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**Federal Grants
Management Training for
Busy People**

Mini-Study Guide

**Grant Management Basics:
Suspension and Debarment**



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CHAPTER 1: SUSPENSION AND DEBARMENT

SUSPENSION

Suspension and debarment can prevent a grantee from receiving federal funds. A suspension is a temporary withdrawal of federal support. Usually, this temporary withdrawal is pending some form of corrective action by the award recipient or pending a decision by the agency to terminate the award. A suspension at the award level is different than a suspension at the organizational level.

DEBARMENT

Debarment is a punitive action taken by a federal agency against an award recipient. The debarment prohibits participation in procurement contracts and non-procurement transactions such as grants and cooperative agreements.

EXCLUDED PARTIES LIST

The Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) is a comprehensive list of individuals and organizations prohibited from participating in federal procurement and non-procurement transactions. This list is maintained and updated continuously by various federal agencies. Both organizations and individuals can be excluded from participation in federal awards, subawards, and certain types of contracts if they are suspended, debarred or otherwise excluded from participation in federal spending.

CHECKING THE EPLS

Checking the EPLS is easy. Just go to www.EPLS.gov. There you can search the EPLS using simple or advanced searches. For example, you can query on the individual or organization name, the taxpayer identification number (TIN), or other types of criteria.

The federal government requires federal agencies and grantees to check the EPLS at various points during the federal grant lifecycle. Federal agencies must check the EPLS for the agency name or principal's name before approving any primary tier covered transaction, such as a grant, cooperative agreement or contract.

The agency is also required to check lower tier participants or principals when agency approval is required for the lower tier transactions. An example of this might be a subaward or other contract that requires agency approval.

Federal grantees, usually through a contracting officer, must check the EPLS to ensure federal monies do not flow to an excluded entity. The contracting officer first checks the EPLS at the opening of bids or receipt of proposals. The contracting officer must check the EPLS again immediately before releasing work or awarding any new work. Grantees need not check the EPLS before issuing payment.

DOCUMENTING SUSPENSION AND DEBARMENT COMPLIANCE

Federal agencies and grantees must document in writing that they checked the EPLS prior to awarding funds or subcontracting work to another entity. Federal law requires the documentation to include when the EPLS was checked and who was searched in the EPLS.

Therefore, you must note both the date the EPLS was checked and the criteria used in the query. An easy way to document this is to print the results of the query from your web browser. This will show both the date stamp and the query criteria. Remember: this topic is a favorite of auditors, so put the documentation in a place it can be easily accessed for both auditors and agency requests.

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