



eRA Project Team Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, July 26, 2005
Time: 9:00–10:00 a.m.
Location: Rockledge 1, 5th floor conference room
Chair: Tom Boyce (in Izja Lederhendler's absence)

Next Meeting: Tuesday, Aug. 23, 9:00 a.m., Rockledge 1, 5th floor conference room

Opening Remarks and Announcements

Tom Boyce

- ❑ Tom Boyce said he was pleased to announce that Starla Collins had joined eRA as his executive assistant.
- ❑ Tom reported that he met with the Extramural IT Steering Committee (ITSC) recently and discussed, among other things, the multiple-Principal Investigator (PI) issue. They gave the go ahead to begin work on it. eRA has made some assumptions; some policy decisions still need to be made such as whether to implement a listing of multiple PIs only in the 424RR form or also in other forms. He also discussed with the ITSC the Scientific Review Evaluation Award (SREA) transition issue (a proposal to improve the process of making payments to scientific reviewers, by for example paying them through electronic transfer of funds instead of checks). They tabled the discussion, saying there are issues with paying other types of outside consultants in NIH and wanted eRA to engage in further discussion.
- ❑ Tom noted that eRA was still awaiting a decision regarding its fiscal 2006 budget request.
- ❑ Tom said that a group of scientists had offered to serve as a focus group for testing the electronic submission of grant applications via Grants.gov to NIH. This would serve as a great opportunity for NIH and Grants.gov to get feedback on the process. Timothy Hays noted that the group consists of 45 to 50 researchers ranging from graduate students to senior investigators. The group is meeting from Sept. 11 to 16 for a workshop near Los Angeles, California. They would like to go through the process of filling out and submitting “test” applications to Grants.gov and viewing the application in the Commons. Tim noted that the testing would give eRA a heads up on potential problems and input on the 424RR Application Guide.
- ❑ Tom said the transition team was working hard on the OERRM reorganization and he would have more to report down the road. Working groups are being formed to look at some specific areas: Data Quality, Reporting, Customer Support Services, Business & Planning Office/Project Management Office and Software Testing. Tom said he would like to engage people from the outside in this thought process as they build their organizational structure and urged them to volunteer in these groups. The first offsite meeting to kick off these working groups will be held August 9 and 10 at the Bolger Center in Potomac. The goal is to have the groups deliver their reports by October 1.

- ❑ Tom welcomed George Gardner, who is assuming the role of Grants Policy Advocate from Marcia Hahn. George comes from the Agency for Healthcare and Research Quality and was earlier working for the National Institute of General Medical Sciences.
- ❑ Tom noted that in the past week, eRA had made really good progress on OPDIV (Operating Divisions) integration. There are a couple of policy issues that need to be determined by the higher-ups but the two sides seem to be in agreement on other issues. Pete Morton noted that it was not an easy process for either side – for the OPDIVs who were mandated to come in to a new system and for eRA who was asked to accommodate them.

Requiring electronic submission of SBIR/STTRs

Scarlett Gibb

Scarlett Gibb noted that an announcement will be made at the this week's Seventh Annual SBIR/STTR (Small Business Innovation Research/Small Business Technology Transfer) conference, requiring that all SBIR/STTR grant applications to NIH for the Dec. 1 receipt date will need to come in electronically through Grants.gov, the one stop federal portal for finding and applying for grants. This is the first mechanism that NIH is rolling out through Grants.gov. eRA has been working diligently for months to prepare for this momentous occasion and will be making a big push at this conference. The 424 Research and Related forms are ready. David Wright and Jennifer Flach will make presentations at the conference on the 424RR form, registering in Commons, etc. In addition, eRA's Help Desk will be manning a booth to answer any questions from the SBIR/STTR community.

Scarlett noted that NIH expects to receive about 2500 SBIR/STTR applications on Dec. 1. Tom Tatham asked about outreach efforts on this submission. Scarlett noted that:

- The 424RR form will be posted online.
- Information has already been posted on the Small Business Funding Opportunities page of the Office of Extramural Research website (<http://grants2.nih.gov/grants/funding/sbir.htm>) urging PIs to register in Commons and on Grants.gov as soon as possible. A more formal announcement will follow in early August (so as not to confuse applicants filing for the Aug. 1 receipt deadline for SBIR/STTRs).
- Information will also be conveyed by Jo Anne Goodnight through a comprehensive SBIR/STTR Listserv.
- Tim Hays is working with a working group of Program Administrators and Review to discuss issues as well as the 424RR Application Guide.
- Amy Swain will be working with SBIR Outreach officers at ICs.

Marcia Hahn noted that a NIH Guide Notice will also be issued regarding the Dec. 1 submission. Overall, she noted that the SBIR/STTR community is well organized, facilitating easy dissemination of information.

Jennifer Flach noted that if some of the Service Providers are ready with their interface with Grants.gov, they may be ready to offer applicants the service of submitting to NIH via Grants.gov.

Skip Moyer noted that Grants.gov requires an applicant to sign on as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). He wondered how that would work if an applicant goes through a third party, such as a Service Provider. David Wright replied that the Service Provider would submit the application through the authority given to the Signing Official at an Institution.

Carlos Caban asked if new RFA/PAs (Request for Applications/Program Announcements) for SBIRs are issued, will they be using the 424RR? Marcia Hahn noted that they will have to write it, because there is not one now. For this fall, a Guide Program Announcement for the SBIR/STTRs will be issued that is 424RR centric. That announcement will be used to feed into the new solicitation published in January. Carlos asked what happens with special RFAs. Marcia said that is an issue they have not addressed yet. The word will have to be put out in future that any IC developing an RFA/PA using SBIR/STTRs will have to come in using a 424RR.

Table Talk

Ramping up eCGAP submissions—The group discussed a recent statement by the Center for Scientific Review's (CSR's) new director, Antonio Scarpa, that he would push for approximately 1,000 eCGAP applications to be submitted electronically for the Oct/Nov receipt dates. Eileen Bradley said that eCGAP applications seemed to be stuck in double digits. Pete Morton noted that there seems to be an erroneous perception that eRA does not have the capacity to deal with 1,000 applications. Pete said he had verified that there is capacity for that magnitude; it had simply not been ramped up ahead of time because that would have been an expensive proposition. Right now, eRA is meticulously working on a step-by-step examination of its needs from beefing up the Help Desk to scaling up servers to deal with the targeted influx of applications. While the jump from accepting 30-40 applications to 1,000 applications may appear fairly dramatic, it is very doable and part of the anticipated plan. Jennifer Flach noted that the concern was not as much capacity as the lack of a concerted push to encourage electronic submission. In that light, she said it was exciting to have Dr. Scarpa push for more eCGAP submissions.

424RR training—Janna Wehrle expressed some concern that the Aug. 4 OER-organized training for extramural staff on the 424RR form had not been well publicized. She noted that given vacation schedules in August, the date should be widely disseminated. The notice will be sent out by OER. Marcia Hahn noted that the training will also be web cast. She is also recommending additional training sessions for the Scientific Review Administrators (SRA) retreat at the end of September and at a Grants Management (GM) retreat in November.

The training is slated for Thursday, Aug. 4, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Natcher Conference Center (Building 45) at NIH's main campus in Bethesda. For information, go to http://odoerdb2.od.nih.gov/oer/training/esa/esa_training_20050804.htm.

Attendees

Austin, Patricia (OERRM)

Bielenstein, Danielle
(NIH/FIC)

Boyce, Tom (OERRM)
Bradley, Eileen (CSR)

Bukowski, Maria (OD)	Gardner, George (OPERA)	Salata, Kalman (CSR)
Burns, Amy (LTS/OERRM)	Gibb, Scarlett (OERRM)	Schorr, Brian (Perot)
Caban, Carlos (OER)	Goodman, Mike (OERRM)	Seppala, Sandy
Carr, Faizah (AHRQ)	Hahn, Marcia (OER/OPERA)	(LTS/OERRM)
Collins, Starla (eRA)	Hays, Timothy (OD)	Silver, Sara (Z-Tech/OERRM)
Copeland, Zoe-Ann (OERRM)	Imrie, Anne (SAIC)	Sinnett, Everett (CSR)
Costa, Tom (Blueprint)	Khramkova, Tatiana (IBM)	Snouffer, Anna (OD/OFACP)
Cox, Michael (OERRM)	Lagas, Robert (Lagas Associates)	Subramanya, Manju
Crapo, Harry (PSGS)	Leahy, Tim (MSD)	(LTS/OERRM)
Cummins, Sheri	Lee, Anna (NIH/OD)	Tatham, Tom (CSR)
(LTS/OERRM)	Lynch, Peggy (IBM/OERRM)	Van Brunt, Virginia (LTS)
Diggs, Lana (OERRM)	Masood, Khalid (OER)	Wehrle, Janna (NIGMS)
Dixon, Diana (OERRM)	Morris, Richard (NIAID)	Wright, David (OER)
Dutcher, Sylvia	Moyer, Skip (AHRQ)	Zhen, Changqing
(Mitrotek/OERRM)	Nastea, Sorin (IBM)	(IBM/OERRM)
Faenson, Inna (OERRM)	Piquet, Barbara (IBM/eRA)	
Flach, Jennifer (OERRM)		