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Keeping Track of Effort Reporting for Research Compliance

By Nina Youngstrom

A new report from the HHS Office of Inspector General may signal an increase in more timely and efficient pursuit of suspensions and debarments for grant fraud, including research fraud, said attorney Lisa Murtha, with Moses & Singer in New York.^[1] “Research organizations really need to do some retraining of their researchers and administrators who support grants and contracts to ensure they understand the nature of the grant application process and the rules associated with it, and have mechanisms in place to ensure that any information they put on a grant application is true, accurate and complete,” she said. For example, researchers who apply for federal grants (e.g., from the National Institutes of Health) must report on their grant applications how they will spend their time and, after receiving their grants, periodically do time and effort reporting. If the time periods don’t mesh or there is inadequate reporting, researchers and their institutions put themselves at risk of violating Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, Murtha said.^[2] That could potentially lead the government to think there’s research fraud and trigger a suspension or debarment. Below is a chart to help track effort reporting. Contact Murtha at lmurtha@mosessinger.com.

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