



Downstate Health Sciences University  
Office of Research Administration

**The Research Foundation for SUNY**  
Policy and Procedure

Subject: **Salary Suspense**

Effective Date: December 1, 2022

Issued By: The Office of Research Administration (ORA)

Responsible Parties:

- DRA – Department Research Administrator
- Department Administrator
- SPA – Sponsored Programs Administrator
- GM- Grant Managers
- PI – Principal Investigators
- HR – Human Resources
- RFCO – Research Foundation Central Office

Background:

A payroll suspense award is an award that holds charges that could not be posted to the appropriate project/task/award, typically because there is a labor distribution end date, or a new award number is setup as required by the award mechanism and paperwork is not on file to transfer personnel costs. When an award terms or changes, those corresponding salary & fringe charges for RF employees end up on the suspense report.

Policy:

All RF personnel working on sponsored awards and non-sponsored awards must be charged to that award. It is the responsibility of the PI to find alternate funding sources prior to a project period end date to ensure continuity of an RF employees' salary and fringe costs.

General Responsibilities

*PIs:* Must ensure that salary and fringe proposed on an award are charged to the appropriate award. At the beginning of the budget period, PIs are responsible to ensure that all requisite forms are submitted to HR timely (IFRs and Employee Change forms). When there is no funding for an employee, it is the PIs responsibility to find an alternative funding source or terminate the employment.

**GMs:** Must review all awards quarterly for allowability and allocability of expenses charged. This includes personnel costs (RF and State IFR employees). Upon review of the award, Grant Managers will reach out to PIs when salaries and fringe charges are absent. When applicable, Grant Managers will communicate with the Pre-Award team for the status of awards to determine next steps (at-risk or PSA), where applicable.

**Preventing Suspense:** 120 days prior to project period end date

A Grant Manager will review each award and communicate with the PI and Department Administrator if an impending change to the award will affect the payroll of any existing RF and/or State personnel. This communication will occur 120 days (3<sup>rd</sup> quarter) of every award. The PI will be asked to provide an alternate source of funding to support their personnel currently allocated to the project.

A change could be:

- Budget period end date and new award notice not yet received;
- Current award ended (project period) or will end shortly;
- Incremental funding has not been received;
- Carryover has not been received or approved (including subawards);
- No-Cost Extension (NCE) is pending approval

It is the PIs responsibility to identify alternate funding sources for their personnel:

- Newly awarded grant/contract
- Multiple-Sponsor award
- Any other non-sponsored award

If the PI or administrator has identified an alternate funding source to support the identified RF personnel, Grant Managers are to request an Employee Change form with the start date of the new award to avoid suspense.

**Unresponsive Circumstances:**

If the PI has not responded with an alternate funding source, the GM will again reach out to the PI at the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter prior to project period end, this time notifying Human Resources, the Director of Sponsored Programs Administration and the Executive Director of ORA. Shortly thereafter, HR will send the PI and Department Administrator forms to proceed with termination of the RF employee. If HR doesn't receive a response within 10 days, they will notify the Director of Sponsored Programs Administration and the Executive Director of ORA, who will proceed to reach out again and also notify the Department Chair and school/college Dean. If there is no response or an alternate funding source identified (approximately 55 days before the project period end date), notice will be sent to the Senior Vice President for Research.

**Process to clear suspense (rare instances)**

- 1) Grant Managers will notify PI and Department Administrators when personnel are on suspense (no longer being charged to an award)
- 2) Above steps for identifying funding and submitting new Employee Change forms are required to clear the suspense