Financial Management of Your 2020/2021 STARTALK Grant

Below you will find practical guidance on the management of your STARTALK grant. This information will help you to manage the financial requirements of your award from the National Security Agency.

1) Questions about your award and budget: Contact the STARTALK Program Management Office at STARTALKgrants@nsa.gov. When contacting them be sure to identify yourself by your grant number (this number can be found on your grant documents). (NOTE: Please make sure you contact your Grant Administration Office to obtain a copy of your grant if they have not provided a copy.)

NOTE: You are required to register with the System for Award Management (SAM) Registry and the NSA Acquisition Resource Center ARC (see Paragraphs 2, and 3, below) in order to receive and maintain your grant.

2) Importance of System for Award Management (SAM) listing information: SAM is the federal government owned and operated website that consolidates the capabilities in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR)/Federal Agency Registration (Fed Reg) and other various systems that support the federal procurement and award processes. For information on how to review/update your Listing (DUNS Number and CAGE Code) in SAM, please contact the Federal Service Desk toll free by phone at 866-606-8220 or via the web at http://www.FSD.gov. Please ensure that your address, title, and direct deposit information (bank routing and account number) are correct before you submit your proposal. Incorrect or outdated information can cause a delay in award of a grant and a delay in payment of invoices. The SAM information should be updated annually and is the responsibility of the organization submitting a proposal.

3) Acquisition Resource Center (ARC): All companies/organizations wishing to do business with the NSA must be registered in the Acquisition Resource Center (ARC). To begin the registration process, or for additional information, please visit https://www.nsa.gov/business/acquisition-resource-center/. If you have questions, please contact ARC customer service at (866)91-GOARC, (866)914-6272.

4) Budget modification: Prior to making any budget modifications you must first get the approval of the NSA STARTALK Program Management Office. Budget modification requests should be sent via e-mail to STARTALKgrants@nsa.gov. (Be sure to include your grant number in your request.)

    a. When individuals e-mail the NSA office with questions about budget changes, the STARTALK Program Office reviews the request against the original budget to see how funds are being internally adjusted. You will then receive an email approving the change with the following words: “Please keep in mind that any proposed changes must stay
within your original budget proposal and that any changes made cannot adversely affect the intent of your original grant proposal.”

b. Once any proposed changes are approved, you will be required to submit a revised budget spreadsheet (to include revisions). This budget spreadsheet will be kept in the NSA STARTALK Program Office and will become the baseline budget for future proposed changes.

NOTE: Please do not contact the invoice addressee on your grant (ONR or contracts – accounts payable) for budget modification issues. Contacting these offices may cause your grant to require a modification that can delay payment of your invoice(s).

5) Importance of identification of the principal investigator (PI): Please ensure that you correctly identify the principal investigator for your grant. That individual is responsible for the administration of your grant and must be available to do so. If the principal investigator will not be able to devote substantial time to the administration of the grant, the performing organization must inform the contracting officer (CO) or NSA Grant Officer. (NOTE: See Sections 3, 4, and 5 of attachment 3 to each grant, titled EXHIBIT A FEBRUARY 2017 NSA AGENCY SPECIFIC TERMS AND CONDITIONS)

SUBMITTING INVOICES

2020 ELECTRONIC INVOICING GUIDANCE

The Maryland Procurement Office (MPO) requires that all STARTALK Grant invoices be submitted electronically using the MPO Website.

Access to the MPO Website requires an External Certificate Authority/Interim External Certificate Authority (ECA/IECA) PKI Certificate. Information on purchasing an ECA/IECA Certificate, including its initial and annual cost, is available on the internet at the following websites:

ORC at https://eca.orc.com/, or

The certificate must be a Medium Assurance Certificate. The grantee shall contact the Electronic Commerce Office at (410) 854-5445 if they need additional information. After obtaining the ECA/IECA certificate, the grantee must contact the Electronic Commerce Office to obtain an account if one does not currently exist.

Steps for Obtaining a PKI and Instructions for Invoicing Electronically:
• Obtain an ECA Medium Assurance Certificate through either ORC or Identrust. The certificate comes in three forms either software (browser based), token (preloaded USB device), or hardware (CAC card loaded). It is the grant awardee’s preference what form of the ECA certificate that is chosen. The cost ranges from $100 - $300 ($100 per year). This process normally takes one to one and a half weeks to receive the certificate.

• Once the certificate is received, contact the MPO Help Desk to request an account. Contact can be via email at dialogue@ec.ncsc.mil or phone at (410) 854-5445. It takes about 20-25 minutes to create the account.

• You will receive a welcome email entitled Welcome to the MPO Website that includes the user ID, password, and instructions on getting started.

• The MPO Help Desk can provide any detailed support needed for access and submission of electronic invoices through MPO.

The costs of the PKI and any associated costs may be allowed as a direct or indirect cost under the grant award.

The SF270 along with a one-page itemized statement, by budget category, for the expenditures that are covered by the invoice period are required attachments to the electronic invoice. Attachments shall be legible, quality, un-skewed images. Invoices shall not contain smudges, markings, shading, writing, stamps, annotation, coffee rings, highlighted data, circling, or redacted data. Form SF270 can be found at the following url:

https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/post-award-reporting-forms.html

NOTE: all information (grant number, invoice number, period covered, amount, CLIN, SLIN, ACRN, etc.) included on the electronic invoice, the SF270, and the one-page expenditure statement must match exactly to avoid rejection of the invoice.

Any questions the grantee has regarding payment status shall be directed via email to the NSA Finance and Accounting Office at operationpayment@nsa.gov, or the STARTALK Program Office at STARTALKgrants@nsa.gov.

Some frequently asked questions:

When can I submit invoices?
You may submit invoices to the MPO Website at any time during your grant period and up to sixty days after the end date of your grant. It is suggested that you invoice as costs are incurred (monthly or quarterly for example). To avoid rejection of your invoice, the period covered by the invoice must have passed before the invoice is submitted for payment.

NOTE: Sixty (60) days after the grant period of performance ends, the NSA Finance Office will review grants in order to remove any remaining balance. Therefore, all invoices MUST be submitted no later than 60 days after the period of performance ends.

I don’t have the funds to pay for all of my program’s needs up front. What can I do?
You may initially invoice for half of the grant amount then incrementally invoice as expenses occur. Keep in mind that if you do not spend all of your funds, you will need to reimburse the federal government for any unspent balance. (NOTE: If you do not spend all of the funds you have received by the end of the grant period, you must initiate a check made out to the US Treasury and forward the check, with an explanation, to the NSA Accounts Payable Office. Please send an email to STARTALKgrants@nsa.gov to obtain procedures for returning the check. In addition, please forward a copy of the check and explanation to STARTALKgrants@nsa.gov. If your grant directs you to submit your invoice to ONR via the MPO Website, please forward a copy of the check and explanation to ONR (the address for which can be found on page 3 of your grant).

How to close your program:
When your grant program has concluded or no longer than ninety days after the end of the period of performance stated on your grant document, you will be required to submit a Form SF425. The purpose of the SF425 is to inform us that your program has concluded and the status of any funds that were not obligated. You will complete Sections 1 through 9 at the top of the form and are self-explanatory. In Section 10, Federal Expenditures and Unobligated Balance, complete d., e., g., and h. Only complete Section 11, Indirect Expenses, if it applies to your organization. Submit the SF425 to STARTALKgrants@nsa.gov and ONR (if stated on page 3 of your grant). (NOTE: the SF425 does not replace the SF270 for payment of the final invoice.)

Form SF425 can be found at the following url:
https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/post-award-reporting-forms.html

You will also be required to submit a Tangible Personal Property Report (SF-428) at time of grant award and a Tangible Personal Property Report Final Report SF-428-B, 90 days after the end of the grant period of performance, to close out your grant. The forms can be found at:
https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/post-award-reporting-forms.html
NOTE: The threshold for reporting property is $5000 per item. However, if there is no property with a value of $5000 or over per item, the forms must be completed stating no property was acquired by this program.

Performance/Final Report

Clarification of the Final Technical Report stated on Attachment #4 of the STARTALK Grant Document: The Summer Program Report and the Post Program Activities Report (if required) submitted to STARTALK Central, at the end of your STARTALK program, are the only Final Technical Reports required for STARTALK Grants. The Summer Program Report and the Post Program Activities Report are submitted to the government for each STARTALK grant by STARTALK Central each year. However, if you are required to submit invoices via the MPO Website to a specific Office of Naval Research (ONR) Office per the guidance in your grant documentation, they may require a copy of the Summer Program Report and the Post Activities Report to close out your grant.

Here is a recap of the contacts for award, budget, and invoice payment status:

Award and budget: STARTALKgrants@nsa.gov
Budget modification: STARTALKgrants@nsa.gov
Invoice payment status: operationpayment@nsa.gov