

ESSENTIAL NEWS FOR RF EMPLOYEES / RESEARCHERS



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AUDIT – Required, Business Purpose Documentation

Federal auditors have recently increased their focus on compliance and efficiency of operations at institutions of higher education. As a result, auditors are more frequently reviewing 1) compliance with the OMB Uniform Guidance regulations, agency policies, and institution policy and procedures; and 2) identifying cost recovery opportunities for unallowable award costs. They have identified the following red flags:

- Costs incurred prior to or after the start and end dates of the award
- High spending patterns in the last couple months of the award
- Excessive salary charges
- Cost Transfers without sufficient supporting documentation
- Expenditures for administrative or clerical salaries or supplies, subcontracts or consultants, travel (especially foreign), and equipment
 - Insufficient documentation provided to support the business purpose of the expense (i.e. shipping expenses with no detail as to what is being shipped and to whom so no direct relationship to the project can be identified).

Sponsored Program Operations staff will be reviewing all expense documentation and justifications carefully and working closely with PI's to eliminate any potential audit findings.

Award Closeout

The Buffalo State Sponsored Program Operations default deadline date to submit all closeout reports and expenses on awards **will be 60 days past the end date of the award** to allow for processing of all expenditures, and the submission of all financial and programmatic reports within the 90 day required sponsor closeout period. Federal sponsors no longer issue payments after 90 days past the closeout. If you feel additional time may be needed to complete any closeout activities or reports contact [Jessica Berg](#) or [Lisa Gatti](#) for an extension of the due date.

Failure to submit timely reports could jeopardize future funding to the campus.

The awarding agencies may approve no-cost extensions for the project when requested in advance by the Buffalo State Pre-award office, contact [Carol Darstein](#).

Report Center One to One Training

In May 2014, new RF reporting tools became available that enable Principal Investigators and administrators to better monitor financial information and transactions related to their sponsored program award(s). A new portlet under the "Tracking Purchases" tab titled "Vendor Payment Inquiry" has been implemented to assist in finding payment/check information more easily. SPO staff are available to provide training to PI's and administrators in learning to navigate the system. Group sessions may also be arranged. Contact [Lisa Gatti](#) for additional information.

Important News for RF Employees and Researchers cont'd

Annual Benefits Open Enrollment

Benefits Open Enrollment is scheduled for **November 1- November 30, 2015** for Research Foundation employees. Enrollment will be an online process again this year and detailed information regarding the process will be mailed to each employee's home address. On October 20, 2015, an Open Enrollment and Benefits Update via a streaming webinar is scheduled, click [here](#) for details. Please review this important information to make any benefit changes before the **November 30th** deadline.

TIAA/CREF Retirement Planning

The Research Foundation is pleased to announce that effective October 1 to October 30 Research Foundation employees will have the opportunity to participate in an interactive learning tool called [What's Your Financial IQ](#) (WYFIQ). Employees will have the opportunity to take this educational challenge to have fun and learn important information about financial planning. All responses are confidential. Participants will be entered in a drawing for 3 mini I-pads*.

Also on **October 20, 2015** 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (ET) TIAA-CREF will host a webinar for RF SUNY employees. The webinar is called *Halfway There: A retirement checkup*. Employees can register for the webinar [here](#).

RF Offers a Paycheck Alternative and a Chance to Win an Apple Watch or iTunes gift card worth \$350

The Research Foundation offers the **Key Bank Pay Card** as a safe, fast and convenient way to receive your wages.

How it works -The Key Bank Pay Card is a reloadable prepaid debit card. Each payday, your salary is automatically deposited to your personalized pay card. Purchase amounts are deducted from the available balance each time you use the card. This paperless process provides many benefits:

- Enables access your earnings 24/7 at Key Bank branches and ATMs at no charge.
- Allows you to get cash back at MasterCard bank locations with no charge.
- Provides a monthly statement.
- Eliminates delayed, lost or stolen checks.

How to enroll - Participants can electronically fill out a [Pay Card form](#) and send it to payroll@rfsuny.org or contact [Stephanie Gruarin](#), HR/Payroll office in Sponsored Programs.

Effective September 21 until December 18, 2015, any participant who signs up to receive payroll payments through a Key Bank Pay Card will receive a \$15.00 Dunkin Donut's gift card when they have their first Pay Card payment. All new pay card users will also be entered in a raffle to win an Apple Watch* or iTunes gift card worth \$350. The drawing for this special prize will be held on December 18, 2015.*

**Gift Cards, value of the watch and value of the mini I-pad are taxable income.*

Your feedback is welcomed. Please share thoughts/comments at rftcomm@buffalostate.edu