NIH eSubmission Tips for Small Business Applicants

Prepare to Apply - Start early!

Get registered   **Registration can take 2-4 weeks to complete – even longer for new businesses!***

- Small business concern must be registered in Grants.gov.
    - Designate E-Biz Point of Contact (POC) who will approve all Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) requests for "submit" authority within Grants.gov.
- Small business concern must be registered in eRA Commons.
    - Designate Signing Official (SO) with overall authority for your business' Commons account administration and institution profile.
- All Project Director/Principal Investigators (PD/PIs) need eRA Commons accounts with the PI role.
    - If you do not have an account, work with your SO to get an account set up. Otherwise, make sure your existing account is 'affiliated' with the applicant small business concern. (See http://era.nih.gov/ElectronicReceipt/faq_special.htm#2)
    - If you are both the PI and SO, you must have two separate accounts (one for each role).
    - Your account will stay with you throughout your career. The same account can be affiliated with multiple institutions. You are responsible for maintaining your account information.

Ensure you have appropriate software

- A version of Adobe Reader that is compatible with Grants.gov forms is needed to download, prepare and submit your application. (See http://www.grants.gov/resources/download_software.jsp.)
- PDF conversion software to prepare required attachments. PDF format is required by NIH for all text attachments. (See http://era.nih.gov/ElectronicReceipt/pdf_guidelines.htm#).

Find Opportunity and Download Package

- Find NIH Small Business Research opportunities at: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/sbir.htm.
- **IMPORTANT:** All applications must be in response to a Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA).
- Application packages are specific to individual FOAs (i.e., can't reuse application forms from one opportunity to another).
- Use "Parent" announcements for your unsolicited, investigator-initiated applications.
    - SBIR Parent Funding Opportunity Announcement: PA-09-080
    - STTR Parent Funding Opportunity Announcement: PA-09-081

Prepare Application

- Follow ALL instructions in the application guide and within the FOA. Instructions in the FOA "trump" those found in the application guide.
- See application guide for fields that NIH requires, but are not marked required on federal-wide forms:
    - SF424 R&R cover component – include contact email address (box 5)
    - R&R Senior/Key Person Profile component - include the eRA Commons Username in the "Credential" field for all PD/PIs and complete the Organization field for all Sr/Key entries
- The NIH system will automatically generate the table of contents, page numbers, headers and footers. We recommend the use of section headings to make sections easy to identify for reviewers.
- Remember to include effort of a value greater than zero in either calendar months or a combination of academic and summer months for all Senior/Key Persons listed in the budget.

Submit Application to Grants.gov

- Only the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) can submit applications to Grants.gov.
- For your submission to be considered "on-time"
  - All registrations must be completed prior to submission deadline
  - You must have a Grants.gov tracking# and timestamp (or eRA help desk ticket confirming a system issue preventing submission) by 5:00 p.m. local time on submission deadline date
  - Any system-identified errors/warnings must be corrected and the submission process completed within the "error correction window"
- Submission to Grants.gov is *not* the last step…you must follow the application all the way through to viewing the assembled image in eRA Commons. **If you can't VIEW it, we can't REVIEW it!**

Check Submission Status in eRA Commons

- NIH provides status emails to the contact, AOR and the PD/PI email addresses listed on the SF424 R&R, but email can be unreliable. Proactively check your application status in eRA Commons (**https://commons.era.nih.gov/commons/**).
- Errors are fatal – your application will not be accepted until all errors are resolved and the AOR submits a complete "Changed/Corrected" application through Grants.gov (**http://grants.gov/**).
- Warnings do not stop processing and are addressed at your discretion.
- "Error correction window" - the two business days following the submission deadline provided to correct eRA-identified errors/warnings. Following caveats apply:
  - Initial application must be submitted "on-time"
  - Proof of "on time" submission and description of all changes made within the window must be documented in the PHS 398 Cover Letter component
  - AOR is expected to enforce that changes made are restricted to those necessary to address system-identified errors/warnings. NIH may reject any application with additional changes.

Check Assembled Application

- After your error-free application is assembled in the eRA Commons you will have two business days, known as the "application viewing window" to check it before it is made available to NIH staff for further processing. This is your first chance to view/print the application just as a reviewer will see it – use it!
- Corrections to the application after this viewing period, if not prohibited by the FOA, can only be made through and at the discretion of the Scientific Review Officer (SRO).

Finding Help

- For general information on the SBIR/STTR program:
  - **SBIR/STTR Program Office**
    Web: **http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/sbir.htm**   Email: **sbir@od.nih.gov**

- For general information on the NIH Electronic Submission of Grant Applications program:
  - Web: **http://era.nih.gov/ElectronicReceipt/**

- For information on eRA Commons registration, application validation, and post submission functionality:
  - **eRA Commons Help Desk**
    Web: **http://ithelpdesk.nih.gov/eRA/** (Preferred method of contact)
    Toll-free: 1-866-504-9552   Phone : 301-402-7469   TTY : 301-451-5939
    Hours : Mon-Fri, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET

- For information about Grants.gov registration, form behavior/navigation, or submission issues contact::
  - **Grants.gov Contact Center**
    Toll-free: 1-800-518-4726
    Hours : Mon-Fri, 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET
    Email : **support@grants.gov**