

# FEDERAL GRANTS NEWS

*for Colleges and Universities*

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## HHS OIG Audits Use of Service Centers, Equipment Purchases by NIH Grantees

In a recent audit report, the Office of Inspector General at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services stood by its finding and questioned \$952 despite objections from both NIH and the auditee institution.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act audit of Iowa State University found that most expenditures were allowable but questioned \$3,487 in costs related to two service centers. The audit involved two related Recovery Act grants awarded to the university totaling \$2.7 million; the audit covered the \$1.7 million that the university had expended as of Aug. 31, 2011.

Calculation errors and lack of supporting documentation were found with respect to \$2,535 in direct and indirect costs associated with 18 hours of employee time at one service center, and \$952 was claimed for employee time devoted to training and administrative functions, which are generally unallowable as direct costs. The university adjusted the \$2,535 claim during the audit fieldwork, to the satisfaction of the auditors.

In its report, OIG explained the purpose of a "service center" as a "business unit within the grantee that can provide goods and/or services either to other entities within the grantee organization or to external customers. Fees are charged for those goods and/or services and can be provided on either a one-time or a recurring basis."

Iowa State had over 700 service centers in operation at the time of the OIG review, and it charged the costs from two service centers to the NIH grants under review. The auditors noted that they were unable to reach a conclusion about \$118,357 in costs relating to the two service centers because doing so would have required them to forecast indirect cost rates using costs that were outside the audit period.

*continued on p. 7*

## NSF Monitors Institution Compliance, Assesses Risk in Award Administration

Grantee institutions often think of federal "compliance officials" as Office of Inspector General auditors. However, at least at NSF, other offices also undertake compliance activities, not just OIG, and the activities are not always meant to be punitive.

At a recent NSF grants conference, Robyn Daniels, of NSF's Office of Budget, Finance & Award Management in the Division of Institution & Award Support, discussed her office's compliance activities. She and a colleague, Deputy Division Director Dale Bell, emphasized that the compliance actions her office undertakes are not audits. Rather, according to Bell, "We are here to help you ... to ensure [your] success."

Daniels said that three components comprise the NSF's "risk-based monitoring strategy" — risk assessment, comprehensive monitoring activities, and gathering feedback and incorporating monitoring results.

After conducting an annual risk assessment of awards and awardee institutions, NSF puts the awardee in three risk categories: higher risk (A), average risk (B), and lower risk (C). Awardees are assigned a risk score based on factors such as institutional

policies in place and experience with federal awards, results of prior NSF monitoring activities, and award administration and program feedback.

NSF then prioritizes monitoring based on higher risk scores, higher dollar amounts of awards, and number and complexity of awards (such as awards with many subawards or consultants or collaborators). Bell said that these assessments really “do not assess awardees but awards.”

Data for 2012 show NSF classified the majority of its 2,266 awardees (representing 43,617 awards) to be low risk, as follows:

- ◆ 174 awardees, or 8% of the total, were Category A.
- ◆ 520 awardees, 23%, were Category B.
- ◆ 1,572 awardees, 69%, were Category C.

### Monitoring Activities Will Vary

Daniels’s office engages in two broad categories of monitoring activities: baseline and advanced. While all awardees are monitored for compliance with federal and institutional policies, Daniels explained that NSF’s monitoring activities will differ the most for awardees that are high and low risk.

Baseline activities “combined with day-to-day award administration with automated monitoring provide broad coverage of the entire award portfolio” at NSF, Daniels said. Baseline monitoring activities consist of the following:

◆ **Automated financial report screening** to identify reporting issues that may need further scrutiny; these tests relate to cash-on-hand balances, interest income, program income, adjustments to closed awards, grants close-out and financial unobligated balances, and late federal financial report submissions.

◆ **Grants and agreements officer award administration** to provide insight into actual or potential compliance issues; these activities include changes of principal investigator, award transfers, award supplements, no-cost extensions, special payments, and significant budget realignments.

◆ **FFR transaction testing** to verify the reasonableness, allocability, and allowability of selected award expenditures.

◆ **ARRA quarterly recipient report reviews** that augment automated screening of recipient reports with program officer sampling of selected descriptive fields.

Advanced monitoring “focuses on award administration practices of selected awardees more in need of business assistance,” Daniels said. Advanced monitoring consists of:

◆ **Desk reviews.** These assess awardees’ general management environment, review selected accounting and financial management policies and procedures, and gather financial information submitted by awardees (see box, p. 3).

◆ **Site visits.** When onsite, NSF reviews selected higher-risk award administration areas and follows up on desk review results as needed (see box, p. 3).

◆ **Business system reviews.** These are combination desk and onsite reviews of large facility business systems to determine whether the operation of those facilities meets NSF’s expectations.

### NSF Can ‘Visit’ While Staying in Place

In 2012, NSF’s Division of Post-award Monitoring and Compliance began piloting “virtual” site visits to NSF awardees, Daniels explained.

These are conducted using WebEx’s integrated audio, video, chat, and desktop sharing capabilities. Virtual site visits usually consist of several 60- or 120-minute sessions held over the course of a week (usually three or four “intense meetings”).

During a virtual visit, typically three or four core review areas and four-to-six selected targeted review areas are addressed. “Limited access to subject matter experts during the visit may require follow-up,” according to NSF.

Daniels said that based on recent monitoring activities, a lack of documented policies and procedures is “a

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common theme across almost all review areas." Other "problem areas" are subaward monitoring, participant support costs, consultants, and indirect costs.

### Keep Actions Program-Related

NSF's Bell reminded conference attendees that in all NSF funding applications, institutions make "certain certifications" about their ability to remain in compliance and properly handle federal funding received from NSF.

Daniels advice for grantees to stay in good standing? "Focus on the objectives of the project program, understand all requirements and expectations, develop good accounting practices, maintain — and follow — written

institutional policies and procedures, and document approvals and conversations with NSF." Finally, she said, don't be afraid to ask NSF whenever any uncertainties arise.

NSF post-award monitoring actions have evolved over time, Daniels explained. And, as NSF's funding resources change over time, coupled with application success rates and other factors that help to create changing NSF award portfolios, monitoring activities likely will continue to evolve.

**Link:** [www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/outreach/grantsconf/compliance\\_march13.pdf](http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/outreach/grantsconf/compliance_march13.pdf). ✦

## What Happens During NSF Compliance Activities?

At a recent NSF grants conference, Robyn Daniels, of NSF's Office of Budget, Finance & Award Management in the Division of Institution & Award Support, discussed her office's compliance activities and explained NSF's intention behind two such activities — desk reviews and site visits (see p. 1).

### Desk Reviews

- ◆ Desk reviews provide NSF with an understanding of an institution's award administration practices and alert NSF to deficiencies. They provide a foundation for the site visit's targeted review activities (see below).
- ◆ NSF completes approximately 120 desk reviews a year.
- ◆ NSF oversees the desk review process by selecting awardees for desk reviews, authorizing review protocols, and approving work papers and summary reports prepared by a contractor. NSF works with awardees to resolve issues identified during the process.
- ◆ Analysts gather information from public sources, discussion calls, and awardee-provided documentation to assess the awardee's capacity to manage federal funds.
- ◆ Desk reviews provide a cost-effective monitoring alternative to resource-intensive site visits.
- ◆ A follow-up site visit or business system review may be scheduled for an awardee if the desk review demonstrates a need for such help.

*Core functional review areas:* General management survey; grants management roles and responsibilities; budgetary revisions and expenditure approvals; expenditure monitoring; cost transfers; accounting

and financial management; accounting policies and procedures documentation; OMB A-133 audit review; project accounting; identification and accounting for unallowable costs; federal financial report reconciliation; ARRA accounting and reporting review

### Site Visits

- ◆ Site visits assess the extent to which an awardee's grant management systems enable efficient and effective performance of NSF awards and ensure compliance with federal regulations.
- ◆ NSF conducts approximately 30 site visits a year.
- ◆ Reviewers assess whether the awardee's financial management system accurately discloses the financial results of NSF awards and if awardee systems maintain effective control over and accountability for all funds, property, and other assets.
- ◆ Through site visits, NSF extends business assistance by offering award administration best practices and answering questions related to NSF expectations and federal award administration policies.
- ◆ Awardees with significant deficiencies may be scheduled for follow-up site visits.

*Core functional review areas:* General management survey; accounting and financial management review; FFR reconciliation; ARRA accounting & reporting review

*Targeted review areas:* Time and effort, fringe benefits, travel, consultants, cost sharing, participant support costs, indirect costs, procurement, subaward and subrecipient monitoring, property and equipment, program income

**Link:** [www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/outreach/grantsconf/compliance\\_march13.pdf](http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/outreach/grantsconf/compliance_march13.pdf).

## President's Budget Includes Increase for Nondefense R&D

President Obama's 2014 budget provides \$143 billion for federal research and development, including "the conduct of R&D and investments in R&D facilities and equipment," according to the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. This figure represents a 1% funding increase over 2012 levels (continued in fiscal 2013 under a continuing resolution) for all R&D; nondefense R&D would increase 9%.

The president's 2014 budget also targets \$3.1 billion for federal STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education programs, an increase of 6.7% over 2012 funding levels. To help achieve this increase, the budget proposes to refocus and decrease by almost 50% the number of federal STEM programs. "This includes the proposed elimination or reorganization of 114 programs, with approximately \$180 million in savings strategically reinvested in new or existing STEM programs," according to OSTP.

Several agencies' R&D funding, as calculated by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, include the following:

- ◆ NIH: \$30.5 billion (up 1.6% from fiscal 2012 actual)
- ◆ NSF: \$6.3 billion (up 9.4%)
- ◆ Energy: \$12.7 billion (up 17.8%)

- ◆ NASA: \$11.6 billion (up 2.6%)
- ◆ USDA: \$2.5 billion (up 8.2%)

For a look at how federal support for R&D has fared over the last six decades, see the chart below.

**OSTP analysis:** [www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/2014\\_R&Dbudget\\_STEM.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/2014_R&Dbudget_STEM.pdf). **AAAS analysis:** [www.aaas.org/spp/rd/fy2014/total14p.pdf](http://www.aaas.org/spp/rd/fy2014/total14p.pdf). ◆

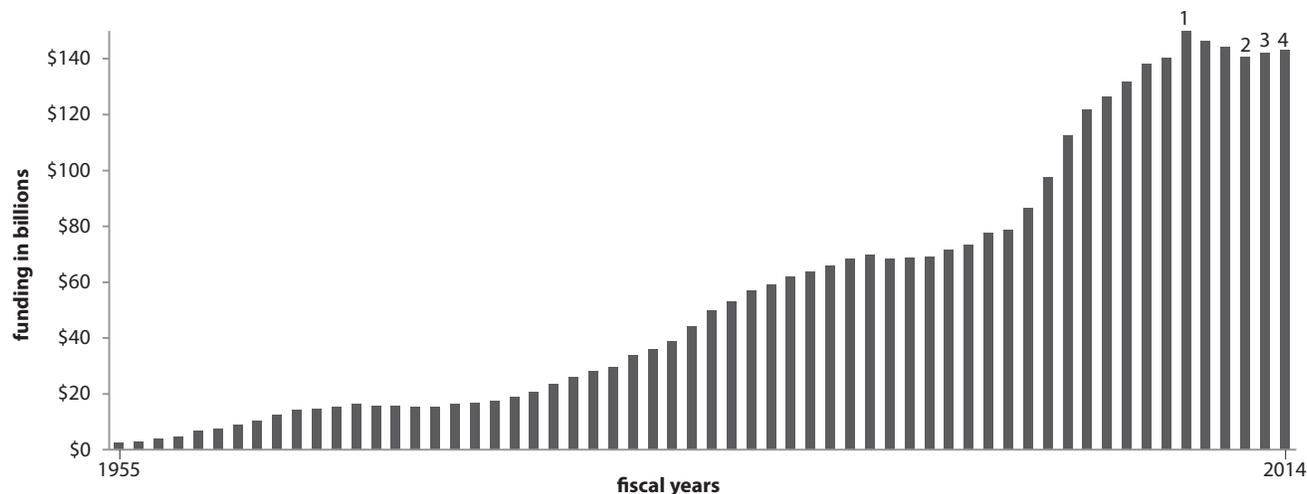
## Disaster Plan for Animals Must Be Thoroughly Planned Out

For institutions that have an assurance from the Public Health Service to conduct NIH-funded research involving animals, disaster planning is not only a good management practice, but it is a necessary one as well. As part of their overall program of animal care and use, assured institutions must have in place a disaster plan based on the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals: 8th Edition*.

Institutions regulated by the Animal Welfare Act must prepare contingency plans according to a final rule, "Handling Animals, Contingency Plans," issued Dec. 12, 2012 (available at [www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_welfare/awa\\_contingency\\_plan.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare/awa_contingency_plan.shtml)).

The PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals requires assured institutions "to comply

### Federal Funding for All R&D, Fiscal Years 1955–2014



1 2009 figure includes Recovery Act money  
 2 2012 figure is preliminary  
 3 2013 figure is proposed  
 4 2014 figure is requested  
 SOURCE: [www.nsf.gov/statistics/nsf13308/pdf/tab23.pdf](http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/nsf13308/pdf/tab23.pdf)

with applicable regulations issued by USDA. OLAW does consider the contingency rule to be an applicable regulation," according to Susan Silk, of NIH's Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare and the moderator of OLAW's latest webinar — March 7 on disaster planning — in its series of online seminars.

Silk introduced the webinar speaker, Stephen Durkee, account manager for Alternative Design Manufacturing, who presented best practices for disaster planning.

Before turning the program over to Durkee, however, Silk said that assured institutions are not required to follow best practices in complying with a specific statutory or regulatory requirement. But, she added, "OLAW defines a best practice as a method that has been shown to achieve better results than other methods; in fact, to produce superior results. Therefore it is used as a benchmark to judge other standards."

If other methods of achieving compliance are taken, Silk offered some advice: "How can you decide if the alternative you are considering is suitable? Please base your decision on the outcome. The outcome you achieve must be in accordance with the expectation of the AWA regs and the Guide."

### **Think Small as Well as Big**

In preparing for a "disaster," Durkee cautioned participants to think not only of large natural weather-related phenomenon such as hurricanes or tornadoes but also to plan for a response to other — perhaps more common — events.

"What happens more frequently are power bumps that reset systems. Pipes breaking. Flu. Large numbers of staff at a professional meeting can trigger the strangest events to happen. These little events are more likely to happen. The good news is that these events will help you with your plan and implementation, so that when the big events happen, you will know what to do," Durkee said.

The institution's institutional animal care and use committee should receive reports of these small events, so that the IACUC "can perform an ongoing evaluation of the adequacy of the plan and the response efforts," Durkee said. "If the husbandry staff isn't reporting these events, it's a concern for the IACUC to address when identified," he added.

"The most obvious" elements to include in a plan, according to Durkee, are actions necessary "to prevent animal pain, distress, and deaths" when "ventilation, cooling, heating, and [potable] water are not available." The plan should also describe "methods for preservation of animals for critical research activities and irreplaceable animals."

Overall, Durkee said the plan should include all of the following:

- ◆ Be location specific.
- ◆ Identify leadership roles.
- ◆ Identify responders.
- ◆ Define how response will occur (include a communication plan).
- ◆ Address mitigation efforts.

In preparing the plan, Durkee reminded webinar listeners that certain requirements are new in the 8th edition of the Guide, including, among other things, that the plan must be prepared in conjunction with the responsible principal investigator; it should be included in the overall institutional emergency plan, and an institution official should approve the plan; it should account for staff training "in advance"; and copies of the plan should be given to local law enforcement and emergency personnel.

During the question-and-answer session, a participant asked whether any sample disaster plans are available. OLAW's Silk referred webinar participants to the NIH Intramural Research Program's disaster response website, which she says "includes templates for a variety of plans" (<http://oacu.od.nih.gov/disaster/index.htm>). She also mentioned that the NIH Office of Extramural Research's Office of Policy for Extramural Research Administration has a Web page offering grantees assistance on responding to natural disasters and emergencies ([http://grants.nih.gov/grants/natural\\_disasters.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/natural_disasters.htm)).

When asked whether disaster plans are subject to the federal Freedom of Information Act, Silk said they would not be "unless the plans were in the records of a federal agency. That is why OLAW does not request or keep disaster plans from institutions." She further added that such plans "may be subject to release under state Freedom of Information or Sunshine Laws."

Durkee added, "I would say for institutions that are public, having a discussion with the public records office at your institution would help to clarify what sort of things would be released" in fulfillment of a records request.

### **Staying Put May Be the Thing to Do**

One participant asked if it could ever make sense to shelter in place, for example, where an institution has a facility that is underground in the basement of a building and is relatively impervious to most natural disasters.

Durkee responded that if "you have an infinite supply of backup energy and power and water, then staying put sounds pretty good." He went on to say, however, "the other aspect of disasters that can occur is people. So

what if people aren't there already and they are not able to get in, then what happens? Or you are prepared for all of the needs of the animals, but have you prepared for the needs of the people who are going to be hanging out there? Is there food? Maybe you need barbecue equipment to hang out, out back, to feed people because there's not enough backup power for kitchen operations or things like that. So there's always some aspects of planning that you can look at. Just writing down how the systems function and work is a way to create a plan to put things together there."

In discussing how many days the plan should account for, Durkee answered, "Well, that's also a tough question because it's going to vary. ... For some species, particularly aquatics, you may have a limit for how long you can oxygenate water without electricity. So knowing what the limits are of your ability to provide care for the animals is ultimately the end of the time frame you can provide relief or mitigation efforts for the animals at your facility. And those are very frank discussions to have and the attending veterinarian should be involved in those."

The final question included in the webinar materials, but answered after the actual day of the event, asked how fieldwork done outside of the animal facilities should be addressed in a disaster plan.

There should be "some sort of plan to handle the animals" that are involved in institutional fieldwork, Durkee said. OLAW followed on with a similar response, "Your institution's disaster plan should account for any situations that you are likely to encounter if a disaster occurs. If you routinely have personnel in the field, your plan should include communication, evacuation, and other strategies to account for their safety."

The next webinar in the series is scheduled for June 20. The topic is "Training Issues," and the presenter is Sara Munro from the Boston Children's Hospital.

**Link to archive:** [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/educational\\_resources.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/educational_resources.htm). ✧

### Upcoming Grants Management Webinars from FFMA & AIS

- **May 9** Indirect Cost Recovery on Federal Grants — Which Way Forward?
- **May 16** Good Grants Management Is Good Grantsmanship — How to Stand Out (in the Right Way) During Pre-Award Review of Your Federal Grant Application
- **May 29** Procurement of Your Annual Single Audit — How to Make One of Your Most Important Federal Grant Purchases

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## Faculty: Heavy 'Burden' Comes With Federally Funded Research

How researchers actually spend their day, and how they would like to, hasn't changed much in seven years. Similar to how research faculty reported in 2005, they "still spend less than 60% of their research time actually engaged in research," according to the preliminary results of the latest Faculty Workplace Survey.

What are faculty doing with the other hours in their research day? According to Federal Demonstration Partnership Vice Chair Sandra Schneider, "42% of their federal research time is spent completing administrative requirements."

Schneider, of the University of South Florida, is also chair of the FDP Faculty Workplace Survey Task Force. She presented preliminary findings from the FWS — also called faculty burden survey — at the recent FDP meeting.

The 2012 survey updates the one done in 2005 and looked at changes in burdens since 2005 and the impact of new burdens, such as Recovery Act compliance, and better defined information on specific burdens, such as working with institution review boards and complying with human subjects protections regulations.

The survey results indicate that researchers spend half of their other administrative time evenly divided between pre-award and post-award activities, with proposal preparation consuming almost 75% of pre-award time.

What's so burdensome about proposal preparation? The following sums up the frequently occurring responses to that question:

- ◆ Constantly changing requirements, formats, content
- ◆ Routine, redundant, detailed interim reports that no one reads
- ◆ Different requirements from different agencies; complex forms
- ◆ Requirements that are too frequent and overly detailed and tedious
- ◆ Ambiguities in requirements; poor fit of forms to actual research
- ◆ User *unfriendly* online submission

Of all post-award activities, report preparation was signaled out as particularly onerous and consumes approximately 35% of post-award administrative activity. Together, proposal and report preparation "takes up almost one quarter of the average PI's federal research time," according to Schneider's slides.

The survey was conducted during Jan. 23–March 22, 2012. Researchers participating were principal investiga-

tors on federal grants/contracts during academic year 2010–2011. More than 13,453, from 99 of the 119 FDP non-federal member organizations, responded to the survey, according to information provided by Schneider.

Survey questions also addressed differences in burdens reported by respondents based on federal funding agency, demographics of the researcher, and workload profiles, among other characteristics.

Schneider discussed areas for further exploration and the benefit of drilling down and examining the survey data further. “There is a wealth of information from the survey that can be used to help guide efforts in streamlining,” according to her presentation. Ultimately, the goals of the FWS are “to increase the likelihood of efficient and effective demonstration projects, and to provide information to FDP and federal agencies to facilitate targeted reduction of administrative burden.”

In a separate, but related action, the National Science Board has issued a request for information on reducing research investigator’s administrative workload. Comments are due by May 24 ([www.nsf.gov/nsb/committees/ab/tskforce\\_ab\\_rfi.jsp](http://www.nsf.gov/nsb/committees/ab/tskforce_ab_rfi.jsp)).

**Link:** [http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/fdp/PGA\\_081164](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/fdp/PGA_081164). ✦

## OIG Reports on Two Audits

*continued from p. 1*

The audit recommended that the university repay \$952, revise its internal controls to ensure correct calculation of indirect costs at service centers, work with the HHS Division of Cost Allocation to determine correct indirect cost rates for the two service centers, and develop a formal written policy that differentiates service center types.

Although both NIH and the auditee agreed that the \$952 in questioned costs were allowable within the project’s scope, OIG did not back down. It said the grantee treated the costs as 100% indirect and 100% direct, “which did not constitute a reasonable, allocable, and allowable expenditure of public funds.” The university described “corrective actions” it had taken regarding the auditors’ other recommendations. **Link:** <http://oig.hhs.gov/oas/reports/region7/71106024.pdf>.

### OIG Continues to Look at Equipment

The University of Michigan properly expended its NIH grant funds on equipment exceeding \$25,000, according to a recent performance audit by the HHS OIG. The audit examined 43 equipment purchases totaling \$5,175,396 during calendar year 2011. No findings or recommendations were made in the audit.

OIG undertook the audit, it said, because it had audited equipment purchases at a different university in 2012 and found significant rebudgeting without NIH prior approval.

**Link:** <http://oig.hhs.gov/oas/reports/region5/51200075.asp>. ✦

## News Briefs

◆ **Worth Watching?** On Monday, April 22, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in *Agency for International Development v. Alliance for Open Society, Intl.* The case concerns the U. S. Leadership Against HIV/ AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003, 22 U.S.C. 7631(f), which requires as a condition for receiving federal funds to provide HIV and AIDS programs overseas that an organization have a policy opposing prostitution and sex trafficking. The Alliance for Open Society, International sued AID, claiming the requirement violates the First Amendment. The court of appeals agreed with the organization, and AID appealed the decision to the High Court. At issue in the case, according to some court watchers, is the type and content of restrictions the federal government can place on organizations that it funds. As such, if the decision of the court of appeals is upheld, these experts say, it could have much broader implications for conditions placed on all types federal awards. A decision in the case is expected sometime this summer. **Link:** <http://tinyurl.com/cxthxe7>.

◆ **Financial Relationships.** The official website for the National Physician Payment Transparency Program: OPEN is now up and running. Established by HHS’s Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the site collects, aggregates, and publishes data on “the financial relationships of manufacturers, physicians, and teaching hospitals,” as required to be reported to CMS by section 6002 of the Affordable Care Act. **Link:** <http://tinyurl.com/aotmfj4>.

◆ **BRAIN Research.** Promising approximately \$100 million beginning with his fiscal 2014 budget proposal, President Obama kicked off his BRAIN (Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies) initiative on April 2. The money will be funneled through three federal agencies: NIH (\$40 million), the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (\$50 million), and NSF (\$20 million). **Link:** <http://tinyurl.com/d3wwgov>.

## Agency Developments

The following are summaries of news items posted in Federal Agency Daily at [www.ManagingFederalGrants.com](http://www.ManagingFederalGrants.com). The date appearing in parentheses at the end of each item is the date the item, including a link, was posted.

◆ **Export Controls.** The Commerce Department's Bureau of Industry and Security and the State Department's Directorate of Defense Trade Controls have published final amendments to the Export Administration Regulations and the International Traffic in Arms Regulations, respectively. The rulemakings come as part of an ongoing presidential Export Control Reform Initiative, which, according to former Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, "is necessary to enhance national security." Both final rules are effective Oct. 15.

The final rules add a structure and related provisions to certain control items that no longer warrant export control on the U.S. Munitions List and the Commerce Control List. Ten new "600 series" Export Control Classification Numbers are created for the following that are moving from the USML to the CCL: aircraft and gas turbine engines, related parts, components, accessories, attachments, software, and technology. Among other things, the rules also adopt "as much as possible a common definition of 'specially designed.'" (4/16/13)

◆ **Bioethics Webinars.** The Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues in cooperation with the Genetic Alliance, a nonprofit health advocacy organization, recently kicked off a year-long webinar series. The series is based on the commission's report, *Privacy and Progress in Whole Genome Sequencing*. The first webinar, held on Feb. 12, provided an overview of the report, while the second webinar, on March 12, presented an analysis of the report's recommendations. The third program, "Strong Baseline Protections While Promoting Data Access and Sharing," took place on April 9. The monthly webinars are scheduled for the second Tuesday of each month at noon. (4/16/13)

◆ **IBC Registration.** The NIH Office of Biotechnology Activities has established the Institutional Biosafety Committee Registration Management System to support online submission of IBC registrations and annual registration updates. Visitors can also "access important compliance guidance" relating to the *NIH Guidelines* at the site. At the site, according to OBA, visitors can access and verify an institution's IBC information; notify OBA of changes in IBC mem-

bership; sign up to automatically receive reminders when a registration update is due; and access information on IBC compliance.

◆ **"Big Data" at NIH.** NIH recently announced that the president's fiscal 2014 budget proposal "will provide at least \$40 million to launch a new Big Data to Knowledge (BD2K) program, significantly expanding NIH's participation" in the administration's Big Data Research and Development Initiative, according to a recent post to the White House Office of Science and Technology blog. NIH will use the 2014 money to focus on how best to share large, complex biomedical data sets; development of analytical methods and software; training data scientists, computer engineers, and bioinformaticians; and setting up Centers of Excellence to develop generalizable approaches that address problems in biomedical analytics, computational biology, and medical informatics. (4/25/13)

◆ **New FFRDC.** The National Institute of Standards and Technology plans to sponsor the National Cybersecurity Center of Excellence. This federally funded research and development center will be "a public-private collaboration for accelerating the widespread adoption of integrated cybersecurity tools and technologies ... [and] will bring together experts from industry, government, and academia under one roof," according to a notice in the April 22 *Federal Register*. Written comments on the NIST proposal must be received by July 22. (4/22/13)

◆ **Benefits of Research.** A new "summary brochure" from NSF "provides examples of the ways in which NSF-funded, basic, social and behavioral science research bears on national security and economic interests," according to a press release from the agency. The document, *Bringing People Into Focus: How Social, Behavioral and Economic Research Addresses National Challenges*, lists a collection of studies examining the benefits of NSF-funded research, which run the gamut from "improving evacuation plans during natural disasters to expanding access to vital services ... [to] evaluating the experiences of returning veterans to understanding the value of good teachers." (4/9/13)