

How to establish milestones in your awarded LSDF grant

The following is meant as a prelude to negotiating and finalizing your milestones and timeline with LSDF program staff. Milestones serve as unambiguous indicators of progress and are used to satisfy Washington state requirements that grants are paid on a reimbursement basis against agreed-upon work. Generally, milestones measure concrete, discrete outcomes such as a deliverable. There needs to be a sufficient number of milestones so progress is not measured against a broad indicator spanning a considerable period and to make reimbursement logical, but not so many that they become trivial or burdensome to manage. **Milestones should include only activities that are supported (either wholly or in part) by LSDF.**

Milestones are reported on semi-annually in grant progress reports submitted by the principal investigator to LSDF, and are cited on reimbursement requests submitted as frequently as monthly. Therefore, 6-8 per year is a good minimum number of milestones. Milestones do not have to be completed for payment to be made, but progress towards milestone completion must be clear and definite.

Failure to meet milestones can result in renegotiation of the milestones to more realistically predict progress; acceleration of effort to catch up; and in cases of persistent failure to meet milestones, particularly without good justification, termination of the grant.

The following are hypothetical, illustrative examples using a one year grant term. The “acceptable” format is not a required template. The **bolded milestones** are set, mandatory milestones.

Unacceptable:

Year 1: isolate candidate markers
 hire two new members for our group
 buy new hypervariator
 initiate recruitment efforts for clinical study

Acceptable:

Milestone #	Milestone	Completion Date¹	Criterion/Deliverable
1	Recruit staff for marker project	Start date	Post job descriptions and ads for postdoc and technician. Postdoc requires PhD and mass spectrometry experience; technician at MS level.
2	Hire staff for marker project	Month 2	One postdoc and one technician hired.
3	Identify candidate markers for XYZ disease	Month 3	At least five markers to pursue by HPLC, selected from literature reviews.
4	Distribute information on clinical study of XYZ3 gene overexpression in breast tumors as a predictor of bone metastasis	Month 4	In-person visits and consultations by study coordinators (including presentation of study goals, procedures, and inclusion criteria) completed with 100 ABC oncologists in the existing statewide ABC Hospital and Clinic Network.
5	Identify patients for the study of XYZ3 gene and breast	Month 6	15 eligible patients consented and enrolled from the 100 ABC oncologists contacted.

¹ All dates refer to the indicated number of months following the Effective Date of the LSDF grant agreement. Dates are converted to calendar dates following execution of the grant agreement.

	cancer metastasis		
6	Collaboration agreement executed	Month 6	Collaboration agreement specifying intellectual property rights and disposition signed among grantee, co-applicants, and collaborators.
7	Identify back-up candidate markers	Month 6	Identify at least three additional markers to pursue by HPLC from literature reviews.
8	Order new hypervariator	Month 6	Purchase agreement signed.
9	Management committee meeting	Month 6	Co-investigators and at least one additional co-I lab member meet for four hours.
10	Collect archived surgical breast tumor specimens	Month 8	Surgical specimens from 15 patients enrolled in the study of XYZ3 gene and breast cancer metastasis received, entered into study database, and stored.
11	Install new hypervariator	Month 9	Receive hypervariator, install in B2-243.
12	Develop method for submission of post-award progress reports	(one month before end of grant term)	Agree on the schedule and mechanism for post-award progress reports with LSDF program staff
13	Validate candidate markers	Month 12	At least two markers with high validity (as measured by ABC statistical analysis) and at least two with moderate validity.
14	Meeting with technology transfer [meeting occurs every year of grant term]	Month 12	In-person meeting with technology transfer office staff; LSDF program staff person participates
15	Achievement of institutional cost-sharing, financial, and other commitments (if applicable) [annual milestone]	Month 12	Commitment of \$250,000 in F&A support from grantee organization executed. Contingent award from NIH of \$324,000 received.

The following milestone applies to “program” grants (e.g., LSDF 09-02) and takes place three months before the end of the grant term.

(number)	Develop a plan for the first five years following the end of the grant period that outlines strategies for continued financial support of the program; summarizes proposed research, clinical, and research activities; and (as appropriate) describes plans for commercial development and/or clinical translation of program technologies or outcomes	(three months before end of grant term)	Prepare plan and submit to LSDF program staff.
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