



SPO Guidelines for *Letters of Support from LBNL Other Significant Contributors*

Many proposals request letters of support from individuals that are not being paid on that research proposal. It is important to carefully word these letters so LBNL employees are not making a promise or commitment of effort that won't be charged correctly. DOE will not pay for effort expended on other research projects. Effort charged to a research project must be appropriate for that research.

Participating in a way that does not commit effort for another project would be time, information, or data that might be available to the general scientific community.

If your letter of support suggests effort, you need to indicate what funded research is appropriately being charged for that time. For example: My federally sponsored research (*title*) is testing new ways to analyze the types of data your experiments will be producing. I would be happy to run your data through our analysis tool to provide you with additional information. This would be of direct benefit to both of our projects.

Below are some examples of words and phrases that imply or commit effort and some that do not.

<i>Language that Suggests Effort</i>	<i>Language that does not Commit Effort</i>
train	invite you to briefings/seminars/lab meetings
assist with experiments	send samples being created by _____
analyze your results	provide access to x piece of equipment
provide technical assistance	provide access to my lab
make my post-doc researchers available to assist you	continue sharing data
advise	share results of our progress on x research project
collaborate	discussing our related research
evaluate	make available to you x resource developed from our research
consult	synergistic work
responsible for	access to my ___ computer platform/software/database
interpret	share with you my experimental design and methods
provide my expertise	as part of the NIH data sharing policy, we can share tools we developed
design	
working with you	
provide direction	

NIH Letters of Support

Question:

Is it required to submit letters of support from key personnel who are employed by the same institution as the PI? In the past we have not provided these letters since it is assumed that all key persons supported the project since they agreed to be included in the budget.

As a follow on question, would we need to get a letter of support from all key persons at the consortium institutions? In the past we have only included a letter of support from the subcontract PI at each consortium institution since it was assumed that all other key persons there supported the project since they agreed to be included in the budget.

Answer provided by:

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NIH does not officially require letters from key personnel at the same institute as the PI, or from all key personnel at consortium institutions, and your application will not be automatically rejected for not providing them.

However, the murkiness comes at the time of review. Letters are expected from all key personnel and other individuals from whom substantive, measurable contributions are expected (such as services, products, collaboration, or intellectual contributions). Reviewers are quick to point out missing letters, because it might appear that the investigator is expecting to utilize those contributions without having confirmed with the individual who is expected to supply them. That is why we use the term “Demonstrate support”, since it provides applicants a few options for applications instead of just submitting individual letters from each key person (such as letter from subproject director). But whichever option is chosen [it] must demonstrate to reviewers that all personnel/resources described in the application are indeed committed.

Hopefully this clears things up for you. Again, we **do not** have a strict requirement for letters of support and do not wish to impose one. As long [as] applications are able to demonstrate to reviewers the support of contributors described in the application then there shouldn't be a problem.