WHAT AUDITORS ACTUALLY ASK FOR

Common Single Audit requests, and what satisfies them

Request lists are written in the language of testing, not the language of running a programme. Here is what the common requests are really asking.

Provide your subrecipient risk assessments for the period.

Really testing	Tests whether monitoring was proportionate to risk, which requires risk to have been assessed before monitoring was chosen.
What satisfies it	A dated assessment per subrecipient, naming the assessor, stating a tier and giving the reasoning.
Creates a finding	"We know our subrecipients well." Familiarity is not an assessment and is not testable.

Show evidence that monitoring occurred.

Really testing	Tests execution, not intent. A monitoring plan is a control design; this tests whether the control operated.
What satisfies it	Dated records naming who did what: desk review notes, site visit reports, invoice dispositions, follow-ups.
Creates a finding	"We are in constant contact with them." Undated contact is invisible to an audit.

Provide the performance reports submitted for this award.

Really testing	Tests that reports were filed, filed on time, and are consistent with the accounting record and with each other.
What satisfies it	The reports as submitted, with submission dates and the portal used - not a document that has been updated since.
Creates a finding	Producing a report that no longer matches what was filed, because the working document kept being edited.

Explain the variance between budgeted and actual costs.

Really testing	Tests whether the organisation noticed, decided, and had authority for the change - not whether variance occurred.
What satisfies it	A dated decision record naming who approved the reallocation and on what basis, plus agency approval where required.
Creates a finding	A reconstructed explanation with no contemporaneous decision behind it.

Who has access to the grant records, and how is that controlled?

Really testing	Tests internal control under 2 CFR 200.303: segregation of duties and limited access.
What satisfies it	A named list of who holds what access, evidence it is enforced by the system rather than by convention, and a log of material actions.

Creates a finding	A shared login. It eliminates attribution for everything else in the file.

Provide the corrective action taken on prior-year findings.

Really testing	Tests whether findings recur. A repeat finding is treated far more seriously than a first occurrence.
What satisfies it	The summary schedule of prior audit findings, with dated evidence each corrective action was implemented and verified.
Creates a finding	"That was fixed" without a date, an owner, or verification.

Provide procurement documentation for this purchase.

Really testing	Tests that competition requirements for the dollar threshold were met and selection was documented.
What satisfies it	The solicitation, the responses, the basis for selection, and a price or cost analysis.
Creates a finding	A sole-source purchase with no written justification.

How do you know payroll charged to this award is allowable?

Really testing	Tests that personnel costs reflect actual work on the award - usually the largest charged cost.
What satisfies it	Records supporting how effort was determined, consistent with your written policy and reconciled to payroll.
Creates a finding	Budgeted percentages charged every period with nothing reconciling them to actual effort.

Provide subrecipients' Single Audit reports and your review of them.

Really testing	Tests the 200.332(f) duty to obtain and act on subrecipient audit results - the review, not just the report.
What satisfies it	The report, evidence you reviewed it, and a management decision on findings within the required period.
Creates a finding	Holding the report unread. Possession is not review.

The pattern underneath

Almost every request tests the same thing in a different costume: was there a contemporaneous, attributable record made at the time by a named person. Not whether the organisation was careful - auditors mostly assume that - but whether the care can be demonstrated afterwards by someone who was not there. That is why reconstruction fails.
