Application Submission System & Interface for Submission Tracking

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Why a New System?
Unfortunately..

The Structure of NIH’s multi-project applications cannot be accommodated by Grants.gov’s downloadable forms.
NIH partnered with Grant.gov team to develop ASSIST, a web-based submission system to accept multi-project applications that works in conjunction with Grants.gov.
Electronic Submission of Multi-Project Applications Using ASSIST
Registration - Preparing Application

• All ASSIST users must have eRA Commons credentials

• ASSIST recognizes accounts with any role
  o Principal Investigator (PI)
  o Assistant (ASST)
  o Account Administrator (AA)

• Work with the OSP office to register with eRA Commons
Overview of Process

1. **Find Opportunity**
   - Get familiar with the process and create an application plan

2. **Plan**
   - Define your team and provide application access

3. **Initiate**
   - Define your team and provide application access
   - Define your team and provide application access

4. **Build Team**
   - Define your team and provide application access

5. **Enter Data**
   - Enter application data for all components

6. **Finalize**
   - Finalize components and prepare your application for submission

7. **Submit**
   - Submit your application through Grants.gov to NIH

8. **Track**
   - Track status and view final application image
Find Opportunity

Find → Plan → Initiate → Build Team → Enter Data → Finalize → Submit → Track
Find Multi-project FOA in....

NIH Guide for Grants & Contracts

Grants.gov Search Grants
FOAs Link You to ASSIST

NIH Guide for Grants & Contracts

**ASSIST – electronic application submission required**

This FOA uses NIH's new Application Submission System & Interface for Submission Tracking (ASSIST) for the electronic preparation and submission of multi-project applications through Grants.gov to NIH. Applications to this FOA must be submitted electronically; paper applications will not be accepted. ASSIST replaces the Grants.gov downloadable forms currently used with most NIH opportunities and provides many features to enable electronic multi-project application submission and improve data quality, including pre-population of organization and PD/PI data, pre-submission validation of many agency business rules and the generation of data summaries in the application image used for review.

Required Application Instructions

It is critical that applicants follow the instructions in the SF424 (R&R) Application Guide, except where instructed to do otherwise in this FOA or in a Notice from the NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts and where instructions in the Application Guide are directly related to the Grants.gov downloadable forms currently used with most NIH opportunities. Conformance to all requirements (both in the Application Guide and the FOA) is required and strictly enforced. Applicants must read and follow all application instructions in the Application Guide as well as any program-specific instructions noted in Section IV. When the program-specific instructions deviate from those in the Application Guide, follow the program-specific instructions. Applications that do not comply with these instructions may be delayed or not accepted for review.

[Apply for Grant Electronically]

Grants.gov ‘Apply’

DOWNLOAD OPPORTUNITY INSTRUCTIONS AND APPLICATION

You will be taken to an external site to download the application for the following opportunity:

CFDA Number: 93.143: NIEHS Superfund Hazardous Substances_Basic Research and Education
Opportunity Number: RFA-E5-13-001: Superfund Hazardous Substance Research and Training Program (P42)
Competition ID: MULTI-PROJECT.PILOT
Competition Title: Multi-project Pilot - Use ASSIST to prepare and submit applications
Agency: National Institutes of Health
Opening Date: 03/08/2013
Closing Date: 04/10/2013
Since you did not subscribe, you will not be notified of any future changes to this opportunity. If you would like to receive notifications, please click here.

Download the instructions and application by selecting the download links below. While the instructions or application files may open directly, you may save the files to your computer for future reference and use. You do not need Internet access to read the instructions or the application once you save them to your computer.

1. Download Application Instructions
2. Link to Agency Multi-Project System
Before Jumping into ASSIST, take some time to learn about the new process
Multi-project FOAs

Section IV. Application and Submission information of NIH FOAs including important guidance for preparing your application in ASSIST

1. Requesting an Application Package

Applicants can access the SF424 (R&R) application package associated with this funding opportunity using the “Apply for Grant Electronically” button in this FOA or following the directions provided at Grants.gov.

Most applicants will use NIH’s ASSIST system to prepare and submit applications through Grants.gov to NIH. Applications prepared and submitted using applicant systems capable of submitting electronic multi-project applications to Grants.gov will also be accepted.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

It is critical that applicants follow the instructions in the SF424 (R&R) Application Guide, except where instructed in this funding opportunity announcement to do otherwise and where instructions in the Application Guide are directly related to the Grants.gov downloadable forms currently used with most NIH grant programs. Conformance to the requirements in the Application Guide is required and strictly enforced. Applications that are out of compliance with these instructions may be delayed or not accepted for review.

For information on Application Submission of Grant Applications.

The SF424 (R&R) Application Guide provides general instructions for completing application forms.
Application Guide

Agency-specific instructions are marked with the HHS logo.

Pay special attentions to Section 9-Instructions for Preparing a Multi-Project Application.

Refer to Supplemental Grant Instructions as needed (human subjects, policies, assurances, definitions and more).
New Application Format

All electronic multi-project applications will include:

- A single Overall component
  - Provides overview of entire application

- Some number of additional components
  - Component types allowed will vary by opportunity
  - Announcements will clearly indicate the types of components expected in a responsive application

- Automatically prepared data summaries
  - Compiled from information included in components
  - Helps reviewers and staff work with the applications
Multi-project Application Assembly

Understand how your application image will be assembled by NIH

- The Overall component is presented first
  • Including system-generated data summaries

- Additional component types are presented in alphabetical order (e.g., Cores before Projects)
  • Components of the same type are grouped together
  • Components are identified by type and sequential number (e.g., Core-001, Core-002)

Check out this resource:
Create an Application Plan

Find

Plan

Initiate

Build Team

Enter Data

Finalize

Submit

Track
Create an Application Plan

- Carefully read the FOA and note the allowable types of required/optional components and any special instructions
- Decide how to distribute the work
- Ensure all eRA Commons and Grants.gov registrations are in place
  - Gather the Commons IDs for everyone who will be working on your application in ASSIST
Sample excerpt from FOA (section IV)

Page Limitations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component Types Available in ASSIST</th>
<th>Research Strategy/Program Plan Page Limits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin Core</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional page limits described in the SF424 Application Guide and the Table of Page Limits must be followed.

Instructions for the Submission of Multi-Component Applications

The following section supplements the instructions found in the SF 424 Application Guide, and should be used for preparing a multi-component application.

The application should consist of the following components:

- Overall: required
- Administrative Core: required
- Core: one or more optional
- Projects: minimum of 3 required
Define the Layout of Your Application

Think about the components you plan to include

- PD/PI(s) for entire application
- Organization lead for each component
- Project lead for each component
- Project Title for application/components
- Start/End dates for application/components
Create an Application Shell

Create an application shell by initiating the application and adding the components in the order you would like them to appear

- Applicants can rearrange components of the same type (e.g., have the third project entered in ASSIST appear first in the assembled application image)
- Components can be added or abandoned at any time
Initiate your Application and Create an Application Shell
Log In to ASSIST

http://public.era.nih.gov/assist

Use your eRA Commons credentials to access ASSIST
Initiate Application

Welcome to the Application Submission System & Interface for Submission Tracking (ASSIST)

INITIATE APPLICATION
Funding Opportunity Announcement # PA-40-201
(Example: PA-00-000)

The National Institutes of Health posts Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs) in the NIH Guide for Grants & Contracts and in Grants.gov's Find Grant Opportunities. Each resource has robust search functionality to identify opportunities of interest. ASSIST can only be used to prepare and submit applications when explicitly stated in the FOA.
Using ASSIST

Available actions vary based on application context and access

Click on question mark icon to access ASSIST help

ASSIST messages appear at top of screen
Add Overall Component

Click **Add Overall Component** to start building your application.

Enter the Commons Username for the contact PD/PI and use the **Populate Name from Username** button or type **PD/PI name**.
Overall Component

The Overall Component is added to the component navigation.

Required forms are presented for the component.
Adding Additional Components

Applicants are presented with allowable component type as defined in the FOA.
Adding Components

Continue adding components to build out the application shell.
Define your Team and Provide Application Access
**Automatic Application Access**

**ASSIST** automatically provides application access to some individuals based on their Commons roles or role on the application

- The person that initiates the application has edit access for the entire application
- All SOs and AOs at the applicant institution have irrevocable edit access for the entire application
- All PD/PIs listed on the Overall application have edit access for the entire application
- All SOs and AOs at an organization leading a component have irrevocable edit access for their component
- The component Project Leads have edit access for their components
Managing Access

• Application access can be given to additional users with Commons IDs
  – Within or outside applicant organization

• Application access can be controlled across these variables:
  – Entire application vs. specific components
  – Read vs. Edit
  – Budget vs. Non-budget data
Signing Officials (SOs)

SOs at the applicant institution can

- Manage application access for other users
- Manage application status all the way to Ready for Submission status
- Delegate Access Maintainer and Status Maintainer authority to other users within their institution
- Access the Submit action
The Manage Access action can be used to provide access to additional users or modify access for existing users.
Enter Application Data

- Find
- Plan
- Initiate
- Build Team
- Enter Data
- Finalize
- Submit
- Track
Searching for In-progress Applications

Use Search Applications to access your in progress application.
Navigating to a Specific Component

Use the component navigation to identify the component you want to work on.
Every component has a Summary Page

Some actions are only available from the Summary Page
Entering Application Data

Click each tab to access form data entry screens.

Clicking **Edit** blocks other users from editing form.
Data Entry Validation

ASSIST will validate entered data and provide errors at the top of the screen when you Save.
Adding Optional Forms

Select form and click Submit

The form tab is added to navigation
# Data Entry: R & R Cover

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>All other components</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All form fields used</td>
<td>Subset of fields used:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Field 5: Organization Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Field 7 (Optional): Type of Applicant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Field 11: Descriptive Title of Applicant’s Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Field 12: Proposed Project Start/End Dates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Data Entry: Other Project Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Component</th>
<th>All other components</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human Subjects</strong>: Standard</td>
<td><strong>Human Subjects</strong>: Answer only the ‘Are Human Subjects Involved?’ and Is the Project Exempt from Federal regulations?’ questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Guide instructions apply</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vertebrate Animals</strong>: Standard</td>
<td><strong>Vertebrate Animals</strong>: Answer only the ‘Are Vertebrate Animals Used?’ question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Guide instructions apply</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Narrative</strong>: Used by NIH for statement of public health relevance; required</td>
<td><strong>Project Narrative</strong>: FOA may specify attachment is optional.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ASSIST prevents data entry of additional Human Subject and Vertebrate Animal info on components other than Overall.
## Data Entry: Research Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Component</th>
<th>All other components</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attachments:</strong> Describe the entire application.</td>
<td><strong>Attachments:</strong> Reflect the activity in the specific component.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction:</strong> Required for Resubmission/ Revision applications</td>
<td><strong>Introduction:</strong> See FOA instructions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specific Aims:</strong> Required</td>
<td><strong>Specific Aims:</strong> Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Strategy:</strong> See FOA instructions for page limit.</td>
<td><strong>Research Strategy:</strong> See FOA instructions for page limit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Data Entry: Senior/Key Person Profile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Component</th>
<th>All other components</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Use the Project Director/Principal Investigator section to designate the Contact PD/PI</td>
<td>• Use the Project Director/Principal Investigator section to designate the Project Lead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Include any Multi-PD/PIs</td>
<td>• Must not use PD/PI role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Project Role of PD/PI</td>
<td>• ASSIST defaults role to Other, Project Lead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Follow FOA instructions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Applications must include a single biosketch for each Senior/Key person regardless of the number of components they are listed on. Biosketch can be included with any entry – just pick one.
Component Actions

As component data is entered several actions are available:

- Change Component Order
- Validate Component
- Preview Current Component
- Update Component Status
  - Work In Progress – only status that allows editing
  - Complete – component data entry is complete
  - Final – component has been reviewed by applicant organization and incorporated into the application
Change Component Order

1. Select Component Type to reorder
2. Provide desired sequence
Validating a Component

Errors and Warnings are displayed
Errors and Warnings

Errors stop application submission and processing and must be corrected before the deadline

Warnings do not stop application submission or processing and are corrected at the discretion of the applicant before the deadline
Previewing a Component

Component preview does not include bookmarks, Table of Contents, data summaries or biosketches.
Once a component is marked “Complete” no additional edits can be made unless someone with entire application edit authority returns the status to “Work in Progress”.
Finalize Content & Prepare Your Application for Submission
Finalizing Components

- As components are marked ‘Complete’, the applicant organization can preview them and incorporate those that are ready into the final application by updating the component status to ‘Final’.

- All components must be marked ‘Final’ before an application can be prepared for submission.
Finalizing Components

Update the component status to Final once you are satisfied that the component is ready to be included in the final application.
Finalizing Components

If a biosketch is already included for the Senior Key, you will have the option to view each biosketch and select the one you wish to keep.

**ASSIST** will check to ensure that only one biosketch is included for every Senior Key person in the application.
Finalizing Components

After all biosketch issues are reconciled, the component status is set to **Final**.
Display Component Status

Provides all application and component status on a single screen.

### Application Status

To update a status start by selecting the Update Submission Status button in the left column from:
- Any form in an Application for the Application
- Component Summary for a Component

### Component Statuses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component ID</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Next Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>Work in Progress</td>
<td>Work in progress status may be updated to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>031-Admin-Core</td>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>Complete status may be updated to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>485-Core</td>
<td>Work In Progress</td>
<td>Work in progress status may be updated to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>828-Core</td>
<td>Final</td>
<td>Final status may be updated to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>847-Project</td>
<td>Final</td>
<td>Final status may be updated to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>687-Project</td>
<td>Final</td>
<td>Final status may be updated to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>027-Project</td>
<td>Final</td>
<td>Final status may be updated to:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although the Status is set to **Final** for each component, the Application Information still shows a Status of **Work in Progress**.
Application Status Flow

- **Work In Progress** – Allows editing
- **All Components Final** – Can only be updated once each component status is Final; must Validate Application to move to next status
- **All Components Validated** – Automatically set once Application Validation is error-free
- **Ready for Submission** – Should be set after all internal reviews have taken place
- **Submitted** – Automatically set after submitting to Grants.gov
Set the application status to All Components Final

You can prepare your application for submission once the status for all individual components has been set to Final.

Set the application status to All Components Final
Final Validation Check

Before an application can be submitted, it must pass validations (Warnings are OK)

Application Information

Application Identifier: 2142
Application Project Title: Research Center to Cure the Diseases of the World
PD/PI Name: MONEY, CHER D
ROUND, BEN A
Organization: Whatsamatta U
Project Period: 01/01/2015 - 12/31/2019

Application Errors and Warnings Results

Application Information

Application Identifier: 2142
FOA Number: PA-40-201
Application Project Title: Research Center to Cure the Diseases of the World
PD/PI Name: MONEY, CHER D
ROUND, BEN A
Organization: Whatsamatta U

All Validations Passed
When the application passes validations, the application status is automatically updated to All Components Validated.
Before you submit you can **Preview the Application** and verify that everything is just the way you want it to go to review.
Once all internal reviews are complete, update the application status to Ready for Submission.
Submit Your Application
On-time Submission

Error-free submission must be made by 5:00 p.m. local time (of submitting organization) on due date

- It takes time to prepare your application for submission
- Submit early (days, not minutes) to have time to address any unforeseen issues and to view your assembled application
Track Your Application
Notifications

ASSIST sends out quite a few email notifications throughout the preparation and submission process to help you track your application – Application access changes, component/application updates, component/application status changes, submission status updates and more

Check out this resources:
ASSIST provides the ability to track both Grants.gov and NIH status

- ASSIST provides a link to the Commons Detailed Status Information to view your assembled application
Application Viewing Window

Applicants have two (2) business days to view the assembled application image in Commons before it automatically moves forward to NIH staff for further processing.

If you can’t VIEW it, we can’t REVIEW it!
Rejecting the Application

SO (Signing Official) can Reject application in Commons within viewing window and submit a Changed/Corrected application prior to the due date.
If no action is taken to reject the application during the two business day viewing window, the application automatically moves forward to NIH for further processing.
Links and Resources

- ASSIST: public.era.nih.gov/assist
- Online help: era.nih.gov/erahelp/ASSIST/
- Applying Electronically Website for Multi-project Applications: grants.nih.gov/grants/ElectronicReceipt/com_index.htm
Help Desk

eRA Commons Help Desk

Web: http://era.nih.gov/help/
Toll-free: 1-866-504-9552
Phone: 301-402-7469
Hours: Mon-Fri, 7a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern Time (Except for Federal holidays)

Although NIH has worked closely with Grants.gov, ASSIST is a system developed and managed by NIH

The eRA Commons Help Desk should be the applicant’s first stop for Support