

## **NIH eRA eSubmission Items of Interest - May 12, 2009**

We have had a tremendous response to our American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) initiatives with approximately 20,000 Challenge Grant (RC1) applications alone. To put that number in context, in just a few weeks we received roughly the total number of applications NIH receives in a four month submission round. That's a lot of applications that are now working their way through the process from submission to assignment. With that tremendous volume of applications, it may take staff longer to respond to support and status inquiries. All things being equal – getting huge numbers of application in the door isn't such a bad "problem".

### **Please Hold Inquiries about Assignment Changes for Challenge Grant Applications until after May 21**

NIH continues to work through the processing and assignment of the large volume of Challenge Grant applications. The Center for Scientific Review (CSR) is looking at the applications and making logical groupings for the review process. While applications are moved between groups, investigators may receive multiple emails alerting them to check eRA Commons because a change has been made to the application assignment. These are automatically generated notifications from the eRA system and may not reflect the final assignment of a particular application. We realize this is potentially confusing for applicants but we expect that many of these assignment changes will be made by May 21.

All of the Challenge Grant applications will be reviewed in Special Emphasis Panels; none of these applications will be reviewed in the regular study sections of CSR. For each Special Emphasis Panel reviewers are being recruited with expertise appropriate for the group of applications. Many Scientific Review Officers (SROs) are involved in this process and many applicants will find their applications assigned to SROs that are new to them or find that the Special Emphasis Panel is being coordinated in an Initial Review Group (IRG) that is not familiar. Applicants should not be concerned about this. Due to the volume and special efforts made to make appropriate groupings, CSR will not be considering requests to move applications between Special Emphasis Panels. Please do not direct such requests to the SROs, the IRG Chiefs or the Division of Receipt and Referral.

These notifications are also generated for Institute/Center assignment changes. Although the automated message gives contact information for the Division of Receipt and Referral, questions about IC assignments are best directed to the assigned primary IC or the IC that the investigator feels is more appropriate. IC contacts can be found on the IC-specific Challenge Grant Web sites: [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/challenge\\_award/IC\\_ChallengeWebPage.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/challenge_award/IC_ChallengeWebPage.htm).

Please assist us in getting this message out to the recipients of the automated notifications.

### **Lingering Revision Applications**

All ARRA Revision applications, except those with confirmed system issues raised to the attention of the eRA Commons Help Desk as described in [Having Problems with Your Application Submission?](#), should have completed the submission process.

The [April 21 Items of Interest](#) outlined a number of system issues requiring eRA Commons Help Desk assistance. The Help Desk continues to work through tickets potentially impacted by these issues. In some cases, the Help Desk is able to confirm a system issue, implement a workaround and contact the applicant to resubmit. These applicants are still eligible for further funding consideration as long as they immediately resubmit their applications and have no other outstanding errors.

In other cases, however, the help desk research reveals that there were no system problems prohibiting successful submission. For example, many applicants received the *"The parent grant for a revision must be awarded. The parent grant for this submission is not a funded grant."* error

because the proposed project dates of the revision fell outside of the currently awarded project period of the parent grant. [NOT-OD-09-058](#) stated “To be eligible...the period of support requested for the revision cannot exceed the current project period end date of the parent grant, including projects on a no-cost extension. Also, a no-cost extension must be in place before the revision application is submitted.” These applications did not comply with the stated guidelines and the errors triggered correctly (i.e., no system issues) – these applications are not viable for further funding consideration.

### **Late Applications**

The eRA Commons Help Desk does not have the authority to decide which applications will be accepted for consideration and which will not. They do, however, document the facts of the submission and assist applicants through any technical issues with using eRA services. Applicants always have the option of submitting their applications with an explanation in the cover letter. The Division of Receipt & Referral or other NIH staff will assess each application on a case-by-case basis relying on the documentation maintained by the help desk to assist in assessing whether a system issue prevented on-time submission.

### **Working Through Help Desk Contacts**

For many of our pending support tickets, we are finding that the reported issues have already been resolved and the applicant has subsequently submitted an error-free application through to eRA Commons. In these cases, applicants can expect an email notification that the ticket has been closed with a short description of the action (if any) taken. If you feel a ticket was not appropriately handled, please email the help desk management team at [eRAUSBTL@mail.nih.gov](mailto:eRAUSBTL@mail.nih.gov) with the ticket number and your specific concern.

Take care,

*Sheri Cummins & Scarlett Gibb*

Customer Relationship Managers  
eSubmission and eRA Commons  
NIH Office of Extramural Research  
[askera@mail.nih.gov](mailto:askera@mail.nih.gov)

Final Notes:

Although you are welcome to send suggestions, feedback and general inquiries to us at [askera@mail.nih.gov](mailto:askera@mail.nih.gov), all production issues must be reported through the [eRA Commons Help Desk](#). This ensures timely support and appropriate documentation of your issues.

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.