not be used to meet ongoing operational needs. For any new positions created for the grant, explain why the position responsibilities are appropriate for a temporary project.
- How will the project support and benefit all project staff, through compensation, benefits, professional development opportunities, and immersion in the activities of the institution?
- What affordances—including work space location, communication venues and practices, available equipment, on-boarding support, etc.—will ensure that new employees assigned to the project are set up for success in their work?
- Describe how the project staff will be supported during the end-of-project transition, including job search assistance, paid time off and flexible scheduling to secure continuing employment, accommodation in project plan, etc.

Budget Narrative

In order to provide clearer justification for budget items earmarked for the cost of employment, the following prompts are suggested for inclusion in the budget narrative of the proposal.

- Provide a 1-2 sentence explanation of what is included in the fringe rate. This explanation must include a high-level description of what benefits are afforded to the grant-funded staff.
- Detail how requested travel and professional development funding will support staff beyond the PI.

Risk Assessment

Not providing equitable support for project staff poses a significant risk for turnover and gaps in institutional knowledge and skills.

- Address how the project will further project staff retention by providing equitable opportunities for mentorship, training, professional development, and immersion.

Post-Award Report

Including the following prompts in a template for final reports emphasizes the importance of documenting and acknowledging the contributions staff made to a project, providing staff with appropriate support and professional development, and assessing staff turnover.

- Provide a list of names, positions held, and current contact information for all workers involved in the completion of the project.
- Describe the opportunities you provided to project staff for training, mentorship, public speaking, immersion in institutional activities, and project outreach. In the list of resulting publications, conferences, workshops, or presentations, note where contingent project staff and students served as co-authors or presenters.
- Explain any discrepancies of more than 5% between the salary and fringe in the application budget for each position and actual salaries and fringe benefits of each worker hired to complete this project.