

NIH eSubmission Items of Interest – January 30, 2015



ASSIST Now an Option for Preparing & Submitting R03 and R21 Grant Applications

The wait is over! You can now choose to prepare and submit your Small Research Grant (R03) and Exploratory/Developmental Grant (R21) applications to NIH using [ASSIST](#) ([NOT-OD-15-062](#)). R03 and R21 Funding Opportunity Announcements now include two buttons, "Apply Online Using ASSIST" and "Apply Using Downloadable Forms".

Check out our [Getting Started: Preparing Your Single-project Application Using ASSIST](#) resource covering ASSIST basics and, if you need more extensive help, our [online help](#) is always available to provide screen shots and step-by-step instructions for specific tasks.

We've received wonderful comments from our multi-project applicants who have already used ASSIST. Let's face it, our complex applications can be quite a challenge under the best of circumstances. If people have nice things to say after pulling together mega-proposals, then we've got to be on to something. We hope the simplified structure of single-project applications will provide an even more friendly, intuitive, and positive experience. Even so, ASSIST is still a relatively new system and there are bound to be a few bumps as we move forward with single-project application support. Contact our [help desk](#) immediately if you run into problems.



The Freedom to Be Real – Soon You Can Use Those Special Characters in Your Application Form Fields!

Tired of being known as Dr. Pena, when you are really Dr. Peña? Want to use β in your project title instead of typing out "beta"? It's about time to get real – real names, real symbols, real system support!

NIH's eRA databases were updated to support all [Unicode](#) characters in May 2014. This allowed eRA systems to accept and store Greek and other characters as they appeared in the original scientific text attachments included with applications. It also allowed these additional characters to be included in summary statements, progress reports and reporting systems. That was a step in the right direction, but you still can't use non-ASCII characters in the free-text fields (e.g., name and project title) of Grants.gov application forms. As of February 17, 2015 that will change. Grants.gov systems will undergo a similar database update over the Presidents Day weekend, providing the final step needed to support the expanded characters in both free-text form fields and attachments ([NOT-OD-15-058](#)).

Remember, eRA systems check some application form fields against eRA Commons organization and PD/PI personal profiles. Make sure your profiles and application data match. Also, please double-check (checking once goes without saying) your assembled application image in eRA Commons after you submit to make sure all characters have rendered appropriately. The Unicode character set includes a LOT of characters and I'd be fibbing if I said we ran every test scenario with every potential character. I'm pretty sure we didn't spend much time testing 🍕 or 🍌, for example. Again, if you find any issues contact the [help desk](#). Hmmm, could you be detecting a theme?



February Due Date Adjustments to Accommodate Extended Grants.gov Downtime

Updating databases to support the Unicode character set is not a trivial task. It involves a lot of planning, testing, and, yes, an extended downtime. To minimize user impact, Grants.gov, like NIH, chose a holiday weekend to make the change. Grants.gov will be down over the Presidents Day weekend from Saturday, February 14, 2015 at 12:01 AM ET to Tuesday, February 17, 2015 at 6:00 AM ET.

Consequently, we've made some adjustments to our application due dates. Due dates that fall on or between February 13 and February 18, 2015 will move to February 19, 2015. Included in that timeframe are our standard February 16 due date for New R03, R21, R33, R21/R33, R34, and R36 applications and 15 FOAs with special due dates. See [NOT-OD-15-057](#) for more information.



Update!
Update!

SciENcv Now Supporting New NIH Biosketch Format

[SciENcv](#) was recently [updated](#) to support NIH's new biosketch format. The latest release also includes formatting adjustments to ensure the documents generated from the tool consistently conform to NIH requirements for fonts and margins.

NIH Seminar Registration Now Open

Registration is now open for the [2105 Regional Seminar on Program Funding and Grants Administration](#) taking place in Baltimore, Maryland.

Quote for the Day

Getting an inch of snow is like winning 10 cents in the lottery. –Bill Waterson (author Calvin & Hobbes)

Well, an inch of snow is just about all we got here in the DC area. For our friends who hit the lottery big in the snow department – hope you are finding a way to stay safe and warm. The pictures on the news are pretty remarkable. Please take care!

Sheri

Sheri Cummins

Communications & Outreach

NIH Office of Extramural Research

cumminss@mail.nih.gov