

POLICY: TIMELY OBLIGATION OF FUNDS

When Obligations are Made

Obligations are orders placed for property and services, contracts, and sub-awards made, and similar transactions during a given period that require payment by the Agency during the same or a future period.

Funds received under a federal grant shall be considered to be obligated according to the standards provided in 34 C.F.R. § 75.707 or 34 C.F.R. § 76.707, as applicable. The following table illustrates when funds are determined to be obligated under federal regulations:

If the obligation is for:	The obligation is made:
Acquisition of property	On the date on which the Agency makes a binding written commitment to acquire the property
Personal services by an employee of the Agency	When the services are performed
Personal services by a contractor who is not an employee of the Agency	On the date which the Agency makes a binding written commitment to obtain the services
Public utility services	When the Agency receives the services
Travel	When the travel is taken
Rental of property	When the Agency uses the property
A pre-agreement cost that was properly approved by the Secretary under the cost principles in 2 CFR part 200, Subpart E- Cost Principles.	On the first day of the project period.

Period of Performance of Federal Funds

All obligations must occur on or between the beginning and ending dates of the grant project. This period of time is known as the period of performance. The period of performance is dictated by statute and will be indicated in the Grant Adjustment Notice (GAN). Further, certain grants have specific requirements for carryover funds that must be adhered to.

State-Administered Grants: As a general rule, state-administered federal funds are available for obligation within the year that Congress appropriates the funds for. However, given the unique nature of educational institutions, for many federal education grants, the period of availability is 27 months. Federal education grant funds are typically awarded on July 1 of each year. While the Agency will always plan to spend all current grant funds within the year the grant was appropriated for, the period of obligation for any grant that is covered by the “Tydings Amendment” is 27 months, extending from July 1 of the fiscal year for which the funds were appropriated through September 30 of the second following fiscal year. This maximum period includes a 15-month period of initial availability, plus a 12-month period for carryover. For example, funds awarded on July 1, 2015 would remain available for obligation through September 30, 2017.

Direct Grants: In general, the period of availability for funds authorized under direct grants is identified in the GAN.

For both state-administered and direct grants, regardless of the period of availability, the Agency must liquidate all obligations incurred under the award not later than 90 days after the end of the funding period unless an extension is authorized. Any funds not obligated within the period of availability or liquidated within the appropriate timeframe are said to lapse and must be returned to the awarding agency. Consequently, the Agency shall closely monitor grant spending throughout the grant cycle.

Carryover

State-Administered Grants: As described above, the Tydings Amendment extends the period of availability for applicable state-administered program funds. Essentially, it permits recipients to “carry over” any funds left over at the end of the initial 15 month period into the next year. These leftover funds are typically referred to as carryover funds and continue to be available for obligation for an additional 12 months. Accordingly, the Agency may have multiple years of grant funds available under the same program at the same time.

Any carryover in individual federal programs is determined in an annual audit performed each year according to GAAP and State statutes. After carryover amounts are determined, they are reported and administered according to specific federal award requirements as outlined in the individual program applications.

LEGAL REFERENCE:

None

POLICY HISTORY:

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