

Andrea Buford Bio

The dark humor among research administration professionals is that the worst thing that can happen to a person is to get the first grant they apply for because then “they” never let you out. That appears to be what happened to me. I began grant work as a non-profit director, working with people who were homeless. I applied for a grant – got it- and suddenly people thought I was gifted in this arena. At that point in my career nothing could have been further from the truth. However, it turns out that I’m trainable, and I have been writing grant proposals ever since.

I made the switch to research administration in 2009, and helping investigators prepare competitive and compliant grant proposals has been truly a joy. However, I have long known that successful proposals and projects depend on more than solid research ideas. They absolutely require a strong institutional research infrastructure, and every university needs to continually address that to ensure that their PIs are solidly positioned for success in seeking external funding.

I serve as the Research Development Officer for the health sciences, because I don’t ever want to get far from research ideas and PIs. But my primary focus here at OU is to ensure that the research infrastructure that properly belongs to an Office of Sponsored Programs is solid – and more than that, visionary. The questions our PIs are asking are important and fascinating, and they deserve to be tested and vetted within the community of scholars and the wider world. Helping that to happen is my job and my joy.