

## Agreements Services Center Town Hall - April 15, 2020

### COVID-19 Based Inquiries and the COVID 19 Inbox – Jamil Chaney

- MRP has created a COVID based inbox. [MRP.COVID.19.Response@usda.gov](mailto:MRP.COVID.19.Response@usda.gov). e-mails to this inbox will be managed and will go through a review process. This inbox covers questions beyond those that are agreements based. These are usually broad questions and can benefit APHIS as a whole.
- In addition, your agreement specialists are still available. A lot of answers to Covid- based questions can be found in our current practices. I would encourage you to look to your usual contacts for support and if it does need to be escalated for additional review then we'll do that of course and let you know.

### COVID-19 OMB Memos- Jamil Chaney

- M-20-11 – Administrative Relief for Recipients and Applicants of Federal Financial Assistance Directly Impacted by the Novel Coronavirus due to Loss of Operations
  - Issued March 9, 2020
  - Provide agencies with additional flexibilities for grants assisting the response to COVID-19
- M-20-17 – Administrative Relief for Recipients and Applicants of Federal Financial Assistance Directly Impacted by the Novel Coronavirus due to Loss of Operations
  - Issued March 19, 2020
  - Extends relief noted in M-20-11 to an expanded scope of recipients (to include recipients of agreements)
  - Adds flexibility with application deadlines and extension of closeout
- M-20-20 – Repurposing Existing Federal Financial Assistance Programs and Awards to Support the Emergency Response to the Novel Coronavirus
  - Issued April 9, 2020
  - Allows agencies to allow recipients to donate medical equipment (including, but not limited to, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), medical devices, medicines and other medical supplies) purchased with Federal assistance funds to hospitals, medical centers and other entities serving the public for COVID-19 response
  - Must engage in legal counsel to ensure donations/repurposing complies with all legal requirements associated with the funding
- **Awarding agencies must advise recipients that they should not assume additional funds will be available should the donations result in any type of shortage. Recipients should coordinate with the project managers and you should still use your discretion on how to execute these. You have input.**

### Tracking COVID-19 Exemptions- Eileen Berke

FAIN#	Recipient Name	Recipient Type	Flexibility/Exemption	OPTIONAL: Short Description	Notes
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- The COVID 19 tracking spreadsheet on the OCFO website is where we're to post all flexibilities granted to our recipients related to the various OMB memos sent out on COVID 19. This information was sent to the Agreements Community on April 8. OMB has stated that there will be future data calls where we outline what flexibilities were granted so it's important that we keep populating the spreadsheet as flexibilities are granted.
- As of this morning, there were about 23 agreements listed where flexibilities were granted. As a reminder, Grant Specialists are to enter any COVID 19 flexibilities that are granted, even if your exemption is not explicitly listed on the OMB memo. If it is COVID 19 related, please enter it on the spreadsheet and put something in the short description field if there is not a drop down that fits your situation. We'd rather over-report than under-report when OMB asks for this data.
- We will be updating the spreadsheet to add a few drop downs in the flexibility column E, for example, one will be added for extensions granted for financial and performance reporting.
  - Question/Example: For a Recipient who is in middle of an agreement cycle- audit from last year- do they need to request one/extension? Right on cusp.
    - Eileen Berke- Reach out to recipient to cover bases.
  - Question/Example: For Agreements currently running that are not related to covid but are impacted by covid: Do they need extension of time or is this automatic with no additional cost?
    - Eileen Berke- They have to request it and it must be documented. Normal amendment process. We are not automatically extending awards.
  - Question/Example: For Agreements with FY19 funding but the activity is in FY20, where training is occurring- the location is affected by the Covid outbreak. What is the guidance on if they then need to be pushed to take place in FY21?
    - Eileen Berke- In general, depends on what type of funding you have. Usually funding can continue for more than one year- a no-cost-extension can be done. Send specific questions as needed.
  - Question/Example: If recipient is asking for a reporting extension- does this need to be in writing? Formal? Simple email? If phone call and follow-up with email to recap, is that sufficient?
    - Eileen Berke- Should be a written request that can be documented. Ask them to respond back via email stating that is accurate.
- If there are any updates to the OMB guidance, we will send it to the agreements community. I am the point of contact for anything related to the spreadsheet and I am the liaison with OCFO for this effort.

#### **Housekeeping and updates- Jamil Chaney**

- ADODR certification:
  - We had a question come in about the ADODR certification and accompanying course. We are still working through some Aglearn difficulties and in the middle of the process AgLearn itself was restructured.
  - We are hopeful that it will be available before the end of the quarter. Should be more user-friendly/improved.

### **International S&T agreements- Jamil Chaney**

- Office of the Chief Scientist wants to see all agreements to China.
- Easier to send through ASC
- If significant updates, Jamil will inform over email.

### **ULOs- Jamil Chaney and Christina Klaus**

- We depend on the Finance and budget teams to provide us accurate numbers, but that relationship is reciprocal. If we aren't freeing up unused funds then it makes it impossible to know what numbers are correct.
- We have an APHIS wide goal to reduce ULOs by 10%.
- Toward that effort on February 21 we sent out a call to the community to make a push to reduce all ULOs generally with a special focus on closing FY15 and FY16 by June 30th.
  - We would like to THANK the APHIS Agreements Community for answering the call- We have had great success!
    - Within a 30 day period, we reduced ULOA by almost 5% = \$11.8 million.
    - Continuing to work on closing out ULOs. Working on running report for closed information, monthly for what quantity has been closed.
    - Will keep providing emails and updates.
    - Please close out FY17 if you are done with FY15 & FY16.
    - Again, good job to everyone!