

# IC Purchase Card Coordinators Meeting September 4, 2012

## Attendees:

Adams, Deborah (NIAAA)*	Huff, Debra (NIA)*	Ricche, Andi (NIAMS)*
Baginski, Renata (NIDA)	Hughes, Anita (NCI)	Romero, Michelle
Baron, Charles (OD)	Hyde, Alan (NIDA)	(OD/DSAPS)**
Betson, Ginger (NDCR)*	Jones-Johnson, Shelley	Sallah, Jody (NIDDK)
Bridges, Antoinette (NIEHS)*	(NIBIB)*	Schneider, David (NHGRI)
Brugh, Sheryl (NIDCD)	Knox, Shamay (NIAID)*	Scott, Candice (NINR)
Brunson, Janice (CC)	Lunney, Dee (NIEHS)*	Smith, Mary (OD/DSAPS)
Davol, Tabitha	Macino, Jeanne (CSR)*	Solomon, Barry (OD/DSAPS)
(OD/DSAPS)**	Mallinson, Kristen (PwC)	Spates, Christine (NIMHD)*
Demery, Inez (NICHD)	Mares, Karri (NCI)	Sutton, Larry for Ginger
Dorsey, Denise (NINDS)	McGee, Andrea (CC)*	Betson (NIDCR)
Drake, Patricia (ORF)*	Miranda Maribel (NIAID)	Thompson, Patrice
Draper, Dionne (NIMH)*	Palacios, Vanessa	(OD/DSAPS)**
Dreier, Jennifer (NINR)*	(OD/DSAPS)**	Timmons, Kiana (ORS)*
Dujun, Nicole (NIGMS)	Patel, Amita (NIMH)*	Tolbert, Theresa (NIMH)
Errett, Paul (NICHD)*	Pelan, Traci (NEI)*	Tran, Tho-Van (NHLBI)
Fernandez, Maria	Phillippi, Mike (NCATS)	Warthem, Barbara (NCI)*
(OD/DSAPS)**	Rappaport, Doreen	Zichos, Sheila (NIDA)*
Francis, Iggy (NIA)	(OD/DSAPS)**	
Gheen, Valery (NCCAM)*	Rhee, Brice (PwC)	

\*Attended using teleconference system

\*\* Purchase Card Program

**Welcome & Introduction:** Doreen Rappaport, Purchase Card Program Manager, called the meeting to order at 1:35 pm. There were 50 in attendance, 19 attended via teleconference. Ms. Rappaport welcomed the attendees.

**Efficient Spending Policy:** Barry Solomon of the Acquisition Services and Review Branch in OALM/DSAPS provided information on the Efficient Spending Policy (ESP) and emphasized the need to accurately complete Form A-NIH Conference/Meeting Approval when submitting conference approvals to their office. Barry provided examples of some common errors in forms that ASRP had received. Questions regarding the ESP should be submitted to [efficientspendpolicy@nih.gov](mailto:efficientspendpolicy@nih.gov). Additional information is also on the OAMP home page <http://oamp.od.nih.gov/ContractToolBox/SpendingPolicy.asp>.

**Year-End Deadlines:** Maria Fernandez of the Purchase Card Program presented information about year-end deadlines for FY12. Non-emergency purchase card holders will be suspended on September 21 at 5pm, and will be reinstated on October 2 at 7am. In the interim, only designated Emergency Cardholders will be able to use their purchase cards for

emergency purchases only. NBS will shut down on September 30 at noon and will reopen on October 11 at 7am. Purchase cardholders will need to manually log purchases made during the NBS shut down and then transfer them to their electronic logs once the system is back up.

**Extension Requests:** Michelle Romero of the Purchase Card Program presented information regarding extension requests. She has now taken the lead on processing these requests since Teresa Thomas is no longer with NIH. Critical reconciliation dates are the 13<sup>th</sup> of every month for cardholders and the 18<sup>th</sup> of every month for CAOs. Currently extension requests are required for either cardholder or CAO who is unable to complete their reconciliation/approval responsibilities by the due date. Due to the volume of requests, the program is considering having IC Coordinators approve extension requests up until the 18<sup>th</sup> and after the 18<sup>th</sup>, ONLY those extensions would be sent to the Purchase Card Office. Most of the coordinators agreed this would work and help to minimize the volume of emails received. This is still in discussion, however, and a detailed email will be sent with the proposed plan.

**FY 2012 Purchase Card Reviews:** Brice Rhee and Kristen Mallinson of PwC presented the results of the FY12 Purchase Card Reviews for both Targeted and On-Site Reviews. A review summary chart was provided. There was some discussion about the need for an article that would explain to non-cardholders about the requirement for cardholders to use required sources before going to open market. Some IC coordinators agreed that this requirement was not well understood by some of their customers.

**Open Logs:** Patrice Thompson of the Purchase Card Program presented information on open logs. The last open log report ran covered the period from October 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012, showing \$8.2 million in open logs. Between October 1, 2011 and December 31, 2011, there was \$1.6 million still not billed or partially billed. Doreen reminded the group to have their cardholders with valid open logs contact those vendors to see why charges have not posted. Also Doreen mentioned that Eos had recently been sent reports of open logs for their ICs. Open logs that are not anticipated to be matched against a valid purchase should be cancelled so that the funds are deobligated and can be used for other agency needs. Just recently there were three open logs cancelled from FY11 totaling \$11,000 which cannot be used in FY12. There is more than that, however. IC Coordinators need to work with their respective cardholders to review FY12 open logs before Sept 30 and cancel any logs that are not expected to be used.

**Proposed Changes to Supplement:** Doreen said that proposed changes to the NIH Purchase Card Supplement Version 6.0 are still being reviewed and the latest draft version of the changes will be sent. Additional changes made since the last discussion were minor. The two requirements for which there are still concerns but remain in the proposed supplement include the requirement for CAO approval before the purchase and the requirement for purchases over \$3,000 to be against a contract. The next step is to present to the Executive Officers for review and discussion. Several IC coordinators remained concerned about the CAO pre-purchase requirement. Concerns included difficulty to implement and would slow

down the acquisition process in their IC. Some stated that it would be hard to find CAOs who would want to do the job and also the lack of properly trained and experienced CAOs in terms of acquisition experience and the ability to determine if the purchase was for a legitimate need. Doreen Rappaport mentioned that there could be multi-approvals (one for a legitimate need purpose, and the other the CAO). Some ICs thought that only duplicated efforts. Doreen asked ICs with continued concerns about this issue to send her an email with their recommendations. It was also mentioned that GSA had recently produced a brochure summarizing the role of a CAO which will be sent to all.

**Online Purchase Card Refresher Training:** Doreen updated the group on the problem with the online refresher training emails and the notification process. The due dates are changed in each iteration of the automated email that is sent. Because of this, the Purchase Card Program has asked their IT staff to only send out one automatic reminder notice to those cardholders and CAOs required to renew their training statuses. If the cardholder or CAO fails to complete the refresher after this notice is received, the purchase card office will follow up with these individuals directly at which point they will be given another week to complete the refresher training. If that deadline is not met, purchase card authority will be suspended until the training is completed.

It was also mentioned that use of a Mozilla Firefox web browser may be necessary for the online training to work correctly, as some users of Internet Explorer were having problems.

**Other General Info:** Doreen reported on several other issues, listed below.

- OFM recently completed an A-123 compliance audit which identified some deficiencies related to purchase cards. The finding indicated that some cardholders failed to enter purchases in the NBS log within the time period required. A reminder will be sent to CAOs to make sure cardholders follow this requirement.
- There has been some recent discussion on how to handle the purchase of Apps for I-Pads. It may be possible for a cardholder to purchase an App and then “gift” it to the customer. This is still being investigated. A cardholder may NOT purchase a gift card and give it to the customer to purchase the App as that is not allowed. Gift cards are ONLY allowed for the incentive program. Please remind CAOs and Cardholders about this.
- There are some cardholders with excessive credit limits which increase the risk of fraud for NIH. For example: If a cardholder has a limit of \$500,000 and is typically only purchasing \$50,000 per month, the credit limit needs to be reduced. In October and November, a credit limit report will be sent out to IC Coordinators for each to reevaluate their cardholders.
- Doreen attended the GSA SmartPay2 Conference in Nashville, Tennessee. It was not widely attended due to the recent GSA conference controversy, so GSA has put some sessions available on-line, including a session on Global Supply and GSA Advantage, and IC coordinators may wish to look at those. Separate email will be sent with the available sessions.

**Posting on Bid Boards:** Doreen discussed the FAR 5.1 requirement for posting proposed purchase/contract actions between \$15,000 and \$25,000 in a public place. To meet this requirement, some ICs have bulletin boards at locations where vendors can look at the postings. It was mentioned that someone in the Small Business Office was exploring the idea of a central electronic Bulletin Board for this purpose. Some IC coordinators provided input that they have recently created bulletin boards in their offices to meet this FAR requirement.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm. The next IC Coordinator meeting will be on December 5, 2012.