

UCEDD Tip Sheets

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ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY CENTERS ON DISABILITIES
THE LEADERSHIP, EDUCATION, ADVOCACY & RESEARCH NETWORK



A project of AUCD, in partnership with ACL, to strengthen the network of UCEDDs

Admin Essentials

How and When to Create a Business Manager Role

What is Addressed in this Tip Sheet?

This tip sheet discusses the tasks and roles of business managers and how and when to fund the position. It summarizes a virtual roundtable conversation on the topic held on September 9th and archived [here](#).

The Admin Essentials series brings together UCEDD directors and business managers with content experts, often retired UCEDD directors, to address pressing administrative challenges. These virtual roundtables provide an opportunity to share resources, troubleshoot challenges, and brainstorm creative solutions to a broad range of administrative topics.

Why is this Important?

Operating a UCEDD involves a complex set of business, financial, and operational functions. In leading and managing these functions, UCEDD directors might wonder: when is the right time to bring on additional staff to manage the fiscal aspects of our center? As a UCEDD grows, the volume of business management tasks may begin to monopolize the director's time. Directors ultimately need to be free to lead, and to prioritize generating new funding and new partnerships. Bringing on staff to support the fiscal management aspects of the center will be a welcome addition for the director and will enhance the ability for the UCEDD to expand—while continuing

to ensure the UCEDD’s adherence to local, state, and federal procurement and grants management regulations and guidance. An effective business manager helps UCEDDs to manage multiple grants; track budgets, expenses, and deliverables; follow federal, state, and local regulations; and apply best practices in grant management. However, creating and funding the role can be challenging. This tip sheet provides advice, promising strategies, and lessons learned from past UCEDD directors on how and when to create a business manager role.

The development of business management strategies must be responsive to diverse stakeholders and their - often disparate - priorities and processes.

What are some Promising Strategies?

Since UCEDDs operate within a broader context, the development of business management strategies must be responsive to diverse stakeholders and their - often disparate - priorities and processes. UCEDDs are accountable to their funders, manage across their center’s staff, and need to report out to individual projects or grants.

Stakeholder Considerations

The University (eg. pre award, post award, payroll)	Funding Source
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offices often have their own accounting and reporting rules. • Accurate information you need for other stakeholders might only be available in other university offices. <p>If part of a state system, university processes may be dictated by state regulations (e.g. purchasing and procurement)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project officers can have different personalities, information needs, or processes. • Need to track funding agreements and associated requirements and expectations for deliverables, funds usage, evaluation, and reporting.
Your Center	Project
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is the PI for each grant? • Who does the fiscal management, human resource management, and programmatic work? • You may want one person supervised by the Director to perform the business management functions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff, partners, and advisors may want to know information about their project in real time. • Community partners may also need specific information about an individual grant.

Staff handling business functions need to be prepared to work with other university offices, coordinate with project officers, and report out to individual projects. Each of these environments have their own ways of operating, and each of these players may change over time. Together, directors and business managers can begin to navigate these changing dynamics to effectively manage the UCEDD’s business operations.

When to establish?

UCEDD Directors have found that once their center grows beyond **\$1.5-2 million** or more in funding (or 4-5 grants and/or large contracts), and when the number of FTE reporting to the UCEDD expands beyond **8-10 FTE**, they may be hitting a tipping point for needing a business manager.

With more funding and more people, it becomes harder to manage the financial aspects of the center. Smaller UCEDDs can probably handle these aspects with the staff in their center and the staff at the university. Larger UCEDDs however, might not. UCEDD Directors' time can begin to be dominated with fiscal management tasks, reducing their time for other important leadership roles. As this happens, it becomes important to consider establishing a business manager role.

A good rule of thumb, if you feel like you need one... you probably do.

What do Business Managers do?

Business managers oversee the business and fiscal aspects of the UCEDD.

Some common tasks include:

- Preparing personnel costs
- Managing fringe benefit and operating budgets
- Reconciling accounting with the university's business office
- Reporting availability of budget, current status, and projections for each grant
- Tracking FTE and funding staff across grants
- Supervising staff on payroll, time and effort reporting, etc.
- Generating budgets and narratives for grant apps and contracts
- Liaising with university offices
- Participating in annual audit
- Managing property, vehicles, and facilities
- Creating internal controls to follow all federal guidelines
- Monitoring any changes to rules and guidance

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Some UCEDDs have Business Managers who also assume the human resources liaison role between the UCEDD and the University Personnel/Human Resources Office. However, many UCEDDs separate these functions across different staff.

When creating a position description for a business manager you should consider:

- working closely with the HR office
- reviewing other position descriptions from throughout the university and the AUCD network (eg. sponsored programs, extension, other UCEDDs)
- benchmarking salaries for the position
- strategically including members from across the university

How do you fund a Business Manager?

Many UCEDDs "grow" into establishing a Business Manager position. Most will begin by setting aside a portion of one staff's FTE for Business Manager functions, and over time as the UCEDD grows, this

role may expand into a full-time position dedicated to Business Management aspects of the UCEDD.

However, the establishment of a Business Manager role may also begin with:

- the University providing personnel FTE for this function;
- the University or the UCEDD reinvesting indirect cost recovery to support this function;
- the UCEDD purchasing Business Manager supports from a shared service, or from a larger unit within the University

Rarely will UCEDDs have the full amount of resources to hire someone at the start. Often the position will need to be a shared position or a part-time position.

Important to note: Some external funds and core grant funds can be used to support administrative functions. Some centers have their business manager entirely funded by their core grant. Others write a percentage of every grant they secure to include administrative costs. You can also ask to use the college's portion of the indirect to pay for the business manager.

Shared Services

Some universities are moving towards shared services models. This can look like a few different things:

1. Smaller centers can go to a shared business center that they can buy into to receive fiscal management services. This is different than the pre and post award offices and office of grants and contracts. Its purpose: to help the smaller centers get the business functions done.
2. Some centers are forming coalitions with other centers with a similar need or a similar topical area. They pool their resources to fund someone to work on business management across the centers.
3. Some of these centers are much smaller, so your business manager could take on 2-3 projects as part of a consortium and their cost would get sent to other centers who aren't large enough to have some fiscal staff.
4. Another option is when a UCEDD becomes an expert at a service. They then can sell their services to the university or other centers. For instance, ICI Boston was skilled in web and online media development and had their own media studio. They sold their services to the university who was looking for training support. They used the additional funds to pay for their business operations.

Recommendations

- Establishing and recruiting a competent Business Manager will enhance the UCEDD's relationship with the University Business office, Office of Sponsored Program, Human Resources Offices, etc. leading to quicker response time and processing of documents such as purchase orders, contracts, work requests.
- Business Managers can provide some expertise to project directors about effective ways to contract out money from a grant. Since they are also monitoring rules and regulations on grant spending, they can provide recommendations that are also in line with the fiscal responsibility of the center.
- Materials from the university's office are often behind a few months in posting and clearing encumbrances. Thus, fiscal reports from University business offices are frequently not up to date. Many UCEDDs maintain a separate set of monitoring processes, or shadow reports, so that Business Managers and fiscal staff are able to run reports (for the Director and Principal

Investigators) that are up to date, reflecting accurate balances. Shadow reporting can be critical for ongoing grants management.

- The way things are done at the university are constantly changing, so you need to have a great relationship with all the players across the various environments and a clear understanding of the roles each player performs. In understanding it, you can influence it.

What are the Relevant Resources?

- [How and When to Create a Business Manager Webinar Archive](#)
- [Sample Business Manager Position Description](#)
- [Fiscal Management- Routine Reports](#)
- [Fiscal Review Checklist](#)

For More Information

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