

## NIH eSubmission Items of Interest – November 19, 2008

### NIH Road to Adobe

Before heading home from work the other night, I decided to stop by a new shop that was in the general direction I was heading. I wasn't sure of the shop's exact location, so I plugged the address into my handy-dandy electronic navigation device (GPS) to chart my course. The roads soon became unfamiliar and when I saw the first "New Traffic Pattern" sign, I knew I was in trouble...I looked at my GPS and saw my little car icon drive right off the road. I heard "Recalculating," in a frustrated little tone and my poor GPS couldn't figure out what to do next. I ended up abandoning my current course until I could get a better idea of how to get to the shop and made my way back to the familiar roads that would take me home. It occurs to me that my little adventure parallels where we are with eSubmission...

NIH needs to get to a number of destinations:

- Grants.gov's Adobe-based application forms (same content as current PureEdge forms re-worked to use Adobe instead)
- Form updates resulting from:
  - Three-year OMB renewal of PHS 398 form set [[NOT-OD-08-028](#)]
  - Three-year OMB renewal of SF424 (R&R) form set
  - The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA)

eSubmission is a bit like my GPS. It needs to be equipped with the appropriate set of maps in order to successfully navigate to a destination. The route to Adobe-based versions of the current PureEdge application forms is fairly straight forward. It's basically a remodeling of an old destination – the forms look a little different, but the mapping behind them hasn't changed and our eSubmission system knows how to traverse them to process an application.

The paths to the remaining destinations listed are trickier. The form updates have been under development at Grants.gov and we have yet to receive and incorporate into our eSubmission system the new information that will allow us to get where we need to go. We had hoped to be able to knock off multiple destinations in a single trip to cut down on applicant and agency logistical burden. We now know we'll need to make several trips to hit them all.

### ***First destination – get to Adobe forms***

Adobe-based application packages will be available for most opportunities by December 5. These packages, we'll call "ADOBE-FORMS-A", will contain Adobe-based equivalents of the PureEdge forms we currently use. This transition will allow our applicants to take advantage of the new Adobe forms and will provide a better solution to users with newer operating systems that were supported in PureEdge only through the use of the CITRIX service. This incremental transition also allows NIH and system-to-system solution providers a more realistic time frame to ready systems to accommodate updates to the forms. I can almost hear the collective sigh of relief from system-to-system solution providers and the 20% of our applicants that rely on them. Since we will still need to accommodate the additional form updates, these packages will likely be used only through April 2009.

### ***Future destinations***

Beginning in March 2009, we will re-post application packages to align with the latest OMB and FFATA form updates ("ADOBE-FORMS-B"). We hope that these packages will remain for at least two submission rounds. This form set will position us to move forward with the Fellowship and Training transitions to electronic application submission. These transitions are dependent on our ability to process applications that use the updated forms.

## **Bringing More Grant Programs Along for the Ride**

How does all this affect our scheduled transitions to electronic application submission for the Career Development (K), Fellowship (F) and Training (T) programs?

Career Development will transition as scheduled for the February 12, 2009 receipt date and will use the Adobe equivalent of the current PureEdge forms ("ADOBE-FORMS-A").

The transition for the Training program is on schedule for a September 25, 2009 transition. The Training application packages, however, will include the OMB and FFATA form updates ("ADOBE-FORMS-B").

Fellowships are currently scheduled to transition April 8, 2009. The delay in receiving updated forms from Grants.gov has forced us to shift our development schedules. We will now be working to accommodate the form updates during the timeframe we had planned to prepare our system for the F transition. This leaves us much less certain about our ability to meet our current transition date for Fellowships. A decision on when to transition Fellowships will be made very soon and communicated through the normal channels. Keep an eye on the [NIH Guide](#).

## **Taking the Show on the Road**

NIH has announced the dates and locations for the two 2009 NIH Regional Seminars on Program Funding and Grants Administration ([NOT-OD-09-012](#)). Georgia State University and Georgia Institute of Technology will co-host the first two-day event in Atlanta, Georgia April 16-17. University of Nevada, Las Vegas and the University of Nevada, Reno are the co-ambassadors for the second event to be held June 25-26 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Optional NIH electronic Research Administration computer workshops will be offered the day prior to each conference (April 15 & June 24). Scarlett and I are offering two courses at the 2009 Regional Seminars - "eRA Electronic Application Submission" and "Account Admin Basics & Post Submission Functionality". These workshops are geared to folks new to the eSubmission process and eRA Commons. We'll also be available at our eRA booth throughout the conferences to answer questions and hear about your experience with our services.

These are my favorite events of the year and I encourage you to consider attending. Registration for the first seminar and workshops in Atlanta has already opened. Space is limited and they tend to fill up fast.

We wish you all a Healthy & Happy Thanksgiving!

Take care,

*Sheri Cummins & Scarlett Gibb*

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Note: This message was sent to multiple listservs; you may receive it more than once – sorry for any inconvenience. To subscribe/unsubscribe to eRA listservs, please go to our [Get Connected](#) page.

## Follow-on items to Dec. 5, 2008 Item of Interest

- I’ve received a number of calls and emails from folks that are taking advantage of the special submission considerations extended to PD/PIs that are also appointed members of NIH Study Sections ([NOT-OD-08-026](#)). Their PureEdge submissions are resulting in the following fatal error from Grants.gov:

“The Closing Date of the grant opportunity for which you have applied has already passed and the grantor agency is no longer accepting applications.”

Although the “grant opportunity” itself (e.g., PA-07-070) may still be open, the PureEdge package attached to the opportunity has closed as a result of this transition. All applications to transitioned FOAs now must use Adobe application packages.

We have done our best to minimize the transition impact on applicants. NIH literally receives electronic applications every day. Realistically, we can only plan around our published submission dates. The need for some applicants to move their application information from the old PureEdge forms into the new Adobe forms is unavoidable.

Now that we have a proven, automated process for moving a set of FOAs from PureEdge to Adobe, we will be able to provide more specific timing information in advance of the transition of the remaining active FOAs still using PureEdge. We hope this additional communication will result in even fewer applicants needing to re-enter their application data.

- I’ve also received some reports of server failures when trying to download the new packages. That issue appears to have cleared. The Grants.gov’s Contact Center is your best bet when you have trouble downloading FOAs from their site.
- One more item worth passing on...an applicant asked “If I open the package with Adobe 9, but then use adobe 8 (both compatible) on a different computer, will there be a problem?” I asked Grants.gov this very same question and I was assured that as long as everyone that touches the application is using a compatible version there should be no issue.

That’s all for now...

*Sheri*

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**From:** Ask eRA (NIH/OD)  
**Sent:** Saturday, December 06, 2008 12:55 PM  
**To:** List ERA\_COMMONS\_ADMIN-L  
**Cc:** eRA Communications Office  
**Subject:** eRA eSubmission Item of Interest - NIH FOAs with Adobe forms now available

**eRA eSubmission Item of Interest – December 5, 2008**

**Yesterday PureEdge, Today Adobe!**

NIH reached a major milestone in our transition from Grants.gov's PureEdge-based application forms to their Adobe-based equivalents. **NIH has updated more than 500 active Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs) with Adobe-based application packages** and closed their PureEdge predecessors (<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-09-026.html>.) This "Yesterday PureEdge, Today Adobe" switch would not have been possible without the support Grants.gov provided to "auto-magically" transition our active announcements to the new forms. Our sincere thanks go out to the Grants.gov Program Office and their development staff for their round-the-clock assistance with this transition!

The change was timed (accommodating the error correction window, application viewing window and [late application policy](#)) so that applicants submitting for the final PureEdge standard receipt dates could complete the submission process using the same form set. We also tried to transition to the Adobe forms with at least 3-4 weeks for applicants to prepare Adobe-based applications for the next receipt dates. The January 7, 2009 receipt date for AIDS and AIDS-Related Applications will be the first NIH [standard receipt date](#) to use the Adobe-based forms.

Last September NIH began posting some announcements without associated application forms. NIH staff is now returning to those announcements to post Adobe-based application packages. This process will be finished early next week.

There are still a number of active FOAs that will continue to use PureEdge packages into January 2009, including some FOAs for grant programs with early December standard receipt dates (small business and conference programs) and FOAs due to expire in January. In early 2009, the remaining active FOAs with PureEdge forms will be updated and our transition to Adobe will be complete.

#### Important notes...

- **You will need a compatible version of the free Adobe Reader on your computer prior to downloading the Adobe application packages.** See Grants.gov's Download Software page ([http://grants.gov/help/download\\_software.jsp](http://grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp)) for a list of compatible Adobe Reader versions, download links and other important details. Using the correct Adobe Reader is critical to successful submission - application packages opened with other software or non-compatible versions of Adobe Acrobat/Reader can become corrupted and may fail to submit properly.
- When downloading the new forms, look for "**ADOBE-FORMS-A**" in the Competition ID on the Grants.gov Download Application page to confirm you are downloading the correct grant application package.
- The content of the actual announcements and the announcement numbers have not changed as a result of these form package updates. For example, PA-07-070 is still the "Parent R01" used for investigator-initiated applications.
- Any in-progress applications using the old PureEdge forms associated with transitioned FOAs are no longer viable for submission. You must use the new Adobe-based application packages.
- Check out NIH's Electronic Submission of Grant Applications Web site (<http://era.nih.gov/ElectronicReceipt/>) for Adobe transition resources.
- Grants.gov owns, maintains, and supports the Adobe application forms and they have applicant resources on their Web site (<http://grants.gov/index.jsp>) worth exploring.
- For you folks that submit using system-to-system solutions rather than downloadable forms ...although these transitioned announcements are now posted in Grants.gov's 2007 system, Grants.gov has helped us "lock in" the exact form/XML schema versions used in the PureEdge/2006 system. You will need to use the newly posted packages in order to successfully submit, but should find no schema changes resulting from this transition.

**A few more thoughts...**

Many of you reading this message have already used Adobe-based forms to submit applications to other agencies and are more experienced with the new forms than we are at this point. Please continue to share any *tips* and *words of wisdom (or caution)* you've picked up along the way. Collective experience is a powerful tool that can be leveraged to make us all more successful. If you have general comments or suggestions about eRA eSubmission or eRA Commons services, Scarlett and I would also love to hear from you.

However, please direct your specific production issues to the appropriate help desk (<http://era.nih.gov/ElectronicReceipt/support.htm>). The help desks should always be your first line of defense. Not only are they equipped to handle the vast majority of support requests, they also officially document your issues and efforts to resolve them. Food for thought - it is hard to claim you've done "*everything you could to resolve an issue before a deadline*" and have no help desk record of a support request.

Take care,

*Sheri Cummins & Scarlett Gibb*

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VVVV