

**B4b: Additional Reasons for Implementing Modular Grants**

(28.4% said yes, there were additional reasons for implementing modular grants)

Main Themes:

- Reduce time spent in study section meetings; focus reviewers on scientific content
- Reduce PI burden and the burden on the PI's institution

**E2b: Raise Modular Grant Limit Beyond \$250K**

(Of those that had a preference, 31.1% said they would prefer the limit to be higher than \$250,000)

Main Themes:

- Cost of research has increased and the limit should be raised to reflect this increase
- Limit should be raised so that certain types of grants (e.g., those involving human subjects, animals, large pieces of equipment, and multi-site) can take advantage of the modular grant format

Additional Comments:

- A limit of \$300,000 would be more appropriate

**E2c: Keep Modular Grant Limit at \$250K**

(Of those that had a preference, 68.9% said they would prefer that the limit not be higher than \$250,000)

Main Themes:

- The current limit is reasonable and sufficient for most grants; PIs can use a non-modular application if funding requests are greater than \$250,000
- Budgets are already inflated; PIs currently ask for the maximum amount and raising the limit will encourage PIs to ask for even more
- Providing budget justification for high cost awards is important; would feel uncomfortable dealing with high cost awards that had no budget details
- NIH/the government has a fiscal responsibility to monitor costs greater than \$250,000; an increase in the modular grant limit would not allow for proper stewardship

Additional Comments:

- Eliminate modular grants; dislike the concept of modular grants; certainly don't want the limit raised
- Preparing a detailed budget forces PIs to think more carefully about the realistic amount of funding needed

## Program and Grants Management Staff Comments

### **E3: Reasons for Liking Modular Grants**

(53.8% of Program and Grants Management staff made a comment when asked about the aspects of the modular grant application process they like)

Main Themes:

- Saves time and reduces burden (simplifies the process) for both the PI (saves time with grant preparation) and the NIH staff (less paperwork, easier and faster to process a grant for an award, don't have to complete cost analysis, etc.)
- Lack of detailed budget focuses the review process on the scientific content rather than budgetary issues; reviewers do not get bogged down in budget discussions and study section meeting times are reduced

### **E4: Reasons for Disliking Modular Grants**

(59.1% of Program and Grants Management staff made a comment when asked about the aspects of the modular grant application process they did not like)

Main Themes:

- Makes it difficult for reviewers and NIH staff to determine if funds are appropriate for the project.
- Lack of detailed budget prevents NIH staff from doing their job properly (oversight is lost because how the funds are used is unknown)
- It's difficult to make and justify budget reductions
- PIs inflate their budgets
- Excludes Other Support information which means NIH staff cannot assess overlap
- PIs, NIH staff, and reviewers still have problems with the process and find it confusing
- Cannot be sure if F&A costs are calculated correctly

Additional Comments:

- Almost all PIs have to submit a detailed budget to their own institution and thus do not receive any real benefit from modular grants
- Having to cut grants in increments of \$25,000 is not always appropriate
- Inconsistency among study sections regarding whether or not the budgets are reviewed and cuts are recommended

### **F8: Reasons for Liking Just-In-Time**

(53.4% of Program and Grants Management staff made comments about Just-in-Time procedures they like)

Main Themes:

- The information submitted by the PI is up to date
- Eases administrative burden for the PIs (saves them time when preparing an application)
- Less paperwork for NIH staff and reviewers to deal with
- Makes sense not to have to get IRB/IACUC approval for grants that aren't going to be funded

## Program and Grants Management Staff Comments

### Additional Comments:

- Just-in-Time is a good process only when the PIs properly follow instructions
- Like the administrative aspects of JIT, such as the automated notification to PIs that they must submit their materials, and the fact that the grantees can use the NIH Commons to submit information

### **F9: Reasons for Disliking Just-In-Time**

(59.9% of Program and Grants Management staff made comments about Just-in-Time procedures they do not like)

### Main Themes:

- Automated reminder is sent to PIs too early; if PIs turn in JIT materials too early in the process they often need to provide updated information later
- Automated reminder is sent to too high a percentage of grant applicants
- PIs often think their application has been approved for funding when notified they should submit JIT materials; they (PIs) get their hopes up only to be very disappointed later
- NIH staff have to follow-up with the PI to track down missing or incomplete JIT information which creates more work for the staff
- JIT often causes delays in making awards; this is especially true when the submitted information is incomplete or when getting approvals takes a long time and PIs do not start the process until they receive a request for JIT materials
- Creates an atmosphere of “rushing at the last minute”/“mad scramble” for PIs and their institutions; don’t like pushing and pressuring PIs
- There are some problems with how JIT info is requested and submitted; sometimes more than one NIH staff member will contact the PI for the required info, making NIH look disorganized

### Additional Comments:

- Grant Management Specialist should be the single point of contact for the PI
- There are problems with tracking the information internally once it is received