

eRA eSubmission Items of Interest – January 29, 2009

The Communications Team was hard at work putting out Guide Notices yesterday. Check ‘em out...

- ***Error-Correction Window Extended for All Electronic Applications with Submission Deadlines through the End of February, 2009*** ([NOT-OD-09-045](#))

We’ve heard about the extraordinarily long times it is taking to submit and understand that you have to work around a number of submission issues. We can agree that the submission environment is far from ideal. Grants.gov has plans to improve system performance and reliability, but it is unclear whether these changes will be in place in time for our February submission deadlines. We had been trying to figure out what we could immediately do to reduce anxiety. Let’s be honest, moving submission deadlines only moves the problem. Extending the “error correction window” allows you to concentrate on getting your applications in by the deadline, without simultaneously coordinating changes for corrective submissions to fix system-identified errors/warnings. We will still monitor the systems closely and are prepared to implement additional contingency plans if needed. We hope that taking this step now allows you to plan your time for maximum success.

This notice also reiterates what to do if you are experiencing problems that threaten the timely submission of your grant application or the ability to obtain a tracking number and timestamp to verify on-time submission.

- ***Announcing a Delay in Transition to Electronic Submission of Applications for Individual National Research Service Awards (Fs) and Confirming Plans to Transition Individual Research Career Development Awards (Ks)*** ([NOT-OD-09-044](#))

Career Development Award (K) applications go electronic February 12. These applications introduce the brand new *PHS398 Career Development Award Supplemental* form and a whole new section in the [application guide](#). Reference letters, an important aspect of K applications, are submitted directly into eRA Commons and joined with the K application post-submission. Detailed instructions for reference letters submission are included in that [new application guide section](#).

- ***Adobe-Based Grant Application Forms Now Available for All NIH Funding Opportunity Announcements Requiring Electronic Submission*** ([NOT-OD-09-043](#))

All NIH funding opportunity announcements are now posted with Adobe-based forms. Anyone who tries to submit a PureEdge-based application will get a message that the opportunity has closed.

If you use a system-to-system solution, we have again “locked in” the version of XML used with the PureEdge forms. However, the transitioned announcements were closed in the 2006 system and recreated in the 2007 system with the same FOA number. You will need to pick up the package posted in the 2007 system for successful submission.

Submission Survival Tips

- Start early!
- If submitting multiple grant applications for your institution, work through the initial submissions of each application to get that on-time timestamp from Grants.gov before circling back to address any identified errors or warnings.
- Use Adobe Reader 8.1.3 and/or submit your application from within your Web browser to avoid the “broken pipe” and other submission issues (see [Grants.gov’s Submission FAQs](#) for details).
- Ensure that each and every person that opens an application package uses a version of Adobe Reader that is [compatible](#) with the Grants.gov forms. Opening forms with non-compatible software can lead to file corruption that prevents successful submission. If your application is rejected at Grants.gov with “Schema validation error” or “Org.xml.SAXParseException,” call the Grants.gov Contact Center for assistance, but be prepared for bad news. These messages typically indicate corruption and you may need to re-enter your information into a fresh package and resubmit.
- If you receive multiple and/or conflicting status messages from Grants.gov - take a deep breath (you’ve got your tracking number) - give the application some time to work through the system and reach its final disposition, check your status in the eRA Commons and use the correction window if a subsequent submission is needed.
- Even better, avoid the need for corrective submissions altogether. Double-check your application for [common errors](#) before submitting:
 - ✓ Is the Credential field in the Sr/Key Person form completed for each PD/PI? Is the Organization field for every Sr/Key person completed?
 - ✓ Are all attachments in PDF format? Cool Adobe feature - you can see all attachments in a single list for easy scanning of filenames (you may need to click the paperclip at the bottom of the left toolbar if the list isn’t already visible at the bottom of your reader window)
 - ✓ Keep attachment names short (less than 50 characters, shorter is better). Do not use spaces in file names and avoid the use of any special characters (i.e., non alpha-numeric). The underscore is an acceptable separator to make the file name easier to read (e.g., Smith_des_methods012.pdf).
 - ✓ Re-read announcement and ensure you have complied with all FOA-specific requirements.
 - ✓ To be safe, close and reopen your application between submission attempts.
- **View your assembled application in Commons – it is the ONLY way to be certain it has properly reached NIH and is available for further consideration!**

Research and Related Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded) form

Many of us are intimately familiar with the *Research and Related Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)* form that allows us to collect information on up to 40 individuals. Did you know that when we started posting funding opportunities on Grants.gov that form didn’t exist and its predecessor only allowed us to collect formatted data for 8 individuals including the PD/PI?

It was our intention to discontinue the use of the non-expanded Sr/Key person form when we moved from PureEdge to Adobe. That piece of the transition did not go as anticipated and approximately 150 of the active Adobe application packages still use the non-expanded form. In most cases, applications for these opportunities will not have more than 8 Sr/Key persons, so this

will not be a problem. When more than 8 sr/key persons are included, the “Additional Senior/Key Person Profile” and “Additional Biographical Sketch” attachments at the bottom of the form should be used.

Some day (OK, it probably won't be any time soon), we'll all look back and say “remember when...”

Hang in there and take care,

Sheri Cummins & Scarlett Gibb

Customer Relationship Managers
eSubmission and eRA Commons
NIH Office of Extramural Research
askera@mail.nih.gov