

**COVID-19 - FOREST SERVICE - GRANTS, COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS AND
PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS Q&A WORKSHEET (4/13/2020)**

Questions and Answers (Q&As) you can use to share with your partners/recipients:

Q: The conference my group was scheduled to attend has been cancelled. Can our costs be reimbursed?

A: Yes, if your organizations travel policy:

1. Permits the purchase of nonrefundable travel, and
2. Does not require reimbursing the cooperator for change or cancellation fees.

Q: My organization told all employees to work from home. May I request an extension to a deadline?

A: Working from home—while it may introduce some complications—should not make it impossible to complete work or meet deadlines. If closure or remote access orders by your organization has occurred within a week of the deadline, please contact the FS Program Manager.

Where work is dependent on access to a physical location such as a FS facility (lab, office, trail system, etc.) that has been closed, the cooperator should immediately contact their FS Program Manager to discuss revisions to project timelines and periods of performance. A modification should be processed by G&A to ensure the record is updated with all newly negotiated terms of the agreement.

Q: My project worksite has been closed. How do I request a project extension?

A: Please contact your FS Program Manager and include a copy of the closure order or other official notification.

Q: My leadership who customarily signs all agreement/award actions, has been quarantined. What should I do?

A: Please work with your administrative office to determine how your organization is handling the situation. If your organization has established delegations of authority or if your Signatory is capable of electronic signatures, there should be no impact on your ability to submit an agreement or award documentation. However, if submitting a final signed agreement/award is impossible, please contact your Program Manager.

Q: Our project manager was quarantined after visiting family overseas. Our project has fallen behind schedule. Will this delay impact our continuation funding?

A: Please explain the situation—without disclosing protected personally identifiable information—in your progress report. Local G&A specialists may need to modify an award or agreement to be a prudent steward of taxpayer funds by delaying access to further funding ahead of the completion of work, but the Forest Service's interest is in seeing the project results—even if it takes longer than originally expected.

Q: What information should I include in a request for an extension to period of performance?

A: Please include official confirmation of the closure, quarantine, or other incident that makes a timely completion of project deliverables impossible. Requests to extend a project's period of performance must be made before the deadline. Requests for extensions will be reviewed on a case by case basis by G&A and FS Program Staff and the cooperator will be notified with the decision.

Q: May I submit a letter of intent, preproposal, proposal, or progress report before its deadline?

A: The Forest Service always encourages prompt and timely submissions. Progress reports may not be submitted more than one month before they are due.

Q: Our project will be delayed due to government office, facility or land based closure and telework guidance for Federal employees. The cooperator is unable to begin work as planned under their executed agreement. Can the cooperator submit invoices for projected work during these FS closures and perform the work once facilities reopen?

A: There is no current authorization for payment of projected work or for work not performed. Cooperators should only bill based on actual work accomplished. However, program staff should review the agreed upon scope of work and discuss opportunities with their cooperator to perform components of the project from a virtual location. Any approved activities that are performed during these closures can be billed for by the cooperator. Documentation of any accommodations for virtual work should be documented to the agreement record. The program manager should not approve invoices for work that has not taken place as this could create a future repayment scenario for the cooperator and/or payment approver for being a false claim.

Q: Can a cooperator request an advance payment to cover their bills while waiting for government facilities to reopen?

A: The cooperator must have the ability to perform work in accordance with their scope of work if requesting an advance payment. Advanced payments cannot be made only for the sake of covering operational costs of the cooperator not associated with the agreed upon project.