

A. INTRODUCTION

This position is assigned to the ARS, HQ, Administrative and Financial Management (AFM), Extramural Agreements Division (EAD) and is located at _____. The purpose of the EAD is to work in partnership with the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), Economic Research Service (ERS), National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), and the public to manage grants, cooperative agreements, and other extramural arrangements.

The work encompasses all phases of pre-award and post-award activities including negotiation, award, administration, and close-out for a variety of competitive and noncompetitive extramural awards, agreements, e.g., research support agreements, specific cooperative agreements, trust fund and reimbursable cooperative agreements, grants, assistance type cooperative agreements, and memoranda of understanding in support of ARS, ERS, and NASS extramural agreement programs.

B. MAJOR DUTIES

Plans, schedules, and conducts studies to streamline or re-engineer area extramural agreements systems, and 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. Validates study results with customers. Organizes and delivers briefings to agency managers to encourage understanding and acceptance of findings and recommendations. Shares and collaborates on findings and best practices with headquarters' staff and other agency offices

Negotiates, awards, and administers extramural grants and agreements for the conduct of scientific, economic, and statistical research.

Advises and assists staff with selecting the appropriate methods of generating proposals, and appropriate methods, techniques, and instruments for implementing differing types of projects or activities, e.g., grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements. Analyzes business and management aspects of evaluation and selection process and advises program staff on findings. Advises agency personnel in matters involving budget and finance, procurement, property, safety and health, buildings and facilities construction projects to ensure there are no conflicts with other statutes or regulations.

Reviews and analyzes proposed extramural projects, awards, and agreements. Identifies the legal and fiscal requirements required to protect the agency's interests, and determines the appropriate award instrument. Develops and formulates terms and conditions for each proposed agreement and/or grant. Ensures all legal documents awarded are in compliance with applicable statutes, governing regulations, and agency policy.

Works with agency offices, Office of the General Counsel, Office of Inspector General, departmental staff offices, and other government agencies to obtain opinions and decisions regarding the legality of various extramural agreements. Ensures compliance with all extramural agreement matters, and has final decision authority to resolve noncompliance issues under their purview.

Reviews program and budget plans to ensure adequate resources are committed for the project. Conducts final negotiations with cooperators regarding intellectual property, 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 with no imposed cost limitation.

Identifies the responsibilities for the agency's technical representative based upon the unique requirements for each award. Delegates authority to Authorized Departmental Officer's Designated Representative to ensure that appropriate technical oversight of projects is performed in accordance with agency requirements, and is consistent with the terms and conditions of the award.

Closes out legal agreements and undertakes terminations where necessary. Conducts reviews to determine whether all terms have been met, that all fiscal, income, patent, and property reports have been received, and that any audit problems have been resolved. Ensures deliverables are received in accordance with the terms of the award or agreement. Coordinates the resolution of problems with the appropriate staff.

Identifies projects which do not meet the legal requirements for grants or non-assistance cooperative agreements and recommends the use of other legal agreements depending on the intent of the proposed project and the relationship to be maintained between the prospective institution and ARS, ERS, and/or NASS.

Conducts reviews on the interpretation and application of ARS, ERS, and/or NASS policies to ensure uniform conformance, to provide guidance, and to promote efficient and effective operations.

Attends meetings, conferences, and work groups and trains federal and non-federal personnel on agency, department, and government-wide policies and procedures.

Utilizes the automated Agriculture Research Information System (ARIS)/Agreements Information Management System (AIMS) to manage extramural agreements.

C. EVALUATION FACTORS

1. Knowledge Required by the Position

Level 1-7, 1,250 pts

In-depth knowledge of laws, regulations, policies, procedures, program objectives, governing the administration of federal grants, cooperative agreements and awards to award, administer, and manage grants, cooperative agreements, or other related instruments; and design, develop, implement and interpret grants/assistance management policies, procedures.

Knowledge of grants/assistance management processes and techniques consistent with sound business and industry practices to review and evaluate adequacy of grants/assistance policies and procedures, conduct program reviews, and risk assessments.

Knowledge of financial methods, procedures, and practices to assess the financial stability of recipient of federal grants or cooperative agreements.

Ability to analyze documents to ensure all legal and regulatory requirements are met, identify missing information, revise documents to meet regulatory and other requirements, and recommend changes to the agreement.

Knowledge of negotiation techniques and requirements sufficient to procure various grants and agreements for research, negotiate agreement terms and conditions, and changes to existing agreements.

Knowledge and skill in applying analytical and evaluative methods and techniques to conduct studies and develop recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of ARS, ERS, and/or NASS extramural agreement programs.

Ability to communicate technical information and maintain a successful business relationship with researchers, agency personnel, cooperators, and similar groups within and outside the federal government.

2. Supervisory Controls

Level 2-4, 450 pts

The incumbent works under the technical and administrative guidance of the Director, EAD, or the Chief, Grants and Agreements Management Staff. Assignments are given in terms of general objectives, goals, deadlines, and projects.

The incumbent is a technical expert who determines the approach to be taken or methodology to be used and who develops an approach for requesting grant and agreement monies. The incumbent determines the required depth of analysis, and obtains necessary information for

compliance with regulations and policies. The supervisor is kept informed of potential problems.

Completed work is reviewed primarily for feasibility, compatibility, effectiveness in meeting program needs, and results achieved.

3. Guidelines

Level 3-4, 450 pts

Guidelines include public laws, legislative committee reports, GAO decisions, executive branch policy and administrative guidance, departmental regulations and decisions, Judicial Branch decisions and orders, proposed legislation and regulations, and current policies and procedures. Precedents exist for prior awards, contracts, and agreements. However, each agreement differs in the complexity, time frame, cost, relationship with other functions such as purchasing, facilities, equipment, and expectations and requirements. The work is also complicated by the fact that the scope of the project can change for each agreement.

The incumbent devises negotiation approaches and writes new clauses or provisions to cover specific situations. The incumbent uses experienced judgment to recognize deficiencies, develop new and different criteria and expectations for each agreement, and apply the appropriate policies and laws.

4. Complexity

Level 4-4, 225 pts

The work involves differing duties such as negotiating grants and agreements with private industry, academic institutions, and government agencies; developing policies and guidelines, evaluating the effectiveness of program operations; and developing new and revised systems and techniques. Complexities include identifying the appropriate legal requirements for each agreement, ensuring the agreement meets the needs of the requestor, negotiating the terms of the award and monitoring the work for compliance with terms of the agreement. Changes in the nature of the research program, approaches, and technology frequently occur which add to the complexity.

Determining what needs to be done requires analysis, such as reviewing the request for completeness, e.g., requirements, expectations, time frames, additional clauses; obtaining additional legal and regulatory information from subject matter experts when the guidance is unclear or where there are conflicts with previous work; or when there is disagreement between the two parties as to the terms of the award or agreement.

The work requires making many decisions concerning such issues as the interpretation of a considerable amount of technical data and policy and regulatory information, and the planning and coordination of activities to complete the award or agreement.

5. Scope and Effect

Level 5-4, 225 pts

The purpose of the work is to serve as a technical expert in administering the agency's extramural agreements program. In this capacity, the incumbent performs as lead negotiator, assists the requestor in completing the documentation necessary to successfully attract grants and agreements, provides final policy interpretation, administers delegated authority, ensures compliance, and monitors accomplishments.

The work product affects the agency's ability to acquire additional funding from industry, educational institutions, and special interest groups to continue research; provide timely research results to farmers, growers, manufacturers, and private industry; and others in private industry and educational institutions who are conducting research in similar fields.

6. Personal Contacts

Level 6-3, 60 pts

Contacts are with ARS, ERS, and/or NASS employees, research scientists, economists, statisticians, cooperators, National Program staff, and other federal agencies. Routine contacts are with university officials, e.g., deans, and directors of sponsored programs, and consultants, state and city officials, and business executives.

7. Purpose of Contacts

Level 7-3, 120 pts

The purpose is to plan, coordinate, advise, and recommend solutions for the establishment of grants and agreements requirements. The incumbent exchanges information of mutual interest, suggests alternative approaches to meeting objectives, and performs as lead negotiator. Due to the differences in operating culture between the federal government and non-federal organizations difficulties may arise in obtaining acceptance of the government's recommendations or resolving controversial issues which necessitate the incumbent to negotiate solutions agreeable to both parties.

8. Physical Demands

Level 8-1, 5 pts

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

9. Work Environment

Level 9-1, 5 pts

Work is usually performed in an office setting; however, occasional travel may be required.

Total Points = 2,910

GS-12 point range is 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 Officer Collateral Duties
- Radiological Protection Officer Collateral Duties
- Environmental Management Officer and Member Collateral Duties
- EEO Collateral Duties
- Drug Test Required
- Vaccine(s) Required
- Financial Disclosure Required
- Special Physical Requirements/Demands
- Special Agency Check (SAC) and limited background investigation required for Research Leader positions
- SAC and full background investigation required for positions working with BSL-3 (or higher) agents, or in BSL-3/BSL-4 facilities.
- Other: