Consultant Services Self-Assessment Checklist

As a part of the National Science Foundation’s (NSF) continued efforts to better facilitate award stewardship, this checklist was created to enable applicants and awardees to assess their consultant services practices, verify areas where those practices meet federal requirements, and identify and remedy any deficiencies identified. Specifically, this checklist was designed to enable awardees to verify that:

- A consultant services policy that states compliant requirements has been approved by management and distributed to staff for official use
- Consultant services costs are supported by pre-award checks, cost-price analysis, and an enforceable agreement
- Consultant services are managed in a way that ensures that agreed upon services are provided prior to payment and that actual payments are in line with the written agreement
- Consultant agreements are regularly reviewed and timely closed.

For additional guidance, please refer to the Uniform Guidance Section 459, “Professional Services Costs” and Sections 317-327 “Procurement Standards”; FAR Part 31 205-33, “Professional and Consultant Service Costs” and Subpart 2, Contracts with Commercial Organizations; GC-1, Section 5, “Consultant Services”; CA-FATC, Section 5, “Consultant Services”; and 2 CFR 180 OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement).

Organizational Consultant Services Policies, Procedures, and Practices

1. In your organization, is contracting with a consultant a procurement action?
   - YES
   - NO

2. Does your organization, prior to making the decision to issue a consultant agreement, assess whether a subaward might be more appropriate?
   - YES
   - NO

3. Does your organization have written policies and procedures for consultant identification, evaluation, contract preparation/administration, oversight, payment, and contract closeout?
   - YES
   - NO

This checklist was provided for educational purposes only. In the event of any conflict between this checklist and OMB or grant-specific regulations, the regulations take precedence.
4. Does your organization have established procedures to ensure that consultants are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any Federal department or agency?

   YES
   NO

5. Does your organization have a standard template for retaining consultant services to ensure a consistent process and adequate supporting documentation?

   YES
   NO

6. Does your organization have established procedures to conduct cost/price analysis to determine a reasonable rate to pay the consultant and document the outcome of that analysis?

   YES
   NO

7. Has your organization established procedures for verifying that services and deliverables have been provided prior to paying a consultant invoice?

   YES
   NO

8. Does your organization have established practices to regularly review open consultant contracts and close completed contracts?

   YES
   NO

9. Can consultant fees be paid for speaking at conferences?

   YES
   NO
10. Which of the following are common concerns related to consultant services? (We recommend that your organization review all answers)

- Consultant services policies and procedures are not documented

- Organization does not verify and document that services are received prior to payment

- Consultant agreement not documented or the agreement does not contain required elements

- Cost/price analysis is not performed and/or documented prior to issuing each consultant services agreement

- Consultant either did not perform contracted services or did not perform them at the level agreed upon

**Special note:** Although uncommon, some organizations engage consultants associated with or at an international branch campus of a US Institute of Higher Education (IHE) or a foreign organization, through an intra-university agreement. Please be aware that there are additional requirements for these types of arrangements. Please consult the PAPPG Chapter I.E.6 and a special term and condition, research term and condition #43. Finally Public Law 115-232 Section 889 “John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019.”