

Procedures for Bridge Funding and Risk Accounts

1. General Information

The Principal Investigator (PI) of a sponsored project may request authorization from the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) to spend or commit a limited amount of funds during a defined period prior to: 1) the receipt of a fully negotiated award; 2) the receipt of incremental funds; or 3) prior to receipt of sponsor approval of a no-cost extension request. Such spending authority is referred to as “bridge funding” and it is implemented through a “risk account.” The need for bridge funding may arise due to one of the following circumstances:

a. Pre-award Spending

Pre-award spending occurs outside of the stated period of performance of the project. Some federal sponsors permit spending 90 days prior to the start of the performance period for an award. This authorization comes as a provision of awards granted under the terms of the Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP). NSHE is a member of the FDP, and FDP terms and conditions are made a part of many awards made to UNLV. Researchers who have an immediate need for funds in advance of the award start date may request bridge funding for pre-award spending if the grant is confirmed to fall under FDP provisions and there is documentation that the award is forthcoming.

b. Incremental Funding During Award Period

Many sponsors fund projects on an incremental basis, meaning that authorization to spend funds for the entire performance period is not provided at the beginning of the project. Researchers may request bridge funding if they require immediate access to *additional funding* due to project needs when funds for the next increment of the award are not yet available.

c. Funds Remaining at Project End

Principal Investigators may request authorization to spend funds remaining at the end of a project's performance period if additional work remains to be completed and an extension request for additional time and/or funding has been sent to the sponsor.

2. Requesting Bridge Funding

When the Principal Investigator (PI) determines that bridge funding is needed on a sponsored project, the PI must send a written request to the Office of Sponsored Programs using the Risk Account Request Form. The request form must be signed by the PI, chair/director and dean/VP and include the following information:

- A brief explanation outlining the reasons for the request and the proposed period of time for the bridge funding to be available.
- A budget outlining the use of the bridge funds including any associated indirect costs.
- Documentation from the sponsor that the project has been awarded and is forthcoming
 - The sponsor's documentation must be obtained from someone who is authorized to make such a commitment. Not all program officials are authorized to do so.
- A department or college account number to guarantee the funds. The requesting college, school, or unit must have funding available to offset any funds credited against the project in the event that an award or additional sponsor funds are not received or approved by the sponsor. Approval for use of the account number must be provided by the chair/director and dean.
- The following statement must be submitted with each bridge funding request: "The principal investigator, department chair/school director, and dean are aware that should this project not be awarded as anticipated or should additional sponsor funds not be received or approved by the sponsor for bridge funding, costs incurred against the risk account will be recovered from the department or college account specified."

3. Approval Procedure

Upon review, the Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP) will send a recommendation to the Associate Vice President for Research that bridge funding be granted based on the documentation provided and seek approval to create a risk account.

Upon approval, OSP will send an email notification to the PI indicating that the request has been approved and is being funded.

An OSP post-award senior research administrator will establish a risk account or authorize additional funds as specified in the approved bridge funding request and file the request in the appropriate award folder. When an award is received from the sponsor, OSP will update the account information to reflect the approved budget and fiscal reporting deadlines that may be designated.

4. Recovery of Costs When a Sponsor Does Not Provide Funding

The University account number provided with the PI's original funding request shall be assessed to recover any such unreimbursed costs in the event that a sponsor does not provide funding.