

Tips for Reviewers

Viewing NIH Electronic Grant Applications

What is the SF424 (R&R)

The SF424 Research & Related (R&R) is the new standardized federal-wide grant application form. All federal grant-making agencies are required to transition to this form and participate in the initiative to create a single online location (Grants.gov) to find and apply for federal grants. Unfortunately, the standardized form does not capture all of the information formerly included on the paper PHS 398, so NIH must combine the SF424 (R&R) form with agency specific (PHS 398) forms to gather additional information. The majority of NIH applications (R01, R03, R21...) must be submitted electronically using these forms.

Quick Tips

- **Printing** – In Acrobat Reader, use the “Current Page” or “Page Range” options on the print menu to identify specific pages or individual sections to print, rather than printing the entire application. Unfortunately the data feed from Grants.gov includes a great deal of “white space” and lists that are not necessary for review.
NEW – If printing the grant application from eRA Commons, set the Page Scaling to 'None' to print exactly what was submitted. If the page scaling is set to 'Fit to Page,' the page header is included but the page margin is larger and the font size is reduced.
- **Bookmarks** – In Acrobat Reader, the Page Layout (under the View menu) must be set to “Continuous” or the bookmarks will be off by one page.
- **Viewing Images** – In Acrobat Reader, the Zoom Toolbar includes a magnifying glass icon to adjust the document's magnification and image size. If an image in the body of the application is too small, simply click on the magnifying glass icon and then click on the image that you would like to see larger. See the Grant Applications CD User Guide for additional viewing options and instructions for Windows/PC and Macintosh users.
- **Search & Find** – In Acrobat Reader, under the Edit menu there are options to Search or Find specific words or phrases within a particular application image or file. You can also include bookmarks and comments in your search.
- **Summary Page** – The first page of the application image is a summary of key information included in the application. (e.g. Humans, Animals and/or Clinical Trials, New Investigator, Budget Totals and Key Personnel) *Viewing Tip:* The page is located before the “Face Page” and because it is not part of the official application, it is not bookmarked. If you navigate to other forms within the application, click on the Face Page bookmark and then scroll up to view.
- **New Investigators** – Searching for New Investigator information? It is located on the cover sheet and in the Clinical Trial & HESC attachment (Item 1).
- **Appendices** – On the CD, click the Appendices bookmark to view; you cannot just scroll through the application to see them. In the eRA Commons system, the Appendices are separate links included with the application (and the previous summary statement for amended applications). The Appendix attachments may not appear in the same order that the applicant uploaded them to Grants.gov. Journal publications and URLs will not be active links unless you are connected to the Internet.

Need Help?

Please check the Review CD Main Menu for:

- Guidelines for Reviewers (includes who to contact if you have questions)
- NIH *Grant Applications CD User Guide* which includes detailed instructions for:
 - Acrobat Reader Use & Functionality
 - Finding Grant Applications
 - Copying & Pasting Text
 - Printing

Call the eRA Commons Help Desk for support using the Internet Assisted Review (IAR) Module

- Phone: 301-402-7469 / Toll Free: 1-866-504-9552 / TTY: 301-451-5939
- Phone support hours: Mon.–Fri., 7 a.m.– 8 p.m. ET
- Web support: <http://ithelpdesk.nih.gov/eRA/> enter your own support ticket for the fastest response

NIH Office of Extramural Research (OER) Websites

For up-to-date information on electronic submission, check the following websites:

NIH Office of Extramural Research: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/oer.htm>

NIH Office of Extramural Research Electronic Submission: <http://era.nih.gov/ElectronicReceipt/>



Application Bookmark Labels – Reference Table for Potentially Confusing Items

The bookmark labels do not always match the title on the application page. Also, some important information is not clearly bookmarked. The table below is not exhaustive, but explains some discrepancies in titles, and identifies items that are not otherwise obvious.

BOOKMARK LABEL	SF424 (R&R) PAGE TITLE	NOTES
<i>Other Information</i>	Research & Related Other Project Information	Items 1 & 2 identify human and animal involvement
<i>Project Description</i>	Project Summary/Abstract	Abstract
<i>Public Health Relevance Statement</i>	Project Narrative	"Significance" in lay terms
<i>Detailed Budget Year 1</i>	Research & Related Budget – Sections A – K	For non-modular applications
<i>Cumulative Budget</i>	Budget Summary Totals	For non-modular - shows all years
<i>Clinical Trial & HESC</i>	PHS 398 Cover Page Supplement	Item 1, second section, New Investigator status Item 2 clinical trial information Item 4 stem cell information
<i>List of Research Plan Attachments</i>	PHS 398 Research Plan	Sections 2 – 5 (formerly Sections A – D of the paper PHS 398) Item 1 Application Type: <u>New Terminology</u> New = new Resubmission = amended Renewal = type 2, competing continuation Continuation = type 5, non-competing application Revision = competing supplement to awarded grant

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is there so much “white space”?

White space occurs because sections of the research plan and other areas of the application are uploaded as separate attachments. Separating them allows us to bookmark the sections to aid with navigating through the electronic application and enables validation of NIH business requirements for each section. See the printing tips above for options that will help you print only those items that are necessary for review.

Why are the contents out of order compared to the traditional PHS 398 format?

NIH application packages combine the SF424 standard forms with agency-specific forms. The application images are created by combining elements from both forms into a single document. Recreating the look of the PHS 398 form pages would be cost prohibitive and is not in the spirit of the federal goal to create a standardized format which will be used by all agencies.

Can you change the titles to match the PHS 398 and make the content entered on the forms easier to read?

Because we are required to use the standardized SF424 (R&R) forms, we do not have the ability to change the content and appearance of the forms. Where we have control (the agency-specific PHS 398 forms), we follow the titles found in the PHS 398 paper form.

What is the computer gibberish that is included with the application?

The listing of filenames and attachments (the designations for the files submitted by the PI to support the application) is application content generated by Grants.gov and is automatically displayed after each form that contains attachments. We hope to eliminate this in the future, but in the meantime, it is not necessary for review and does not need to be printed.