

**Cayuse, Inc.**



National research organization  
collaborates on proposal  
development from widely dispersed  
research centers.

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## Institutional profile

Kaiser Foundation Research Institute (KFRI), located in Oakland, California, is the central business office for the national research program at Kaiser Permanente. Kaiser Permanente is America's leading integrated health plan serving more than 8.7 million members in nine states and the District of Columbia. KFRI manages and submits research proposals from seven widely-distributed research centers ranging from Georgia to Hawaii. Each of these centers is an independent operating unit. The total estimated Federal Research funding in 2006 for KFRI was approximately \$60 Million, primarily from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Approximately 200 employees participate in the proposal development process.

## Challenge

Prior to electronic submission of grant proposals, the KFRI central office would receive paper proposals from each of the research centers about a week before a major NIH deadline. It would review, approve and subsequently ship these proposals to NIH.

Seeing the Grants.gov initiative as an opportunity to improve on their proposal submission process, KFRI began to investigate potential vendors of integrated solutions for proposal development and submission in the spring of 2006. The business challenge was to select and deploy a solution which was both comprehensive and flexible enough to accommodate the requirements of the Kaiser research enterprise, and to do so in time for the February 5<sup>th</sup> NIH deadline.

KFRI faced several challenges. Each operating unit has different Indirect Cost and fringe benefit rates. The operating units can be sub-contractors to each other and, when under subcontract, there may or may not be recoverable Indirect Costs available to the prime. Additionally, the software is used primarily by designated regional research administrators, as most science staff do not log onto the system. Finally, all of the proposals are submitted under one entity, KFRI.

The decision process required consensus among the regional research offices.

The following technical standards influenced the choice of vendors:

- An on-site deployment was required.
- Microsoft Operating Systems and MS SQL Database were required.
- Rapid deployment and training would be required for January 2007 rollout.

## Solution

Cayuse424 was selected in November of 2006 with the following results:

- Web Training completed on December 8, 2006
- Site deployment delivered on December 19, 2006
- Rollout to staff for use occurred on December 19, 2006
- First Electronic Submission occurred on January 24, 2007

The results above were supported by the following Cayuse products and services:

- Cayuse424 on-site installation.
- Cayuse Research Plan templates
- Concurrent web training to the research centers.
- Phone Support and upgrade services.

## Benefits

Each of the operating units can easily and efficiently create primary proposals for themselves and sub-proposals for the other centers to use. Any changes in the sub-proposal budgets automatically flow to the prime without intervention. KFRI is currently piloting a related feature of the system: allowing sub-contractors *external to KFRI* to logon to the system to prepare sub-award budgets. These powerful features make collaboration much easier and faster.

Once the central office approves the proposal, the submission task is delegated to the individual research centers, allowing the central office to concentrate on the approval process rather than the mechanics of submission.

The software allows KFRI to improve on many administrative procedures. When a proposal is created, key Oakland personnel are invited into the proposal work space. The validation engine in the proposal workspace gives a running tally of *errors and warnings*. When these errors and warnings fall to a low level, the KFRI personnel have a visual clue that the proposal is complete enough that they should provide feedback and pre-approvals prior to final central office review.

The *Supporting Documents* upload area in the proposal workspace is used extensively to provide a repository for important proposal documents that do not get submitted electronically but are stored with the proposal including: KFRI transmittal forms, Consortia Letters of Intent, Human Subjects Training Plans, etc..

Among the other benefits cited by KFRI are the following:

- Excellent end-user acceptance among the different research centers.
- Ease-of-use promotes efficient and rapid proposal development with minimal training
- Flexibility of Cayuse424 enhances a wide variety of collaborations between the research centers
- Rapid and comprehensive feedback on validations makes for reliable submissions

“Supporting Kaiser’s grants application process to meet NIH, AHRQ, and CDC electronic submission requirements was a significant milestone that the Kaiser Foundation Research Institute needed to meet. We’ve been extremely impressed with Cayuse’s solution, Cayuse424, and its ability to streamline our application process. Kaiser submits on average 80-90 federal proposals per year, to date, four of our research centers have successfully submitted a total of 20 applications using Cayuse424, with a total dollar value of 23.3 million.” said Paul Steele, Project Manager for Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research.