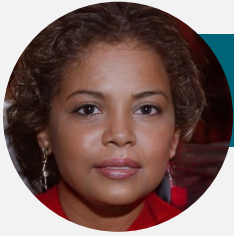


Research Administrator

Irene Bell

bit.ly/Persona-download



“Knowing that my work helps fund groundbreaking research projects is very important to me.”

Bio

Irene majored in business administration in college, and while in school became interested in medical research. In research administration, she has found a fulfilling career with a frequently challenging workload. Irene handles pre-award administration for grants, contracts, and subcontracts - all while carefully following institutional requirements and administrative procedures. Irene works as a bridge between the sponsor, her PIs, and the sponsored research office, resolving any issues around the solicitation. Her responsibilities include finance and compliance, and range from managing cost-sharing and administrative costs on proposals to reviewing grants for accuracy, providing grants trainings to investigators, vetting grant packets for completeness, and coordinating IRB protocols. She provides budget reports to management and mentors other research administrators. Recently Irene has taken on post-award duties including monitoring grant expenditures and time and effort reports, preparing interim and final budget reports, assisting with internal audits, preparing financial projections, and managing grant files and workflows.

Education: BA, Business Administration

Years of experience: 10

Work location: University offices, but can work remotely

Goals

- To overcome generational, cultural, and personality differences in building relationships with faculty
- To navigate newer funding types like crowdfunding
- Continuous process improvement
- Research administrator certification
- To delegate more tasks to avoid burnout



Software attitude & use

- Connectivity and current information is vital to Irene's work. Slow Internet connections greatly impede her progress
- Would like to increase her skills in Excel for financial processing
- Web portals: institutional time reporting, payroll, financial, and sponsored project financial management systems, InfoEd, Cognos (an online financial controller), Grants.gov, eRA Commons, NIH RePORTER
- Data and visualization: Tableau
- Collaboration: Box, Trello, and conferencing software programs
- General: MS Office and Google Suites

Scholarly Outputs



- Contributions to grant submissions, including review, verification, and written content

Pain Points

- Rules and regulations affecting the pre-award phase constantly change, making it hard to keep up
- Time and effort for contract budget negotiations
- Ever-increasing number of trials delays activation time

Motivators

Working toward improved work/life balance in a role where questions must be answered almost 24/7

To ultimately improve patient care by supporting the work of clinical trials

To help activate and manage as many trials as possible

To advance to lead or supervisory RA

Wants/Needs

- Effective face-to-face communication with investigators and sponsors when working on contracts and budgets
- A CTSA-supported research administrator network for sharing information and best practices
- An ideal communication mechanism to convey updates in the field of research administration to RAs
- Cross-institutional “standard contracts” or “previously negotiated terms” to speed budget negotiation

Professional Development

Department supports travel to conferences, workshops, and training sessions related to her job

Irene receives new information from NIH listservs, NCURA, a university-run support group for research administrators, and from knowledgeable colleagues

Irene would like to take her growing financial management skills even further, and is interested in mathematical and statistical courses