



# Grants Management

## *Navigating A New Research Landscape*

**Confronted by today's** tough financial realities, increasingly complex regulatory requirements, and a more competitive funding environment, university leaders are put to the test every day. Mounting pressure to manage greater volume in a highly regulated environment only heightens the challenge to performing vital tasks necessary to deliver the breakthrough outcomes that can improve lives today.

Since the recent economic downturn, resources are scarce. New, more invasive requirements associated with increased funding activity have been introduced. Technology upgrades have been delayed. Audit risk has increased, especially in the post-stimulus world. Employee training and industry conferences have been scaled back. These factors have resulted in less than optimal environments in which research organizations must continue not only to operate, but thrive.

Research organizations are now seeking cost effective ways to improve operations and reduce risk. Strategic plans are being updated, subcontract compliance is being reviewed, reductions in aged receivables is improving flow, deficit spending is being reduced, policies and procedures are being revised, and organizations are exploring advanced technology solutions and the feasibility of outsourcing the research administration function.



## ***Strategic Services***

### **Research Strategic Planning**

Given the tight Federal research funding environment, institutional leaders are increasingly focused on identifying a defined number of research areas within their portfolios to direct future investment. Selecting these areas requires consideration of revenue potential versus research capabilities and clinical competence for both hospital programs and physician specialties.

Attain Partners professionals work with you to assess this data, develop research focus area alternatives, and create a productive strategy that differentiates and distinguishes your institution from competitors. We have performed a variety of projects including organizational assessment and strategy, research administration business process re-engineering, structuring research policies and procedures, and developing and implementing plans to improve people, systems, and processes to support the research enterprise.

### **Research Administration Benchmarking**

Attain Partners holds the rights to the sponsored programs benchmarking and best practices program that was formerly administered by BearingPoint, Inc., Society of Research Administrators (SRA), and the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO).

Inclusion in the program provides institutions and the sponsored projects administration community a basis for quantitative and systematic analysis of operations and activities, achieving the benefits of benchmarking for very little cost and effort.

### **Industry Contract Negotiation Escalation Matrix**

With the budget constraints of Federal sponsors, commercially supported research is a vital source of funding and provides access to state of the art technology. To ease and streamline the commercial contracting process, while protecting organizations from complex issues such as Medicare billing compliance, HIPAA regulations, the Physician Payments Sunshine Act, liability exposure, and the disposition of intellectual property, Attain Partners' Matrix tool narrows the knowledge gap between seasoned attorneys and contract associates on the front lines of complex industry sponsor negotiations.



## ***Technology Services***

### **Time And Effort Reporting System Assessments**

Attain Partners provides assessments of time and effort reporting systems, designs and implements system and business process improvements, determines compliance with Federal regulations, designs reports to improve management and compliance, and trains client staff.

### **Research Management Assessment**

An institution's research administration structure and systems must not be overly burdensome, but serve faculty researchers well to support the institutional research mission.

Typical areas for review include central and department research administration staffing, compliance management, business processes that support research administration, information technology support, and specialized service facilities.

## ***Leadership and Solutions to Drive Transformation***

In addition to our expertise in grants management and business operations, Attain Partners has strong and deep capabilities in information technology (IT) services, assuring that proposed managerial solutions are combined with the latest IT systems support. Our approach starts by helping you understand current bottlenecks and identify technology problems to create solutions that resolve your challenges.

The road ahead is complicated, but Attain Partners helps you simplify to forge forward. We work with you to:

- Increase operational efficiency
- Optimize your technology investments
- Reduce your exposure to risk, and
- Improve cash flow



## ***Additional Grants Management Services***

### **Grants Management Diagnostics (Pre- and Post-Award)**

Attain Partners performs diagnostic reviews and assessments of pre- and post-award organizations, including: existing organizational structure, present and future staffing requirements, current business policies and processes, and supporting technologies and operating and management reports. We determine best practices and develop a report that identifies compliance risks, makes recommendations for improvements, and provides the client with a roadmap for change.

### **Remote Invoicing and FSR Filing**

Using Virtual Private Network (VPN) solutions and clients' electronic files, we prepare invoices per grant agreement/contractual specifications, perform cursory compliance reviews, and return reports to the institution for review and approval, all offsite.

We also can perform manual remote invoicing and FFR filing, including project reconciliations, evidence of cursory compliance reviews (salary cap calculations), fringe and F&A calculation reviews, out-of-period cost review, allowability and allocability review, and Sponsor A/R analysis.

### **Business Process Outsourcing**

Attain Partners' Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) services distinguish us from traditional providers. BPO is a growing trend among institutions that may not yet meet the threshold volume of research, lack the funds to invest in necessary staff, or aren't able to manage compliance or other complexities of research organizations.

Our professionals are experienced in serving colleges, universities and academic medical centers for all types of awards or cognizant agency jurisdiction.

### **Subcontract Monitoring Compliance**

Attain Partners' subcontract monitoring solution enables cost-savings from the additional labor, travel, and office space expenses associated with subcontract monitoring. Our compliance solution begins with an assessment of issued subcontracts, and engagements are completed with an internal audit report for each subcontractor, with compliance and staff training recommendations to improve the understanding of subcontract compliance challenges.

### **Grant Account Deficit Resolution**

Attain Partners' risk assessment uncovers current and potential liabilities, and puts in place policies and procedures to prevent and/or resolve research deficits in a timely manner.

### **Specialized Service Facility (SSF) and Recharge Centers**

The challenges most university SSF and Recharge Centers face stem from the inadequate development of standard operating and financial management procedures. Attain Partners is especially qualified to assess and develop funding models for unique and complex service centers, such as Higher Performance Computing environments, Flow Cytometry Core, and Animal Care facilities.

### **Policy and Procedure Development/Deployment**

Leveraging years of industry knowledge and best practice experience, we can develop and revise Research Administration policies and procedures that are critical to regulatory compliance. Insufficient policies can hinder growth and subject the institution to greater risk if research faculty, or those who infrequently manage awards aren't aware of responsibilities.

## ***Not just powering the future—empowering it.***

Attain Partners is a strategy, technology, and compliance consulting firm. Our consultants deliver transformative services, solutions, and market-leading results to the education, healthcare, and nonprofit communities, as well as state and local government. From research administration to F&A cost rate proposal development and negotiation, facilities management, organizational and digital transformation, and strategic financial analysis, Attain Partners isn't just powering the future—we're empowering it.

For more information, visit [AttainPartners.com](https://AttainPartners.com).