CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE FOR REGENERATIVE MEDICINE

CIRM Electronic Grants Management System
Description of need, History and Timeline

An electronic grant application and management system will be a core IT component in allowing CIRM to fulfill its mission. A single grant program lifecycle consists of many steps (see figure 1), each of which concerns a number of individuals, including CIRM staff, applicants, grantees, Grants Working Group (GWG) members, and the ICOC. And all of those people must interact and coordinate their efforts to ensure that the work of the Institute flows smoothly and efficiently.
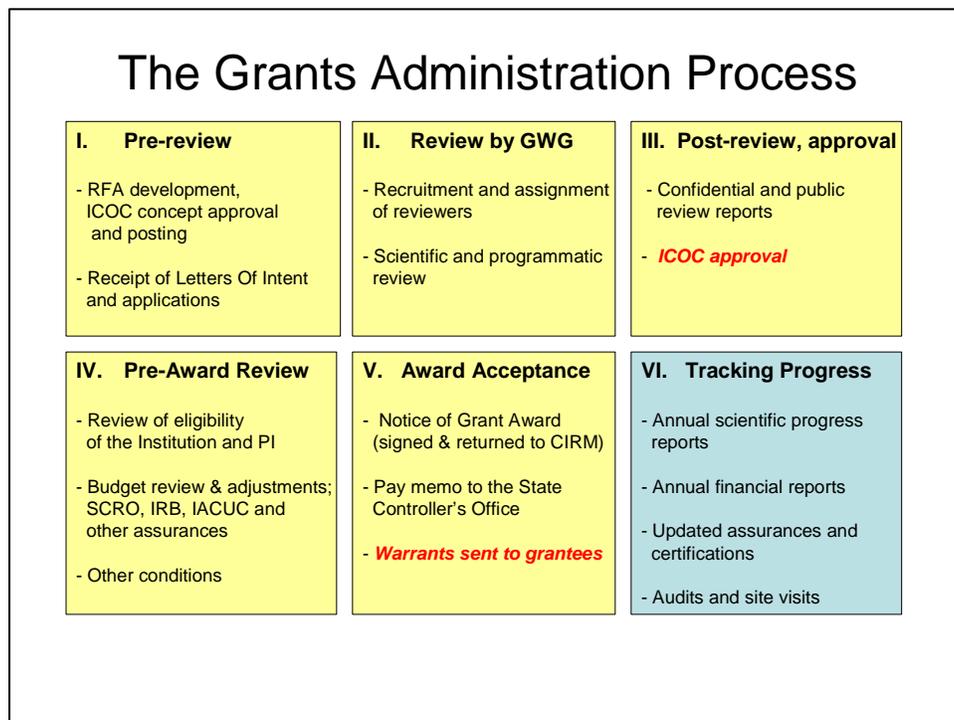
The Grants Administration Process

I. **Pre-review**	II. **Review by GWG**	III. **Post-review, approval**
- RFA development, ICOC concept approval and posting - Receipt of Letters Of Intent and applications	- Recruitment and assignment of reviewers - Scientific and programmatic review	- Confidential and public review reports - *ICOC approval*
IV. Pre-Award Review	**V. Award Acceptance**	**VI. Tracking Progress**
- Review of eligibility of the Institution and PI - Budget review & adjustments; SCRO, IRB, IACUC and other assurances - Other conditions	- Notice of Grant Award (signed & returned to CIRM) - Pay memo to the State Controller's Office - *Warrants sent to grantees*	- Annual scientific progress reports - Annual financial reports - Updated assurances and certifications - Audits and site visits

Figure 1

Given that, at any particular time in the future, there might be dozens of programs in various states of the lifecycle, it is readily apparent why an electronic system to help manage the process is so imperative.

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The timeline (figure 2) gives a brief outline of the process by which we have come to a decision on a vendor to provide an electronic grants management system.

Timeline of Grants Management System Evaluation	
Date	**Event**
January, 2006	Began researching grant management systems vendors
June, 2006	Chose the Arlington Group's Easygrants software and began the implementation process
August, 2006	The Arlington Group declared bankruptcy
November, 2006	Altum acquired the Easygrants software from The Arlington Group and began supporting existing customers
November, 2006	CIRM decided to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for an electronic grants management system
May, 2007	The RFP was posted and publicized
June, 2007	Five companies responded with RFP bids
July, 2007	A nine person evaluation committee (7 CIRM employees and 2 external reviewers) evaluated the responses and narrowed down to three finalists
July, 2007	The three finalists each gave an in-person presentation and demonstration of their systems to the evaluation committee
August, 2007	The evaluation committee met to discuss the presentations
September, 2007	Questions surfacing from the committee meeting led to a "clarification" document being created
September, 2007	The three finalists provided responses to the clarification document
September, 2007	The evaluation committee chose a winning bidder

Figure 2

We began searching for a vendor to provide this system in January of 2006. Using a variety of research means, we identified the vendors in the space and began narrowing the field based on the requirements we had identified by that point. After talking to several vendors, and having them come to our offices to give presentations, we selected a system provided by "The Arlington Group", a vendor of grants management systems based in Virginia.

Work on the implementation began in June of 2006. Shortly thereafter, in early August, The Arlington Group abruptly and with no forewarning declared bankruptcy, halting progress on the implementation.

In November of 2006, another company, Altum, purchased the rights to Easygrants, which was The Arlington Group's software. CIRM determined that the best path forward would be to issue a formal Request For Proposal (RFP) for an electronic grants management system.

By this time, we had completed the review of several grant programs, which informed the requirements of the RFP. The RFP identified five criteria that were to be used for evaluating any proposed solution. Those criteria were:
- Qualifications of Personnel
- Experience of the Firm
- Responsiveness to scope of work
- Cost
- Timing

The RFP was posted in May of 2007, with responses due on June 22nd. By the deadline we had received five responses.

An evaluation committee was convened to review and score the proposals. The committee was made up of nine individuals. Seven were CIRM staff, and two were volunteers from outside of CIRM, each of whom had extensive experience with grants management and grants management systems.

The evaluation committee met and reviewed the five proposals, scoring them according to the criteria listed above. After scoring, it was apparent that the proposals clustered in two groups. The committee decided to discard the lower group from further consideration, leaving three proposals. The three bidders were asked to come to CIRM to give a four hour presentation and demonstration of their systems, to allow CIRM staff to see the proposed solutions firsthand and to ask questions of the vendors directly.

Over the course of July and early August, the three vendors came and gave their presentations. After the final presentation, the evaluation committee met again and determined that the presentations had raised a few final questions that needed to be resolved prior to making a recommendation.

Those questions were written up as an addendum to the RFP and sent to the three bidders. The responses of the bidders were in the form of an addendum to their bid.

After reviewing the three clarification responses, the evaluation committee had a final meeting, at which point we settled unanimously on a recommendation.