Cyberseminar Transcript

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Series: HSR&D Career Development Award Enhancement Initiative

Session: How to Prepare a Budget for an IIR Grant Application

Presenter: Susie Hsieh, PhD

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Moderator: I’d like to introduce today’s speaker, Dr. Susie Hsieh. She’s the Co-Principal Investigator of the Career Development Award Enhancements Initiative and Executive Director of the Center of Innovation to Implementation. Dr. Hsieh, may I turn things over to you?

Dr. Susie Hsieh: Thank you. Is everyone able to see the first slide? I just want to make sure.

Moderator: Yes, we can.

Dr. Susie Hsieh: Okay, perfect. Thank you very much for joining us today. I’d also like to recognize Janet Ekstrom, who is the project manager for the CDA Enhancement Initiative and she is the one who put most of the slides together and she’ll be helping me and I just wanted to tell the audience that we’re actually presenting this live over here at Ci2i also so we have people here. Thank you so much.

So, just a little bit about myself. I came from a university and I’ve done many, many budgets across the years. Mostly NIH but also DOD, PCORI, and quite a few other types of foundation grants and so I was new to the VA, coming in here about four years ago and so a lot of the grants that are federal that are turned in all use a SF424 but there are some particular things about the IIR application and so I’m hoping to touch on some of those differences. Okay.

So, we’re going to start with a poll question. We would like to know what is your primary role in the VA? For those who are on the Cyberseminar can you let us know whether you’re a student, trainee or fellow or Career Development Awardee or an early career investigator. You may also be a mid-career investigator or a senior investigator. Or possibly you’re an administrator, so if you could answer that poll question that would be great.

Moderator: So, I currently have the polls open and we’ve got 79% of the vote, we’ll just give it a few more seconds and I’ll give you the results.

Dr. Susie Hsieh: Thank you so much.

Moderator: I’m going to go ahead and close the poll and I’m going to share the results with you. So we have 9% that are student, trainee or fellow. We have 44% that’s project staff. We have 9% that’s Career Development Awardees. We have 21% that are early, mid, or senior career investigators and 18% is the non-research clinician, administrator, or policymaker. So I’m going to go ahead and hide that and if you’re ready for the next poll question.

Dr. Susie Hsieh: Yes, we have a second poll question. Can you take this poll and tell us what best describes your grant writing experience? This way I can help gear the Cyberseminar towards the people who are specifically on the Cyberseminar.

Moderator: So right now, we have 81% that’s voted. We’ll give it just a few more seconds and we have 88% so I’m going to close the poll and right now it says, and I’m going to go ahead and share the results: 32% never written or assisted with a grant, 8% only written or assisted with a CDA grant or equivalent, we have 34% have written or assisted with a few grants and we have 26% that have written or assisted with five or more grants.

Dr. Susie Hsieh: Okay, wonderful. Thank you. So it seems like most of, probably about 50% are admin staff and research assistants who are helping and quite a few of you have assisted or written a few grants and so I’ll try to gear this Cyberseminar towards those majority.

Okay first of all let’s start with the IIR budget basics. So one of the first things that you really need to do is to check the new guidance documents and updates to existing documents prior to each application. So when Janet started putting these slides together, I think it was in September and then on the 19th she went back and looked up the RFA and the SF424 and there were major changes to the documents. So always check to make sure that there are updates that you are aware of. You need to carefully read the RFA and the budget section and specifically for the winter cycle pages 67-85 of the SF424 tells you about creating the budget and the RFA is really detailed; it includes budget instructions unique specifically to HSR&D grants and it includes instructions to complete the budget narrative, also called a budget justification, and very importantly it has instructions for the Summary Budget Worksheet and the SF424 form which as we will show you later on in the Cyberseminar those things have to be included in the final submission of the budget. So there is a link there for you to review the budget submission process; it’s a step-by-step guide and I won’t click on to this but just letting you know and very importantly you have to draft the budget early and take time to fine tune it and there’s a budget cap, so the total budget cannot exceed 1.2 million and the project duration is limited to four years. This is a little bit different for people who are used to NIH grants which are five, so its limit is four but it could be shorter so it could be three years, it could be three and a half years, you just make the budget specific to your project.

Okay, moving on and so I’m going over just some of the very general things. So there’s a budget cap and the project duration. You can get exceptions but those are rare, and you have to obtain a waiver. You need to do this way before you submit the grant because you have to write an email. Usually my experience has been that the PI will write an email to David Atkins explaining to him why you need an exception for the cap and they have to agree to it and you have to have a detailed justification and narrative or the additional time or the amount that’s over the cap and you have to submit that way in advance. So generally, you can submit this to this email here, which is the VHA email that you email it to. However, you probably should get in touch with your local admin office. So the way we handle it in Ci2i, and it may be different depending on where you are, is we talk to our grants administrator and tell him. So in our case we’ll write him an email and say okay we’ve contacted Dr. Atkins and we’re looking for getting a waiver and he will help you generally, your grants administrator, to draft this waiver and once that’s signed and this has to come usually from your admin office, it goes in by November 15th for the winter cycle and this is usually about a month before the due date for the final grant. If the waiver is granted, a copy of the waiver letter from HSR&D must be included in that section in the appendices for “Letters of Support”. Just note that a waiver does not guarantee that a project would be funded at the requested level, but you have to have that letter if you will be going over that cap.

Okay, and so more general instructions. You cannot ask for any funding for admin support. Meaning, so people who have not written an IIR they’re usually surprised that they cannot put in funding for an administrative assistant. That cannot be included for study personnel. However, you can have consultant services and you can obtain that by a contract or through a letter of agreement. There is a limit of $500 per consultation and there’s a limit of $2,500 per year. Physicians can never be paid as consultants and you do have to take into consideration Cost of Living Adjustments, which right now is a maximum of 2% per year for current VA salaried personnel and that’s for years two, three, and four. I’m telling you this because when we go into sort of the nitty gritty of creating your actual budget, you have to take that into consideration when you’re doing the whole entire budget so that across the four years you don’t exceed the cap and Cost of Living Adjustments are not permitted for IPAs. IPAs are Inter Personnel Agreements and those should be treated like contracts and computers and IT expenditures should not be listed in the budget section.

Moving on. More general instructions specifically regarding IPAs and I can take more questions on IPAs a little bit later but just generally Cost of Living Adjustments are not permitted and the IPA, the total IPA, does not include any kind of indirects; so no overhead costs. It includes salary and fringe benefits only. So see it as a contract and that is one lump sum and you know how you negotiate that with the university or the institution you’re working with can vary depending on how you work out the agreement, but in general no indirects and I know that’s often a touchy subject for many universities. At Stanford, the departments that we have a lot of IPAs with, they understand that but often times when you bring in a new person from a different department who has not done an IPA with the VA they will insist on having some kind of indirect costs added to the IPA and that’s just simply not allowed. They can figure out whatever it is that they need but it should only cover the salary and fringe benefits for that individual who’s covered in the IPA. IPAs cannot be used for physicians or any kind of clinicians and it cannot also be used for any kind of a PI and also very importantly IPAs cannot be more that 30% of the entire budget if you’re at a COIN and if you’re not at a COIN it cannot exceed 40% of the entire budget. So in thinking big picture you have to really think about paying more VA personnel than IPAs. You can’t go into any kind of project and think okay I’m just going to get a whole bunch of people from my university to be doing this project. No, you have that 30% cap generally and so the majority of that salary must go to VA employees. So if you have more questions on that we can answer that later.

Okay so I’m going to start talking about the steps to complete a budget and so I’ve probably done hundreds of budgets across my fifteen or so years of being at the University of California and now at the VA and so one of the first steps you need to do is to come up with, okay so number one, you’re going to need a budget and number two, you’re going to need a budget justification narrative. Okay, so those are the two things you need. To start developing the budget what you have to do is to number one, complete the Summary Budget Worksheet which I’m going to show you a little bit later. However, in order to get to that point you probably need some transitional Excel table to help you to arrive at those numbers for the Summary Budget Worksheet and all of that information from your transitional Excel table goes to that worksheet and then you have to basically transfer everything from your Summary Budget Worksheet into the SF424 Budget Form and then when you have the Summary Budget Worksheet and your narrative it has to be combined into one big PDF which contains that Summary Budget Worksheet and the budget narrative, the budget justification, as one PDF and that is usually the first page of the PDF and then that’s what you upload into the SF424. This is just sort of a general overview. I’ll go into details and I want to say that for many of the VA COINs also just any VMACs you may have a grants administrator who will help and so I’ll be speaking in generalities but there are specific differences between the VAs which I don’t really know about but regardless of how your VA functions you still have to transfer all the information from your Summary Budget Worksheet into the SF424. Whether that’s going to be in ASSIST, which is through eRA Commons, or whether you do it on a PDF that you submit to your administrator and your administrator puts it into ASSIST, but someone will have to do that.

Okay so I’m going to start now talking about the details of developing a project budget. So again I want to recommend using a Word or Excel document to list all your expenses before you create the budget justification and I’ll show you a sample Word document on the next slide and you have to also make sure that you use the locality adjustments for all the people you have in your budget. So let’s say for example in our case we are at Palo Alto so our locality pay may be different than someone if we’re say collaborating with someone from Birmingham or from Utah or from Bedford and so when you’re working on your budget you have to make sure you take the locality pay into consideration in developing it, because it will be different. So one thing that happens is if you end up with people from a more expensive location you’re going to be able to use fewer personnel then if you use people who are from a slightly more cheaper location and they don’t take that into consideration in the budget cap, you know. If someone is paid 40% more in the Bay area than someone in, say for example, Birmingham that is not factored and you know you still have the 1.2 million cap. You know, something to consider when you think about who your collaborates will be. So, I’m going to the next page.

So before you create the Summary Budget Worksheet, I would recommend that you use a Summary Budget Table. This is a Word file and so what I do here is I try to fill out this Summary Budget Table; you’re going to have a primary site, in our case we would have Palo Alto and perhaps we would have maybe, in our case perhaps, Greater Los Angeles or maybe Salt Lake City, various site personnel, and then you would have the roles and then you would have all of the years of salary and fringe. But to get to this table you have to have an Excel file to get those numbers to fill it in. So I don’t have an example of an Excel file because I think it’s very specific to your own project but you need to be able to have some kind of an Excel file that will do the calculations for all of your expenses; specifically your salary and fringe. So let’s say all the people here you might have three or four Co-Investigators and your PI here. You’ll have all of the information and then your additional sites and this is what you’ll be transferring over to your Summary Budget Worksheet but you know that transition to this file you have to have some kind of an Excel file and I think people who have done it before, they probably have ones that they use and possibly after this Cyberseminar people can email me and I do have some samples but you know they’re all very different, depending on where you’re at. So you should have all of these categories: consultants by site, equipment, that does not mean computers, okay so again no IT, supplies, such as paperwork, and then project travel and other things and we’ll go through these categories each one-by-one as we go through the rest of the slides.

Okay so moving on. When you’re calculating the salaries, often times we talk about it in terms of percent effort. You have to calculate it in calendar months when you put it into the budget narrative. You only use VA hours worked and VA time spent on the project and the calendar months have to be based on the VA 40-hour work week. So, for example a 5/8th VA appointment is 25 hours a week which equals 7.5 calendar months. So one thing that we did not include here but I wanted to let you know is NIH does have an Excel file, there’s a formula that you can go and download on an Excel which will directly convert your percent effort into calendar months so that it’s easier and it’s just a formula that someone put onto the NIH website that you can just download from there. Okay so moving on.

So the budget justification is really important and here’s some generalities. It must be in compliance with font and margin guidelines. So everything has to be two-type fonts. We generally suggest that you use Arial 11, sometimes if you use other fonts it gets rejected by the eRA Commons system, so you know when it converts into a PDF sometimes it doesn’t look right, and margins are between a half and one inch and so you can use whatever seems to work with your budget justification. It’s very important to be concise and explicit. Double check all of your calculations and include separate justifications by performance site. So I will show you an example a little bit later and so you can see the whole thing. And transfer salary, fringe, and calendar month efforts to the Summary Budget Worksheet and again I’ll show you a sample of that later.

Okay. So in your budget justification here are some very concrete examples and you have the slides so you can refer to this later. You have to put in the calendar months that they worked, the GS level, what proportion of their salary is VA, and then calculate the salary and the fringe and it has to be done for every single person that is on your budget and so it seems like it’s tedious because if you have like 20 people in there, you still have to put in those numbers. This is where it’s really important to have an Excel file calculating all of the salaries because you have to transfer those numbers. So in your Excel file you should probably have the base salary, for example for Jane Smith as a GS 14 and in this case it would include the locality adjustments and then you will have her year, the salary, and the fringe and so go to your Excel file, copy those numbers for the fringe and for the salary, and then just put it in and then it may not be the same across all four years. For example, if Jane Smith goes from 10% to 15% and then ends with 20%, you have to have all of those numbers for every single year. So, in this case, this is pretty easy, it’s the same across years one through four but it may be different if the salary changes. And so, the bottom one is another example of someone donating their time. You still have to put in calendar months, their GS level, and their VA appointment; even if there’s no salary requested. So, it all has to be in there. So it seems like it’s really a lot of detail, but it has to be in there because when the reviewers look at it, sometimes they criticize you for not having that detail in there.

Just more examples. For example, to-be-named project staff; say for example you have a project director, but you don’t, you know, have that person yet. That also has to be in there even if you don’t have a named person and then for consultants, in our case let’s say for instance you have a qualitative researcher and this person is not requesting salary, possibly this person is a core resource at your center, so in our case in Palo Alto we have statisticians and qualitative consultants here that we, the center, fund and they can actually contribute effort to projects and so there is no cost on your project but they are being paid for by someone else. But if they’re not requesting salary they still need to put in there and it has to be specified that no salary is requested.

Okay. Just general things about travel. So basically, what is allowed are the top two categories. Travel that is necessary for the conduct of research and travel to implement or disseminate findings within VHA. And so those two things can be paid for by your IIR but the bottom two are things that you cannot put into your budget request. You cannot pay for travel to present your research results at professional meetings. Please do not include that in your budget and you cannot ask for professional development travel funds. That is also not allowed. Generally, the top two you ask in your IIR and you can use those funds to do that kind of travel and for the bottom two categories, your center will have to pay for it. So the center support grant for Palo Alto includes travel for people to present research results and it also includes funds for professional development travel. You are to request funds from your center for those two things; not from your project and if you have questions for that, you can ask at the end.

You have to submit a travel table in your budget justification. So generally, that comes towards the end of your budget justification. The status of the person traveling, if it’s the PI or if it’s somebody who is working at the VA, or an IPA or a consultant, why, where they’re going, the dates, and estimated cost. So this is the format that you have to use. So if you have a WOC, they can travel but WOCs are paid through, you know, if you want them to travel they have to do it through, I think through, that they have to register through SAMs and they have to get a DUNS number and so it’s kind of complicated for a WOC to travel, but they can travel. You just have to register them with a DUNS number; that’s the only way they’ll be able to use Concur and IPAs and consultants can also travel but again those are a lot more complicated than if you’re a VA personnel. So VA personnel they travel through Concur, the rest of the people who are not VA personnel you have to go through that whole process of becoming a government contractor. And so, project-related travel expenses have to be fully explained and it has to be concise and in the justification. You have to explain why emails, conference calls, or teleconferencing is not adequate to accomplish the goals of the requested travel and if you can ask for travel it’s a good idea to do that because it’s really hard to get travel money if you don’t have it in your IIR and often times your center will run out of the travel money for going to conferences or for professional development. So if you can get travel in your IIR I would suggest asking for it because it’s really hard to get it later.

Okay moving on. Here is an example of someone traveling. So in this case you have perhaps the PI and the project coordinator traveling somewhere for a training workshop for a site that is working with your team and so it covers flights at the domestic government rate and lodging. So keep in mind that all lodging has to meet the government’s travel rate and then there’s standard per diem in local transportation and so in our example we have travel for year one and there’s no travel expenses for years two, three, and four and so it would look something like this.

Okay moving on. I want to say something about transcription services. There are quite a few people who do work that require transcription services and so HSR&D actually funds a Centralized Transcription Service Program to help fulfil transcription needs for all HSR&D research and they did this because it may be able to provide a more cost effective, secure, and efficient mechanism without you having to contract outside for these services. And as some of you may know getting a contract executed sometimes is time-consuming and difficult so this is really a good program for you to use, if you need to use transcription services. And it’s not mandatory so you don’t have to use it but if you do use it and if your proposal includes transcription services and you have to put in this information. So you have to contact the Centralized Transcription Service at Salt Lake City and it’s led by Dr. Susan Zickmund and you request a formal proposal from her including cost for the potential use of their services in the study. If you chose not to use the Salt Lake City Centralized Transcription Service please include a brief summary for the reasons for not using them, in your justification, because it is provided they would like for you to use it, if possible and if not, say why.

So if you do choose to use the Salt Lake City Centralized Transcription services you have to include a brief description of the transcription service in your budget justification and there’s actually boilerplate language that is usually provided, so if you ask us at Palo Alto we do have some boilerplate language we can provide if you need it and possibly your VA has that too. And then you will list as “not applicable” for Dr. Zickmund’s percent effort and list her salary as contributed because she heads up the transcription services but she’s not directly paid for by your study, and then you have to add Salt Lake City as an additional site if you’re not already working with someone from there. They will be one of the additional sites and list Susan Zickmund as the site investigator who is responsible for the funds sent to and the work performed. If there’s already a research site, for example if you’re working with somebody else there already, it doesn’t have to be Susan Zickmund, you might be working with another person there, she does not then need to be listed as the site investigator, if you have a different person and you’re listing them already. And also list CTSP Transcription Services under other direct costs on the Summary Budget Worksheet, which as I said we’ll be showing you a little bit later.

Again, just to complete that. List Dr. Susan Zickmund as other professional and then type in

CTSP under the other project role category and the biosketch and other support is not required for her but you must upload an attachment to both the biosketch and other support fields with the words “not required” and this is for eRA Commons because you will get a system error and so your grant will be rejected in eRA Commons if you don’t have one for her but it isn’t required. But they’re looking for that page anyways so if it’s not there it will be kicked off the system. If she in fact is the collaborator or co-investigator in the research, follow the general instructions for adding her as the key person in the profiles.

Okay, so now I’m going to talk about the Summary Budget Worksheet, and you have to select one of three Summary Budget Worksheet templates; either the one for only one performance site. So for those applying for the CDA you will probably choose that most likely. And the majority of the people will use the five performance sites; that’s what I have been using for most of the people here because usually you have your primary site and probably one, two, or three other sites that you’ll be working with. Occasionally you’ll have twenty performance sites but generally that isn’t what most people use. I think for people who are doing a lot of recruitment, for example if they’re doing clinical trials and they need people from lots and lots of places they may use twenty performance sites but generally you’ll be using the five performance site one; so choose one of those three. And then so, when you choose the Summary Budget Worksheet there are separate sections for each performance site. And only VA personnel on paid appointments or WOCs should be listed in the personnel section. So and then there’s other direct costs and the only required subcategories with costs that must be itemized are IPAs, consultants, and any subcategory exceeding $5,000 per year. Everything else can be aggregated and listed on the last line under other direct costs. So again, IPAs, consultants, and categories exceeding $5,000 those are the only things you want as subcategories to be itemized.

Okay so, subtotals are auto calculated. I’m going to go and click onto the bottom so that you can see what it looks like in a little bit. Here. Okay. Here we go. Okay, so why isn’t it showing up? Oh, here it is. Okay, here we go. So this is the Summary Budget Worksheet. And so, let me just show you the whole thing so you see what it’s going to look like when you submit it into the SF424. So this one that I’m showing you is up to five sites. In this example, it’s two sites. So site one and this is site two. So we don’t have site three, four, or five. When you upload this into your SF424, you’re going to have this on the very front and that is followed by a budget justification. So, the budget justification has a primary site with all of the personnel. Going down. You have your travel table and the equipment is not over $5,000 so it’s not required here and then you’ll have other direct costs. So you do have materials and supplies and IPAs. So the IPAs again, see them as a contract. Okay. So, going down. You have consultants and then for computing services they have all this here but, let’s see, all right, we’re just going all the way down I’m showing you what it looks like. So now we’re at the end of site one and then you have site two which includes personnel, same thing, equipment, travel table, other direct costs. This is the PDF that you upload into ASSIST when you submit your grant into eRA Commons. It’s going to look like this. So as a PDF you’ll upload this at the end. Okay, so I just want to say a few things about this. So these subtotals that you see here. Okay so, note that you only see year one on the front page of this Summary Budget Worksheet. So you only see year one but you’re going to have year two, year three, and year four and you know sometimes if there’s an exception, year five. So you only see year one and that’s what you upload. However, when you go into ASSIST on eRA Commons or just filling out this as a PDF you will have year two, year three, and year four. So, your subtotals are going to be auto calculated. Years two, three, and four auto-populate from your one entry, for most budget categories, except for equipment and travel. If your costs vary, you have to overwrite the auto-populated values. So whatever you input into period one will automatically show up in year two and you have to change years two, three, and four; just so that you know that, and you can do that. And so, year five does not auto-populate and remember you have to obtain a waiver if your project exceeds four years. So you’re going to transfer information in these highlighted cells here. So this information here in all of these highlighted, you know year, effort, all of this stuff, you’re going to have to transfer that over to the SF424 and you have to make sure that the cost of an entire project match the grand total that’s listed. So you will see that there’s a total project here, this $932 for four years and let me go ahead and just repeat again, this is what you’re going to work from but you have to put this into the SF424 and I’m going to show you what that looks like in a little bit. And if you don’t put that into ASSIST someone else will have to do it. It could be your grants administrator. The way we do it here is that PIs go in to ASSIST and then they fill in the budget themselves but it could be that in your case you actually give this whole PDF file over to your grants administrator and maybe they fill it out in ASSIST. So depending on how that’s done we don’t know exactly how that’s going to work. Okay, so now I’m going back to, back to our PowerPoint.

Okay just some general things. Do not cut and paste from any other program to complete the fields in the SF424 and again keep in mind you’re doing this on ASSIST most likely which is through eRA Common and if you’re doing it on the PDF same thing, do not copy and paste. You have to type everything in. The font may not transfer correctly and cause problems such as these characters, random characters, and it’s going to be rejected by eRA Commons and so again check your total project cost and make sure that it matches the grand total in your Summary Budget Worksheet and so the budget information is condensed into three lines only: the PI name, effort, salary, and fringe and other VA personnel, you know the number, so again let me go back to, actually you can refer back to that and see what that looks like.

And so for your budget form, a separate budget for each year, as I had shown you from the previous PDF and if there are no funds requested enter zero, and if there are no funds requested for a field that’s not required you can also leave that field blank. Round figures to the nearest whole dollar and fields highlighted in yellow and outlined in red are required.

Okay so here’s what your SF424 is going to say. Okay. So, this is budget period one, so this is year one. You have to enter the start date and the end date. So the likelihood is you’ll be doing this on eRA Commons through ASSIST. You have to put in the first name and the last name of your person and from your Summary Budget Worksheet you’re going to transfer it over, just type it in, don’t copy and paste, the requested salary and the fringe benefits and then this actually will auto-populate. So if you put in this number and that number correctly, this number here should match what you had put in when you did your Summary Budget Worksheet and then you keep adding personnel. So the organizational DUNS number will auto-populate from the SF424 form because the likelihood is your administrator has already inputted this in. Okay and then for the budget type check the box labeled project, because it’s a project. You are not going to use the subaward, most of you, because most people putting this in will be the people who are the contact PIs, so it’s your project so click this, not this and put in the start date, end date, and then you know fill all this in, this will populate, and then this will also populate.

Okay. So for senior key personnel include only the name of a single person at a time and keep adding. You have to retype their salary from the Summary Budget Worksheet and you have to retype in their fringe. So each time, do that and again these will all automatically populate. Do not use the suffix field to indicate degrees and do not select add additional key personnel or add attachment button.

Okay, so this is section B of the SF424. So in this section include all additional VA personnel. Remember from, let me see if there’s a way I can like, can I pull up the other thing from, is there any way I can pull this up again?

Janet: Yeah.

Dr. Susie Hsieh: Um, yeah?

Janet: Yeah, if we go.

Dr. Susie Hsieh: I have to go back?

Janet: Or is it still up on (unintelligible 46:02)

Dr. Susie Hsieh: I think, hang on a second. Okay. Hang on. Okay, so I can’t seem to be able to pull up the Summary Budget Worksheet but remember in that section where it said total number unique staff, you just have to put in, so from the sample you saw that in year one the total unique staff was seven; you would put in the number seven and then the aggregate calendar month and the aggregate requested salary and fringe. So this is other personnel all together. Okay, so it has to be the total aggregate; you don’t individually put in those people individually like you did for the senior personnel in the front. If you have questions on this, go ahead and ask me, but I think you’ll know what I’m talking about if you go back and look at the Summary Budget Worksheet that we pulled up. The one about, I think five slides ago. So do not include salary support for non-VA personnel and IPAs, consultants, and contract costs are listed in section F.

So here it is. So, here is section F. So for the majority of the people this is where you put in most of the costs. So it’s other direct costs. So it’s everything else that is not in the other two sections. So all direct costs; IPAs, contracts, and consultants and that is one number. So you put in one number here. So costs for equipment and travel are subtotaled with all other direct costs and are entered here and all costs from other performance sites are entered here also. Do not itemize costs in other lines of section F or elsewhere in this, for SF424.

Okay so other things. No URLs allowed in the budget and present the budget by project years, not calendar or fiscal years. So, you could start a project in January, even though it doesn’t coincide with the physical year end October; just do it by project. And costs requested in the Summary Budget Worksheet, the SF424, and budget justification must match all budget categories, all sites, and all project years. You have to go back and double-check all your numbers and I do want to put in the caveat again that you should follow instructions from your specific local grants administrator for uploading budget documents into ASSIST. So here I’ve used ASSIST to upload all of these things myself, but we don’t know how you do it at your local VMAC and you also may get different advice about how to pay study participants and focus groups, so follow local guidelines.

And so, here are some links that are really helpful. Proposal guidance and templates and go on to all of these. So, for example here’s the guidance and templates and here is the Budget Worksheet template as we showed you before and you just download it and use it however way you need it. There’s also memo and FAQ on how to use IT appropriation and there’s also examples of completed budget forms here that you can look at. So here is the template for the single site. Many of you will be using just a single site so as you see what I was telling you before about the aggregate number for unique staff and then the total effort. Down here on this tab, download this for five sites, and then this is for the twenty sites; so you have this here you can download it yourself.

Okay, and then samples of forms and I believe there are other useful links. Thank you, Janet for providing this to everyone. The most recent RFAs and program announcements are here on this link and the parent Merit Award is here, you can get all of these; you know, just play around with it and see.

Okay. So, we are five minutes from the end. I would like to stop now and take any questions. Is anyone online who has a question? And then, go ahead.

Moderator: Yes, this is Maria again. I just want to remind everybody to submit questions, to please use the question pane in your GoToWebinard dashboard and one of the first questions I have here is, how can you pay for support for non-VA co-investigator who’s an MD-PhD?

Dr. Susie Hsieh: So, for an MD-PhD, is this person mostly researcher or clinician? If they’re non-VA, generally what we do is pay through an IPA, if they’re not clinicians.

Moderator: Okay. And another question. Are there any sample budgets for database studies that can be shared offline?

Dr. Susie Hsieh: Yes. Please contact me offline and I can share those. And I have to tell you that if you’re doing mostly database kind of research projects, oftentimes the reviewers will come back and say why do you need four years. They might say we think you can do this in two and a half or maybe three years, so I’ve seen many instances where people get that kind of critique and then they have shortened the time for the study and you know justify. Because even though the cap is 1.2 million you may get it funded at maybe $600K or $800K or $900K, if they feel that’s how much it should cost to do that project; meaning don’t necessarily ask for the maximum if you can do it for less because people look at your budget and they will come back and criticize you for that. Other questions?

Moderator: Yes. What if you’re not part of a center? What are some possible alternatives for travel funds to present the research?

Dr. Susie Hsieh: If you have an academic appointment at a university you can use start-up funds. But if you, travel is just really one of those categories that is hard. So the way we’ve done it here is sometimes we use our foundation; so we have a foundation that will help get NIH funds and some people will travel through NIH money or foundation money or if they have a mentor at a university who has start-up funds or travel funds, oftentimes the mentor may help pay for the travel if it’s for development and not project-specific travel. That’s how we’ve done it here. There might be other ways of doing it, but from my experience those are the most popular ways of doing it. Other questions?

Moderator: I think that’s our questions for the day and I want to thank you, Dr. Hsieh very much for taking the time to prepare and present today and for the audience when I close the meeting momentarily, you will be prompted with the feedback form. Please take a few moments to fill that out and we really do appreciate and count on your feedback to continue to deliver high-quality Cyberseminars. Thank you everyone for joining us for today’s HSR&D Cyberseminar and we look forward to seeing you at a future session. Have a good day and goodbye!

[ END OF AUDIO ]