

Major Projects Guidelines

OMB Circular A-21 states that direct charging of administrative salaries “may be appropriate where a major project or activity explicitly budgets for administrative or clerical services and individuals involved can be specifically identified with the project or activity. ‘Major project’ is defined as a project that requires an extensive amount of administrative or clerical support, which is significantly greater than the routine level of such services provided by academic departments. Some examples of major projects are described in Exhibit C.” Exhibit C does not provide exhaustive examples of a major project and this document is designed to provide some additional guidance.

Examples of Major Projects:

- Numerous subcontracts
- Administrative core on a program project
- Conference/instruction grants
- Infrastructure/equipment awards
- Database/data management awards
- NRSA training grants with 5-10 (5% admin salary) trainees or 10+ trainees (10% admin salary)
- Cognitive studies

SPA will make a determination based on the scope of work and information provided by the department to determine whether the award meets the definition of a major project and to verify the amounts charged are reasonable within the scope of work.

SPA will request annual confirmation/justification from the department even if SPA agrees the award meets the definition of a major project.

Other than administrative salary guidelines for NRSA training grants, these examples are not absolutes, but rather general guidelines.

Resources and References:

OMB Circular A-21: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a021/a21_2004.html