

Washington Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit
Federal Agency-Supported Project Initiation Workflow
August 9, 2024

This document is provided to help UW principal investigators (hereafter, PIs) and agency project officers (hereafter, POs) – collectively referred to as “project leads” – to establish research projects funded by federal agencies (e.g., USFWS, USGS, NOAA, NPS, and others) through the Washington Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit (WACFWRU).

Federal projects funded through the WACFWRU use a mechanism known as a Research Work Order (RWO). All projects funded by RWOs must support a graduate student or a post-doctoral candidate and must be research based. Projects providing support for undergraduates may qualify on a case-by-case basis. Funding does not have to provide salary support, and the budget can include support such as travel, supplies, services, and salary for other investigators. At the onset of the project, it is important to find out how the funding will be transferred to the USGS Cooperative Research Units Program to make sure that it is eligible for the RWO process. Steps in project initiation include:

1. **PROJECT DEVELOPMENT:** Project leads will collaborate on the development of a project idea. Once a project is adequately defined, the project leads should approach the Unit administrator, who will provide them with a list of documents that must be completed. The Unit administrator will provide templates and examples of all of these documents. These will include:
 - a. A statement of work, which must also include a title, list of personnel, project start/end dates, and an abstract.
 - b. A budget and budget justification. As negotiated per the Cooperative Agreement, RWOs are assessed an indirect rate of 15% on the total direct costs by the University of Washington. In the case of a subaward, indirect is assessed by UW on the first \$25,000 of the outgoing budget. Agencies should also note that USGS CRU will assess a 6% indirect rate on the University of Washington budget for projects that require an interagency agreement (i.e., that do not originate with USGS).
 - c. A data management plan.
 - d. A keywords worksheet.
2. **PROJECT CONTRACTING:** Once the required documents are complete, project contracting can begin. This will require communication between the PI, the PO and agency financial lead, the Unit Administrator, and a USGS Cooperative Research Units administrator. Changes can occur after the submission of these documents but they should be *minor*, and the Unit Administrator should be made aware of any changes. The budget total when finalized cannot exceed the amount noted in the submission, but categories may be adjusted. The time required for contracting can be challenging to predict, but may be several months. The Unit Administrator can provide details on timing.
3. **PROJECT REPORTING:** After contracting is complete, project leads should be aware that the Unit Leader will contact the PI annually to request information on student and postdoc support provided by the project. Failure to provide a prompt response may jeopardize future collaboration with the WACFWRU.
4. **PROJECT CLOSEOUT:** Upon closeout, project leads must provide the Unit Administrator with a final abstract including the project aims, methods, results, and significance. Failure to provide this documentation may jeopardize future collaboration with the WACFWRU.
5. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** The WACFWRU should be acknowledged for facilitating funding in any publications or presentations stemming from project funds.

Project leads are welcome to reach out to Sarah Converse, Unit Leader, at sconver@uw.edu or Sarah Romero, Unit Administrator, at sarahjh@uw.edu with any questions.