

# Mastering Research Administration

A Complete Guide to the  
CRA<sup>®</sup>, CPRA<sup>®</sup>, and CFRA<sup>®</sup> Exams

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**Disclaimer:**

- These multiple-choice questions and the accompanying text were originally developed in 2022 and were reviewed and updated in August 2025. Grant policies, rules, and regulations may change over time. Please consult official sources for the most current information.
- While it is generally considered best practice to avoid negative phrasing and answer choices such as “all of the above” or “none of the above” in standardized multiple-choice questions, these materials were created for training purposes. In some instances, we have intentionally used such formats.

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# CHAPTER 11

## Federal Notices of Award

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## 11.1. Introduction

A Notice of Award (NoA) is the official legal document issued to a grantee confirming that a federal award has been made. It authorizes the recipient to request, use, and report funds in the approved manner and includes all applicable terms and conditions of the award. The NoA is an essential reference throughout the life of the award, and a revised version will be issued if any post-award amendments are made. The federal legal requirements for a Notice of Award are set forth in the Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200), primarily in Section [§200.211](#).

## 11.2. Contents of NoA

Section [§200.211](#) specifies that a federal award must include several key elements, including: the federal award performance goals, general federal award information, general terms and conditions, federal awarding agency, program, or award-specific terms and conditions, and any additional requirements set by the federal awarding agency. These key elements must be included in each NoA, either directly or by reference. For example, the National Science Foundation (NSF) may reference the terms and conditions by referencing the NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide ([NSF PAPPG](#)).

### (a) Federal award performance goals

Performance goals, indicators, targets, and baseline data must be included in a federal award when applicable, and the awarding agency **must** specify in the terms and conditions how performance will be assessed, including the timing and scope of the expected performance.

### (b) General federal award information

The 16 elements required in every federal NoA are listed below, with a brief description. Further information is provided in the next sections of this chapter or in other chapters.

- **Recipient's name:** For example, Morgan State University.
- **Recipient's unique entity identifier (UEI):** This is a 12-character alphanumeric ID generated and managed via [SAM.gov](#) and used by the U.S. federal government to uniquely identify organizations that apply for or receive federal funding, such as

grants and contracts. For example, the UEI for Morgan State University is KULSKCCZJT27.

- **Unique Federal Award Identification Number (FAIN):** This is a unique number assigned by a federal awarding agency (such as NIH, NSF, DOE, etc.) to identify a specific federal grant or cooperative agreement. The format of the FAIN is specific to each agency. Examples include:
  - NSF: 2045678
  - NIH: R01CA123456
  - DOE: DE-SC0023456

Elements of FAIN have their own meaning, determined by the individual agency. For example, the breakdown of NIH award number R01CA123456 is as follows: R01 shows the grant mechanism; CA shows that the award is issued by the National Cancer Institute; and 123456 is the consecutive unique number given to that project.

- **Federal Award Date:** This is the date when the federal awarding agency signs the Notice of Award (NoA) or otherwise officially approves and obligates funding to the recipient. In other words, it is the date the award becomes legally effective.
- **Period of Performance Start and End Date:** The period of performance (e.g., 10/1/2025 to 9/30/2030) is the time during which a recipient is authorized to incur costs and carry out work on that specific federal award. There are certain exceptions. For example, publication costs may be allowable even after the performance end date.
- **Budget Period Start and End Date:** The period of performance is broken down into budget periods. The budget period is the interval of time for which a specified portion of the funding is assigned. For example, while the period of performance may be five years (e.g., 10/1/2025 to 9/30/2030), each budget period may be one year (e.g., the first one from 10/1/2025 to 9/30/2026). The costs of the project will be allowable and available according to the budget period, with carryover details between budget periods specific to each agency, and sometimes, each award.

- **Amount of Federal Funds Obligated by this Action:** This number (e.g., \$200,000) details how much money is obligated (or deobligated) by that NoA or modification. If the project has five budget periods, one can reasonably expect at least five actions, each coming with a certain amount of obligated funding.
- **Total Amount of Federal Funds Obligated:** This is the cumulative total of federal funds that have been legally committed (obligated) to a recipient to date for a specific award. It includes all funding obligated by previous actions plus the current action. For example, if Action 1 was \$200,000 and Action 2 was \$300,000, the Total Amount of Federal Funds Obligated thus far is \$500,000.
- **Total Approved Cost Sharing or Matching, where applicable:** This is relevant to cost sharing by the recipient or a third party. Please see the [Chapter on Cost Sharing \(matching\)](#) for more information.
- **Budget Approved by the Federal Awarding Agency:** This is the official spending limit approved by the sponsor. It reflects what the agency has approved, not necessarily what is currently obligated or available for spending. For example, the NIH may approve an R01 grant for \$5,000,000, but each of the annual NoAs – divided into actions – obligates only a portion of that total each year. Therefore, for example, if \$1,000,000 is obligated in each of Year 1 and Year 2, only \$2,000,000 is obligated thus far. The institution must keep the spending within \$2,000,000 until subsequent NoAs obligate more funds.
- **Federal Award Description:** This is a brief summary that identifies the purpose, program, and nature of the federal funding being provided. It helps recipients and auditors understand what the federal funds support and from which federal program they come.
- **Name of Federal Awarding Agency:** (e.g. the National Science Foundation (NSF)) and **Contact Information for Awarding Official** (e.g., John Doe, email: jdoe@nsf.gov)
- **Assistance Listings Number (ALN) and Title:** An ALN (formerly known as a CFDA number—Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance) is a unique five-digit number assigned to each U.S. federal assistance program. These programs include grants,

cooperative agreements, scholarships, loans, insurance, and other types of federal financial or non-financial assistance. Please see below for more information.

- **Identification of Whether the Award is Research and Development (R&D) or Not:** Some awards are considered to be R&D, and some are not.
- **Indirect Cost Rate for the Federal Award:** The indirect cost rate for the specific award must be clearly listed.

### **(c) General terms and conditions**

Federal awarding agencies must incorporate the following general terms and conditions either in the federal award or by reference, as applicable:

**(i) Administrative requirements** implemented by the federal awarding agency as specified.

**(ii) National policy requirements:** These include statutory, executive order, other Presidential directive, or regulatory requirements that apply to the award by specific reference and are not program-specific.

**(iii) Recipient integrity and performance matters:** If the total federal share of the award is more than \$500,000 over the total period of performance, the federal awarding agency must include terms and conditions available in [Appendix XII](#) of Uniform Guidance Part 200, Title 2.

**(iv) Future budget periods:** If it is anticipated that the period of performance will include multiple budget periods, the federal awarding agency must indicate that subsequent budget periods are subject to the availability of funds, program authority, satisfactory performance, and compliance with the terms and conditions of the federal award.

**(v) Termination provisions:** Federal awarding agencies must make recipients aware, clearly and unambiguously, of the termination provisions in [§200.340](#), including the applicable termination provisions in the federal awarding agency's regulations or in each federal award.

## **(d) Federal award agency requirements**

Given that the general requirements of each award are quite extensive, many of the requirements are provided by reference. Each agency typically has a manual that is available online, on the agency's website. The following are some notable examples:

**National Institutes of Health (NIH):** Per the NIH website, "The NIH Grants Policy Statement (NIH GPS) makes available, in a single document, the policy requirements that serve as the terms and conditions of NIH grant awards."

<https://grants.nih.gov/policy/nihgps/index.htm>

**National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA):** Per NASA's website, "The NASA Grant and Cooperative Agreement Manual (GCAM) provides comprehensive policy guidance on the pre-award, award, post-award, and closeout phases of the grant management life cycle to NASA proposers, award-managing personnel, and recipients to implement government-wide and NASA-specific regulations for applying for and administering grants and cooperative agreements." <https://www.nasa.gov/grants-policy-and-compliance-team/#Regulations>

**National Science Foundation (NSF):** The NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide(PAPPG) holds the agency specific guidelines for proposals, awards, and post-award processes. <https://www.nsf.gov/policies/pappg/24-1>

Below, we discuss some of the elements of notices of award – including ALN, period of performance, budget period, and FAIN – in more detail.

## **11.3. Assistance Listings Numbers (ALN)**

### **11.3.1. Establishing ALNs and Their Purpose**

According to the Uniform Guidance [§200.202](#), a federal agency must create an Assistance Listing (ALN) before it can announce a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). The ALN, formerly known as the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number, is created as part of the initial program planning and design phase. This number helps in determining how much money the U.S. government has spent on each program. It also helps with audit, as programs with identical ALN are likely to have very similar audit requirements.



This regulation requires Federal agencies to complete the following sequence of steps:

- **Program planning and design:** The federal agency designs the program, which includes establishing its goals and objectives.
- **Create an Assistance Listing:** As part of this process, the agency creates an Assistance Listing for the program. This listing is published on SAM.gov, the official source for federal assistance program information.
- **Announce the funding opportunity:** After the Assistance Listing is created, the federal agency can announce the NOFO.

This requirement helps ensure public transparency and provides a consistent way for recipients, auditors, and other stakeholders to track federal financial assistance.

### 11.3.2. ALN Digits

The ALN has a standard format of two digits, a period, and three digits (XX.XXX), such as 93.859. The first two digits represent the major federal agency that provides the funding, while the three digits after the period identify the specific program within that agency. This system provides a consistent way to track and reference all federal assistance programs across agencies. In the case of 93.859, “93” denotes the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and “859” is the Biomedical Research and Research Training offered by the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS), an institute of the NIH, which is a subagency of the DHHS.

The Assistance Listings Number (ALN) can be found on the federal agency's funding opportunity announcements (FOAs). It is typically listed under program information for each federal financial assistance program. The ALN is used to identify federal financial assistance programs such as grants and cooperative agreements, but it is not used for federal contracts.

## 11.4. Period of Performance vs. Budget Period

The Period of Performance (POP) is the total time an award is active, while a Budget Period is a specific segment within the POP during which the recipient is authorized to

spend funds. A single POP can encompass one or more budget periods, which are often 12 months each, to manage project activities and finances in manageable phases.

#### 11.4.1. Period of Performance (POP)

- The overall time frame from the start date to the end date of an award during which the recipient must complete all activities and incur expenses. It encompasses the entire project, including all potential budget periods.
- *Example:* 10/01/2025 to 09/30/2030

#### 11.4.2. Budget Period

- A specific, funded segment of the Period of Performance during which the awardee is authorized to spend funds. Awards can be divided into multiple budget periods, which are often annual but can vary in length.
- *Example:* 10/01/2025 to 09/30/2026 (a subset of the period of performance listed above).

### 11.5. Funding Terminology

#### 11.5.1 “Approved Budget,” “Obligated By This Action,” & “Total Funds Obligated”

- **Approved Budget** details the maximum committed funding.
- **Obligated By This Action** names the amount of funding available for spending during the budget period listed in the document issued.
- **Total Funds Obligated** is the combined amount of funding of all Actions that have been issued up until that point in time.

Example: an NIH R01 grant may have a total **Approved Budget** of \$6 million for five years, but that does not mean that the entire amount is available to the recipient with the first notice of award. The first notice of award may obligate \$2 million, which means that only \$2 million is available to the recipient for spending during that time; therefore, \$2 million is **Obligated by This Action**. At this point, the **Total Funds Obligated** will be \$2 million. In the next year, another \$1 million may be issued, i.e. **Obligated By This Action**, thereby

increasing the **Total Funds Obligated** to \$3 million (\$2 million in Action 1 plus \$ 1 million in Action 2).

Each action (NoA or amendment) may obligate some funds, deobligate funds, or may be associated with no change in funds. For example, an administrative action is an official document in which solely an administrative change has occurred, such as a change in PI, but no funds are obligated or deobligated.

### 11.5.2. “Carry-Over” vs. “No Cost Extension” vs. “Offset”

- **Carry-Over:** Moving unobligated funds from one budget period to the next within the same period of performance. For example, \$50,000 that remained unspent in Year 1 is moved to Year 2. In this case, \$50,000 is added to Year 2 without changing the total budget over the period of performance. Sometimes carry-over is automatic, and sometimes it requires prior approval.
- **No Cost Extension:** An extension of the period of performance without additional funds from the sponsor. This is requesting more time to complete project goals, when some of the budget is still unspent.
- **Offset:** When the sponsor reduces future funding because the grantee did not need all of the funds previously obligated or had excess program income or cost savings.

## 11.6. Federal Award Identification Number (FAIN)

As discussed earlier, FAIN is a unique identifier assigned by a federal agency to each federal financial assistance award, such as a grant or cooperative agreement. FAIN appears on every NoA and is required for Uniform Guidance reporting (2 CFR [§200.332](#) and [§200.210](#)). It must also appear in Subaward agreements, SEFA reports, and FFR/PSC submissions.

The elements of FAIN may have their own meaning, depending on the funding agency. For example, R01GM123456 means this is an R01 grant, issued by the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS, abbreviated as GM) within the NIH, and ending with a serial 6-digit number.

Sometimes, the FAIN is expanded with other identifiers. For example, in 5R01GM123456-02, the number 5 (before R01) is a code for the type of action – 5 denotes non-competing continuation – and the number 02 at the end means Year 02 of the award. Therefore, this NoA denotes non-competing continuation, Year 2, for an R01 grant issued by NIGMS.

The table below shows the structure of FAIN for several major federal agencies.

Agency	Example FAIN	Breakdown
NIH	R01GM123456	activity code (R01) + institute (GM) + 6-digit serial number
NSF	2310456	7-digit consecutive numeric code
DoD	W911NF-22-1-0123	agency code (W911NF) + fiscal year (22) + action type (1 = grant) + 4-digit serial number
NASA	80NSSC23K0123	agency prefix (80 = NASA) + center (NSSC = NASA Shared Services Center) + fiscal year (23) + action type (K = grant) + 4-digit serial number
Dept of Energy	DE-SC0023456	agency prefix (DE = Dept of Energy) + program or office code (SC = Office of Science) + 7-digit unique sequential identifier
USDA	2023-67021-39012	year (2023) + program code (67021) + sequence number (39012)

## 11.7. Summary

A Notice of Award (NoA) is the legally binding document issued by a federal agency to a recipient institution. It authorizes funding, outlines terms and conditions, and specifies both the budget period and the overall period of performance. The Assistance Listings Number (ALN), formerly known as the CFDA number, identifies the federal program that funds the award. It must appear in the NoA and is used for reporting on the Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards (SEFA).

The Period of Performance is the total authorized project timeframe, often several years, during which the recipient may conduct the funded activities. The Budget Period is a subset of the period of performance, usually one year, for which funds are obligated and

available for expenditure. Multiple budget periods can exist within a single period of performance; each tied to a separate NoA.

In summary, the ALN identifies the funding program, the NoA documents the award and funding details, the budget period sets the annual spending authorization, and the period of performance defines the total approved project timeline.

## 11.8. Practice Questions

1. Federal notices of award must include all of the following information EXCEPT:
  - a. The recipient's unique entity identifier (UEI)
  - b. Names of the panel members reviewing the application
  - c. Unique federal award identification number (FAIN)
  - d. Total amount of federal funds obligated
  
2. All of the following appear on federal notices of award, EXCEPT:
  - a. Budget period
  - b. Period of performance
  - c. Name and contact information of the awarding official
  - d. Name and contact information of the head of the awarding agency
  
3. Which of the following can be a UEI?
  - a. KULSKCCZJT27
  - b. FTMTDMBR29?X
  - c. NP@8ULVAAS23
  - d. NPU8ULVAAS
  
4. Which entity assigns UEI to universities and other award recipients?
  - a. SAM.Gov
  - b. eRA Commons
  - c. The F&A cognizant agency
  - d. The Single Audit cognizant agency
  
5. UEI – as a unique entity identifier used to do business with the government – replaced which of the following?
  - a. DUNS number
  - b. CAGE Code
  - c. E-Verify number
  - d. EIN

6. The federal award date on a notice of award is listed as 05/21/2025. This is the date that the:
- Project can start.
  - Notice of award is issued by the agency.
  - First funds drawdown can happen.
  - Any of the above.
7. The budget period on a notice of award is stated as 08/01/2025 to 07/31/2026. This first data (08/01/2025) is the date that the:
- Project is expected to start.
  - The award is issued by the agency.
  - The funding increment obligated by this action can be used.
  - All of the above
8. The federal award identification number (FAIN) on a notice of award is SC2GM125512. This award most likely is issued by the:
- NSF
  - NIH
  - DoD
  - DoE
9. The federal award identification number (FAIN) on a notice of award is 80NSSC21K0436. This award most likely is issued by the:
- NSF
  - DoE
  - NASA
  - USDOT
10. The federal award identification number (FAIN) on a notice of award is W911NF-22-1-0125. This award most likely is issued by the:
- NSF
  - NIH
  - DoD
  - DoE

11. The federal award identification number (FAIN) on a notice of award is DE-SC0023456. This award most likely is issued by the:
- NSF
  - USDOT
  - DoD
  - DoE
12. An NIH-funded grant has the award number “5R01CA162334-02” on its notice of award. Number 5, at the beginning, refers to:
- Year 5 of the award
  - The 5<sup>th</sup> time this award has been renewed
  - This award being linked to 4 more awards, making a total of 5.
  - Non-competing continuation of the award
13. An NIH-funded grant has the award number “5R01CA162334-02S2” on its notice of award. S2 likely refers to:
- Second solicitation
  - Second supplement to this award
  - Second year of the award
  - Second season of Year 2
14. Reading the award number “5R01CA162334-02” on a notice of award from the NIH, one can infer that this award is issued:
- By the National Institute for Aging
  - For Year 2 of the project
  - For Year 5 of the project
  - Is an institutional training grant
15. Reading the award number “5R01CA162334-02” on a notice of award from the NIH, one realizes that the award has been issued by the:
- NHLBI
  - NCI
  - NCATS
  - NIH Clinical Center



16. Reading the award number “5R01GM162334-03” on a notice of award from the NIH, one can infer that the project is entering Year \_\_\_\_ and may be extended up to Year \_\_\_\_ before a renewal is requested.
- a. 3, 3
  - b. 3, 5
  - c. 5, 5
  - d. 3, 8
17. Which of the following awards are likely to have larger funding?
- a. 1R01AA162334-01
  - b. 1R15GM024451-01
  - c. 1R03CA162577-02
  - d. 1R21CA185663-02
18. In 2025, NIH had \_\_\_\_ application types.
- a. 4
  - b. 9
  - c. 12
  - d. 48
19. Type 2 application in NIH language means:
- a. The first submission of an award
  - b. Second year of an award
  - c. Competing renewal of an award
  - d. Revision of an award
20. An NIH-funded grant number is “2R01CA162334-06.” The first number “2” means:
- a. Competing renewal
  - b. Second year of the award
  - c. Second revision of the award
  - d. Second supplement to the award

21. An NIH-funded grant number is “2UL1GM118973-06”. Most likely, the first phase of this award had \_\_\_\_ years.
- a. 2
  - b. 4
  - c. 5
  - d. 6
22. Assistance Listings Number (ALN) replaced:
- a. FastLane
  - b. CFDA
  - c. ORCA
  - d. FBO
23. The format of ALN is:
- a. XX.XX
  - b. XX.XXX
  - c. XXX.XX
  - d. XXX.XXX
24. The first part (two digits before the period) in ALN denotes:
- a. The major federal agency
  - b. The federal program number
  - c. Whether the award is a grant or cooperative agreement
  - d. The year of the award
25. The second part (three digits after the period) in ALN denotes:
- a. The major federal agency
  - b. The unique identifier for the recipient institution
  - c. The dollar amount category of the fund
  - d. The federal program number
26. ALN can be found in all of the following EXCEPT:
- a. NoAs for federal grants to the prime institution
  - b. NoAs for federal cooperative agreements to the prime institution

- c. NoAs for fixed-price federal contracts to the prime institution
- d. Subaward agreements from prime to subaward recipients of federal grants

27. A grant agreement has ALN 47.XXX. The award is from:

- a. NSF
- b. DHHS
- c. DoD
- d. DoEd

28. A cooperative agreement has ALN 93.XXX. The award is from:

- a. NSF
- b. DHHS
- c. DoD
- d. DoEd

29. ALN is typically used for:

- a. Reporting and audit purposes
- b. Helping the PI with the disbursement of funds
- c. Accounting for expenses on that award
- d. Determining tax status of the recipient institution

30. Missing an ALN in SEFA:

- a. Is usually not a concern
- b. Will result in a fine of no more than \$25K
- c. May be an audit finding
- d. Is almost always because the federal agency did not issue one

31. According to Uniform Guidance, §200.202, ALN \_\_\_\_\_ be assigned\_\_\_\_\_ a funding opportunity is announced.

- a. Must, before
- b. Must, after
- c. Should, before
- d. Should, after

32. If, for exigent circumstances, DHHS has not issued an ALN at the time of award, the recipient institution:
- Cannot start spending.
  - Has to communicate with DHHS every month until the ALN is issued.
  - Can assign a temporary ALN (e.g., 93.999) and then replace the ALN with the final number.
  - All of the above.
33. A project is funded by a federal agency. The work is expected to be performed from April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2027. The federal agency issues a notice of award, committing \$600,000 from April 1, 2022, to March 1, 2024. Incremental funds will be awarded afterwards. In this case, the period of performance is \_\_\_\_\_ year(s).
- 1
  - 2
  - 3
  - 5
34. In the previous example, the first budget period is \_\_\_\_\_ year(s).
- 1
  - 2
  - 3
  - 5
35. Which of the following is correct?
- Budget period is a subset of project period.
  - Project period is a subset of budget period.
  - Project period and budget period are used interchangeably.
  - There is no relationship between budget period and project period.
36. The project period of a study is from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2026. The total requested funds are \$400,000. The PI is not able to finish the project in time; therefore, he requests one more year, without increasing the budget, to complete the work. This is an example of \_\_\_\_\_ and as a result the \_\_\_\_\_ increases.
- No-cost extension, project period
  - No-cost extension, post-award cost

- c. Incremental funding, project period
  - d. Incremental funding, post-award cost
37. When a grant renewal is issued:
- a. The budget will be doubled.
  - b. The project goals may change.
  - c. The effect is like a no-cost extension.
  - d. The period of performance is doubled.
38. Pre-award costs are allowable only with written approval \_\_\_\_\_ and they are expended within \_\_\_\_\_ days of prior to the project start date.
- a. Of the department chair, 90
  - b. Of the department chair, 180
  - c. In the notice of award, 90
  - d. In the notice of award, 180
39. "Federal award date" is:
- a. The day that the project starts
  - b. 90 days prior to the day that the project starts
  - c. The day when the authorized federal official signs the award
  - d. All of the above
40. Moving remaining funds from a budget period to the next budget period within the original project period is called:
- a. Carry-over of funds
  - b. No-cost extension
  - c. Offset
  - d. Renewal
41. With offset, the new year budget \_\_\_\_\_ but the overall budget \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. Does not change, increases
  - b. Does not change, decreases
  - c. Decreases, does not change
  - d. Increases, does not change

42. With full carry over of funds, the new year budget\_\_\_\_\_ but the overall budget\_\_\_\_\_ .
- a. Increases, increases
  - b. Increases, decreases
  - c. Does not change, increases
  - d. Increases, does not change
43. Carry-over of funds:
- a. Always needs permission from the agency.
  - b. Always needs permission from the chair and dean.
  - c. May be automatic.
  - d. Happens only with good justification.
44. Which of the following NIH grants typically require prior approval from the agency for carry-over?
- a. R01
  - b. R21
  - c. R03
  - d. P50
45. University X applies for a three-year award in the amounts of \$200K, \$300K, and \$300K for Years 1, 2, and 3 of the project. The application is recommended for funding in full. Notices of award are expected to be issued once a year, and funding is obligated for each year. The project requires permission for carry-over. "Amount of this Action" in the Year 1 notice of award (NoA) is:
- a. \$0
  - b. \$200K
  - c. \$300K
  - d. \$800K

46. In the example above, the recipient university realizes the name of the Authorized Official Representative (AOR) is misspelled. They request a revised NoA. In the revised NoA, which has the correct name of the AOR, "Amount of this Action" will be:
- a. \$0
  - b. \$200K
  - c. \$300K
  - d. \$800K
47. In the example above, only \$150K of the awards are spent in Year 1. The unobligated balance is:
- a. \$0
  - b. \$50K
  - c. \$250K
  - d. \$650K
48. In the example above, the recipient university requests carry-over of all unobligated funds, which is approved by the funding agency. In Year 2 NoA, "Amount of this Action" will be:
- a. \$50K
  - b. \$250K
  - c. \$300K
  - d. \$350K
49. In the example above, the available budget for Year 2 is:
- a. \$250K
  - b. \$300K
  - c. \$350K
  - d. \$500K
50. In the example above, the cumulative amount awarded after issuance of the Year 2 NoA is:
- a. \$250K
  - b. \$300K

- c. \$500K
- d. \$550K

51. In the example above, \$200K is spent in Year 2. How much are the unobligated funds by the end of Year 2?

- a. \$50K
- b. \$100K
- c. \$150K
- d. \$450K

52. In the example above, the university requests carry-over of the entire unobligated balance. The agency decides to offset the funds of Year 3 using the obligated balance from the previous years. What will be the "Amount of this Action" in the Year 3 NoA?

- a. \$0
- b. \$150K
- c. \$300K
- d. \$450K

53. In the example above, what is the cumulative amount awarded after the Year 3 NoA is issued?

- a. \$300K
- b. \$550K
- c. \$650K
- d. \$800K

54. In the example above, \$100K remains at the end of Year 3. The university requests a no-cost extension, which is approved. "The Amount of this Action" will be:

- a. \$0
- b. \$200K
- c. \$300K
- d. \$650K



55. Which of the following expenses may be allowed after the project period but before submission of the final federal financial report?
- a. Hiring key personnel
  - b. Purchasing equipment
  - c. Purchasing supplies
  - d. Publication costs
56. Preaward costs are:
- a. Allowed within 90 days prior to the project start date for all federal awards.
  - b. Allowed within 90 days prior to the project start date only if the federal agency allows for it in writing.
  - c. Never allowed.
  - d. Allowed within 90 days prior to the project start date only if the funds are spent for hiring personnel.
57. Which of the following is LEAST reasonable as a preaward expenditure?
- a. Flight reservations to meet with collaborators
  - b. Advance hiring of key personnel
  - c. Purchasing equipment
  - d. Publication Cost
58. An award number is 1R01CA123456-01. The ALN associated with this award starts with:
- a. 20
  - b. 47
  - c. 81
  - d. 93
59. For NSF awards, most terms and conditions of the award are referenced in the:
- a. PAPPG
  - b. GPS
  - c. EDGAR
  - d. GCAM

60. For all of the following, ALN starts with 93, EXCEPT:

- a. NIH
- b. CDC
- c. SAMHSA
- d. AFOSR

## 11.9. Answers to Practice Questions

1. B Federal notices of award include details such as the recipient's UEI, the FAIN, and the total amount of federal funds obligated. However, they do not include the names of the panel members reviewing the application. That information is not relevant and may in some cases be confidential.
2. D
3. D UEI must have 12-digits and should be alphanumeric only.
4. A
5. A
6. B
7. C This project might have had previous budget periods, and therefore might have started prior to that date. The federal award date is the date that the agency issued the award. The correct answer is C; when new funds are obligated, the start date for using those funds is the new budget period.
8. B This award is issued by the NIH. The activity code (grant mechanism) is SC2, and it is issued by the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (GM).
9. C NSSC stands for NASA Shared Services Center. Number 21 means that the award was issued in the Year 2021.
10. C This is a FAIN for army grants. W911NF is the unique identifier for Army Contracting Command's Research Triangle Park office, which oversees grants from the U.S. Army Research Office (ARO). 22 represents the fiscal year in which the award was issued (fiscal year 2022). 1 denotes that this is a grant, however, this will vary depending on the assistance type. 0125 is the unique sequential project number for that fiscal year from that particular office.
11. D This is a FAIN for a Department of Energy grant. DE means Department of Energy. SC means Office of Science, which supports basic research in energy,

physics, chemistry, biology, materials, and computing. 0023456 is the sequential identifier assigned by DOE.

- 12. D In an NIH grant number, the first digit indicates the type of application. A “5” means it is a non-competing continuation award.
- 13. B In NIH grant numbering, an “S” followed by a number indicates a supplement to the award. “S2” means it is the second supplement to that specific grant.
- 14. B In the NIH grant number “5R01CA162334-02,” the “-02” at the end indicates Year 2 of the project.
- 15. B In the NIH grant number “5R01CA162334-02,” the two-letter code indicates the awarding institute or center. The code CA corresponds to the National Cancer Institute (NCI).
- 16. B The -03 indicates the project is in Year 3 of the current competitive segment. An R01 grant is typically awarded for up to 5 years before renewal is required.
- 17. A Among the listed projects, the R01 mechanism is NIH’s standard research project grant and typically has the largest funding amounts compared to R15 (Academic Research Enhancement Award), R03 (Small Grant), or R21 (Exploratory/Developmental Grant).
- 18. B
- 19. C In NIH terminology, a Type 2 application refers to a competing renewal award, which is a request for additional funding to continue an existing project. Type 1 refers to a new, first-time submission, Type 3 is a non-competing continuation progressing into the next year of funding. Type 4 is supplemental funding, and Type 5 is a non-competing administrative extension. Therefore, a Type 2 application is specifically a competing renewal of an award.
- 20. A For NIH grant numbers, the prefix (first digit) indicates the type of application/award.

21. C The NIH grant number “2UL1GM118973-06” shows that the “2” indicates a competing renewal, and the “06” indicates the award is in year 6 of the current project period. Since competing renewals generally occur at the end of the original project period, and the standard NIH project period is five years, the first phase of this award most likely had five years.
22. B Assistance Listings Number (ALN) replaced the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number as the government-wide identifier for federal financial assistance programs.
23. B The Assistance Listings Number (ALN) is the government-wide identifier for federal financial assistance programs and replaced the older Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number. The ALN has a standard format of two digits, a period, and three digits (XX.XXX). The first two digits represent the major federal agency that provides the funding, while the three digits after the period identify the specific program within that agency. This system provides a consistent way to track and reference all federal assistance programs across agencies.
24. A
25. D
26. C The Assistance Listings Number (ALN) is used to identify federal financial assistance programs such as grants and cooperative agreements, but it is not used for fixed-price federal contracts.
27. A 47 denotes NSF.
28. B 93 denotes DHHS.
29. A ALN is used during Single Audit for lumping awards into programs or a cluster of programs. It also helps the government to know what programs have received the most funds.
30. C Missing an ALN in the SEFA (Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards) may be an audit finding because it is required to properly identify federal assistance programs.

31. A According to the Uniform Guidance §200.202, a federal agency must create an Assistance Listing before it can announce a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). The ALN (formerly known as the CFDA number) is created as part of the initial program planning and design phase.
32. C If DHHS has not issued an ALN at the time of award due to exigent circumstances, the recipient institution can assign a temporary ALN (e.g., 93.999) and later replace it with the final number.
33. D The period of performance refers to the total time during which the project work is expected to be carried out, regardless of the timing or availability of funding. In this case, the project is expected to run from April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2027, which is 5 years.
34. B The first budget period is the initial segment of funding committed in the notice of award. Here, the agency committed funds from April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2024, which is 2 years.
35. A
36. A Funds are not increased (no extra cost) but the project period is increased by one year. Hence, this is a no-cost extension.
37. B When a grant renewal is issued, a new budget will be added, but the total budget is not necessarily twice as much as the previous budget. Therefore, A and C are incorrect. While the period of performance will be added, it will not necessarily be doubled. Therefore, D is incorrect as well. In grant renewals, when a new phase is added, the goals of the new phase may be different. Hence, B is correct.
38. C Pre-award costs are allowable only with written approval in the notice of award and must be expended within 90 days prior to the project start date. The correct answer is C.
39. C
40. A Moving remaining funds from a budget period to the next budget period within the original project period is called carry-over of funds.

41. B      “Offset” means that the total budget will decrease. This happens under different circumstances, for example, when the project has spent only a small portion of the budgeted funds, and the agency determines that not all of the funds are needed. The new year budget does not change, but some of the budget for previous years is rescinded.
42. D      With full carry-over, the money that was not spent in the budget period prior will be moved to the next year. Hence, the new year's budget will increase. But the total budget does not change, because it was only transferred from one year to another.
43. B      Carry-over of funds may be automatic, or it may require permission from the agency. It may depend on the type of award.
44. D      R01, R03, R21, R15, and most other NIH R-series grants have automatic carry-over. NIH U series (e.g., U54), P series (e.g., P50), and T series (e.g., T32) often require prior approval for carry-over.
45. B      The “Amount of this Action” on a notice of award (NoA) represents the specific funds that the federal agency is committing for that budget period. In this example, University X applied for a three-year award with requested funding of \$200,000, \$300,000, and \$300,000 for Years 1, 2, and 3, respectively. Notices of award are issued annually, and the agency obligates funds for each year separately. Therefore, the Year 1 NoA will reflect only the amount obligated for Year 1, which is \$200,000.
46. A      In a revised Notice of Award (NoA) issued to correct a misspelled name, the “Amount of this Action” will be zero. The amount of \$200,000 was already obligated by the previous NoA, and this one does not add any money; it simply corrects a name. This is an administrative amendment.
47. B      The difference between \$200K and \$150K.
48. C      The amount of this action will be \$300K, because that is the amount that is added.
49. C      \$300K from the new action, plus \$50K of carry over from the previous year.

50. C      \$200K from the first action, plus \$300K from the second action. Please note that of the \$500K, \$150K was spent in Year 1, and \$350K is available for Year 2.
51. C      Overall, \$500K was obligated by the agency. Of that, \$350K was spent in Year 1 (\$150K) and Year 2 (\$200K). Therefore,  $500K - 350K = 150K$  remains.
52. B      In this case, the agency felt that the university was not spending the funds, and it has to rescind the money. The Year 3 budget will still be \$300K (as planned). Of that, \$150K will be from previously unspent funds and \$150K from a new action. Please note that in this case, the total budget over 3 years is now \$650K ( $200K + 300K + 150K$ ). This is \$150K less than the initial budget of \$800K. Offset happened in the amount of \$150K because the university was not spending.
53. C      See the explanation for the previous question.
54. A      This is a no-cost extension. Therefore, no new money is obligated by the action.
55. D      Publication costs are one of the very few costs that are allowable after the project period ends, but before the final financial report is submitted. That is because publications often happen after the project ends.
56. B
57. D      A, B, and C may be needed for starting the work. But publication costs are unlikely to be allocable to the project, when the project has not started yet.
58. D      This is an NIH award, which is a subset of DHHS. All DHHS awards have an ALN of 93.XXX. The other ones are 20 (Department of Transportation), 47 (NSF), and 81 (Department of Energy).
59. A      NSF has its Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG). NIH has its Grants Policy Statement (GPS). The Department of Education has its ED General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), and NASA has its Grant and Cooperative Agreement Manual (GCAM).



60. D The first three are agencies within DHHS. Therefore, all of their awards have an ALN that starts with 93. AFOSR (Air Force Office of Scientific Research) is within DoD.

# Appendix I: Example Notice of Award



**Department of Health and Human Services**  
National Institutes of Health  
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF GENERAL MEDICAL SCIENCES

**Notice of Award**  
FAIN# RL5GM118972  
**Federal Award Date**  
06/23/2022

Recipient Information	Federal Award Information																								
<b>1. Recipient Name</b> MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY 1700 E COLD SPRING LN  BALTIMORE, 21251  <b>2. Congressional District of Recipient</b> 07  <b>3. Payment System Identifier (ID)</b> 1526002033B8  <b>4. Employer Identification Number (EIN)</b> 526002033  <b>5. Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS)</b> 879941318  <b>6. Recipient's Unique Entity Identifier</b> KULSKCCZJT27  <b>7. Project Director or Principal Investigator</b> Payam Sheikhattari, MD (Contact)  payam.sheikhattari@morgan.edu 443 885 3639  <b>8. Authorized Official</b> Timothy Akers timothy.akers@morgan.edu 443-885-3798	<b>11. Award Number</b> 5RL5GM118972-09  <b>12. Unique Federal Award Identification Number (FAIN)</b> RL5GM118972  <b>13. Statutory Authority</b> 42 USC 241 42 CFR 52  <b>14. Federal Award Project Title</b> ASCEND Training Model to Increase Diversity in the Biomedical Research Workforce  <b>15. Assistance Listing Number</b> 93.310  <b>16. Assistance Listing Program Title</b> Trans-NIH Research Support  <b>17. Award Action Type</b> Non-Competing Continuation  <b>18. Is the Award R&amp;D?</b> Yes																								
<b>Federal Agency Information</b> <b>9. Awarding Agency Contact Information</b> Susan F. South  NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF GENERAL MEDICAL SCIENCES southsf@mail.nih.gov	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Summary Federal Award Financial Information</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td colspan="2"><b>19. Budget Period Start Date 07/01/2022 – End Date 06/30/2023</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>20. Total Amount of Federal Funds Obligated by this Action</b></td> <td>\$599,091</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20 a. Direct Cost Amount</td> <td>\$578,051</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20 b. Indirect Cost Amount</td> <td>\$21,040</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>21. Authorized Carryover</b></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>22. Offset</b></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>23. Total Amount of Federal Funds Obligated this budget period</b></td> <td>\$599,091</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>24. Total Approved Cost Sharing or Matching, where applicable</b></td> <td>\$0</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>25. Total Federal and Non-Federal Approved this Budget Period</b></td> <td>\$599,091</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"><b>26. Project Period Start Date 09/26/2014 – End Date 06/30/2024</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>27. Total Amount of the Federal Award including Approved Cost Sharing or Matching this Project Period</b></td> <td>\$3,616,378</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Summary Federal Award Financial Information		<b>19. Budget Period Start Date 07/01/2022 – End Date 06/30/2023</b>		<b>20. Total Amount of Federal Funds Obligated by this Action</b>	\$599,091	20 a. Direct Cost Amount	\$578,051	20 b. Indirect Cost Amount	\$21,040	<b>21. Authorized Carryover</b>		<b>22. Offset</b>		<b>23. Total Amount of Federal Funds Obligated this budget period</b>	\$599,091	<b>24. Total Approved Cost Sharing or Matching, where applicable</b>	\$0	<b>25. Total Federal and Non-Federal Approved this Budget Period</b>	\$599,091	<b>26. Project Period Start Date 09/26/2014 – End Date 06/30/2024</b>		<b>27. Total Amount of the Federal Award including Approved Cost Sharing or Matching this Project Period</b>	\$3,616,378
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## Appendix II – ALN List of Federal Agency Two-Digit Prefix Numbers

Prefix	Agency	Prefix	Agency
01*	U.S. African Development Foundation (USADF)	47	National Science Foundation
04*	Inter-American Foundation	57	Railroad Retirement Board
07*	Office of National Drug Control Policy	58	Securities and Exchange Commission
08*	Peace Corps	59	Small Business Administration
09*	Legal Services Corporation	60*	Smithsonian Institution
10	U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)	61*	International Trade Commission
11	U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC)	62*	Tennessee Valley Authority
12	U.S. Department of Defense (DOD)	64	Department of Veterans Affairs
13*	Central Intelligence Agency	66	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
14	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)	68	National Gallery of Art

<b>Prefix</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Prefix</b>	<b>Agency</b>
15	U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI)	70	Overseas Private Investment Corporation
16	U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)	77	Nuclear Regulatory Commission
17	U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)	78	Commodity Futures Trading Commission
18*	Federal Reserve System	81	U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)
19	U.S. Department of State (DOS)	84	U.S. Department of Education (ED)
20	U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)	85	Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation
21	U.S. Department of the Treasury (TREAS)	86	Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation
23	Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)	87	Consumer Product Safety Commission
27	Office of Personnel Management	88	Architectural & Transportation Barriers Compliance Board
29	U.S. Commission on Civil Rights	89	National Archives & Records Administration
30	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission	90	Delta Regional Authority

Prefix	Agency	Prefix	Agency
31	Export – Import Bank of the United States	90	Denali Commission
32	Federal Communications Commission	90	Election Assistance Commission
33	Federal Maritime Commission	90	Japan–U.S. Friendship Commission
34	Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service	91	United States Institute of Peace
36	Federal Trade Commission	92	National Council on Disability
38	Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council	93	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
39	General Services Administration	94	Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)
40	Government Printing Office	95	Executive Office of the President
42	Library of Congress	96	Social Security Administration (SSA)
43	National Aeronautics & Space Administration	97	U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
44	National Credit Union Administration	98	U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

Prefix	Agency	Prefix	Agency
45	National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)	99*	Miscellaneous
46	National Labor Relations Board		
<i>* These prefixes are for reporting purposes only.</i>			

Verify federal agency two-digit prefix numbers by performing a federal program or federal agency search located on the [Single Audit Resource Center](#) website.