



STScI | SPACE TELESCOPE
SCIENCE INSTITUTE

EXPANDING THE FRONTIERS OF SPACE ASTRONOMY

HST Grant Funding

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STUC – 19 Oct 2022



Summary

- In May, the STUC raised two concerns regarding HST grants
 - Allocation profile
 - Grant reporting
- The grant allocation profile was changed in 2017 to address ongoing growth in unspent but obligated funds
 - Appropriate to revisit the rationale, history, and outcome
 - Significant flexibility in system to address circumstances associated with particular projects or institutions
- Interim and final performance reports are at the minimum level to satisfy federal funding requirements and auditing
 - Happy to hear concerns or suggestions for improvement
 - We will be making examples available on grants website





Grant Allocation History and Rationale

- April 2017
 - Growing pool of unspent funds in HST grants (> \$40M)
 - Driven by slower rate of expenditure than scheduled release of funds to grants
 - Note this is a matter of spending rate – it's not a matter of funds never being spent
 - NASA faced \$40M shortfall in HST budget for FY18 – FY20
 - See “HST Project Update” by Jennifer Wiseman and Pat Crouse, Nov 2017 STUC presentation
 - NASA asked STScI to investigate mitigation of shortfall by reducing “uncosted carryover”
- Summer 2017
 - STScI responded with project RUCUS (Reduce Uncosted Carryover Using Software)
 - Significant software development effort
 - Investigation and analysis of grant allocation and spending
 - Modeling of uncosted carryover under various possible new grant profiles
 - Communication with STUC members, grantees, and institutions to explore what would be acceptable
 - Paul Hertz (HQ) discussed the need to reduce uncosted carryover at AAS and APAC



Grant Allocation History and Rationale

- October 2017

- Notification to community of new grant increment profile (email from Paula Sessa, GRA)
 - Funds released based upon invoicing instead of fixed schedule
 - When 90% of extant funding is invoiced and paid, next allotment automatically available
- Upgrade to Space Telescope Grants Management System (STGMS) to release allocations automatically to avoid disruption in funded research at grantee institutions
- Additional funding available upon request, generally within one business day

- Increment profile:

Approved Amount	Available at Award	Available when 90% expended
Up to \$30,000	100%	
Up to \$50,000	50%	50%
Greater than \$50,000	20%	20% in equal increments

- Expenditures monitored automatically
 - \$0 in first 9 months results in notification
 - \$0 in first 12 months results in 50% reduction in funding available (no change in award)



Grant Allocation History and Rationale

- November 2017
 - New grant allocation profile discussed at STUC meeting
 - STUC formally endorsed solution to HST budget shortfall, but stressed need to maintain grants funding over the long term (see STUC report, Nov 2017)
- These allocations incorporated into subsequent revisions of General Grant Provisions document (no change from Paula Sessa email in Oct 2017)
- Grant pool has remained near \$30M per cycle since Cycle 26 implementation
- Uncosted carryover currently half of what it was when the allocations were revised



Grant Reporting Burden

- Federal research dollars are subject to review and audit
- Requirements for Interim Performance Reports and Final Performance Report are outlined in General Grant Provisions documents
 - Interim: Due annually
 - Final: Due within 90 days of the grant end date
 - Each includes:
 - Brief comparison of actual accomplishments with the goals and objectives for the period, the findings of the investigator, or both.
 - Reason why established goals were not met, if appropriate.
 - Each report submitted by grant administrative PI using STGMS
- Other reports from authorizing or certifying official
 - Interim: financial (monthly), annual audit (expenditures > \$750K)
 - Final: financial, equipment, new technology (all within 90 days of grant end)



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 - Reason why established goals were not met, if appropriate.
- The requirements for interim and final reports are unavoidable, but we can provide examples to the community to make it clear what is required
 - Examples will be posted to grants website
- ***These really should be brief***
 - Both in content and in time to write (certainly less than an hour invested)