Dr. Harold A. Scheraga at Cornell University holds one of the longest running R01 awards. In 2018, Dr. Gia Maisuradze and Dr. Shalom R Rackovsky joined Dr. Scheraga as multiple-PD/PIs on his grant titled Internal Bonding of Proteins. The most recent competing segment has a grant number of 2 R01 GM014312 62A1. There are two things of note in that grant number. First, it is in its 62nd year - that is an impressive run of funding by any measure. Second, it was the resubmission (A1) application that was funded, not the original renewal. Sometimes an application just needs some tweaking and, after addressing reviewer feedback, the subsequent resubmission application receives a favorable funding decision. It happens at all stages of a career - from a new investigator’s first application to renewals for our most distinguished investigators with long funding histories. With that in mind, it’s important to understand the resubmission rules.

Here are the basics …

- Only a single resubmission (A1) of a competing new, revision or renewal application (A0) will be accepted.
- Following an unsuccessful resubmission (A1) application, applicants may submit the same idea as a new (A0) application for the next appropriate new application due date (see NOT-OD-18-197 for exceptions).
- Resubmissions (A1s) must be submitted within 37 months of the last competing new, revision, or renewal (A0) application.

Where folks seem to get a little confused is when dealing with the steps following an unfunded resubmission.

If your resubmission of a new application is not awarded, you can try again as a new application. Remember, not to mention your previous submission or reviewer feedback anywhere in your application - not even the cover letter. By all means, make any changes necessary to address reviewer feedback and strengthen your application, just don’t explicitly point out what you changed or why. When you submit your new application, it will be treated like we’ve never seen it before - fresh application number and no comparisons to previous submissions.

Now, here is the tricky-bit. If your resubmission of a renewal application is not awarded, then you must come back in as a new application on a due date for new applications. You get the original renewal application (A0) and the single resubmission of the renewal (A1) and that is it. If neither application is awarded, you lose continuity with your previous award. Your new application can talk about your preliminary data and publications, but don’t frame it as your accomplishments on your specific aims or your productivity under the past award. Your new application must not include a Progress Report or Progress Report Publication List or mention that it follows your resubmission of a renewal.

Thankfully, Dr. Scheraga and his colleagues did not have to face this reality, but had their resubmission application not received funding, their next award would have been under a different grant number and in year 1, not 62.

For more information on this topic, check out our Resubmission Applications page.

Did you notice more notices?

You might have noticed an increased use of Guide notices, rather than full program announcements to alert the community of specific research topics of interest. This is not a new concept. Some NIH Institutes/Centers (ICs) have been using this approach for many years. We are just formalizing it a bit and expanding its use across all ICs. We even gave these notices a proper name - “Notices of Special Interest.”

Let’s face it, NIH funding opportunity announcements (FOAs) are not “pithy.” It’s not surprising given the amount of information covered in them. But apart from indicating a
specific research topic, many aspects of program announcements are the same from one FOA to the next, especially when it comes to the logistics and expectations for submitting and administering an application.

Notices of Special Interest highlight areas of scientific interest and point to existing active FOAs (often parent announcements) for the submission logistics. This allows the ICs writing the notices and the applicants using them to really focus on the unique aspects of the opportunity.

The process for submitting an application remains the same. You complete the application form package associated with the FOA designated in the notice using all available guidance. You may find the guidance in the application guide, FOA, and/or a Guide notice conflict. FOA instructions win over instructions found in the application guide. Guide notice instructions win over both the FOA and the application guide.

Let’s look at an example. Notice of Special Interest NOT-AG-19-012, like most of these notices, requires the notice number in the Agency Routing Identifier field (4b) on the SF424 R&R form. Our application guide instructions for the Agency Routing Identifier field, however, indicate to “skip the field unless otherwise specified in the FOA.” The notice instruction wins over the application guide. Your application must include “NOT-AG-19-012” in the Agency Routing Identifier field to be considered for that specific initiative.

One other item worth noting is that an IC may issue a Notice of Special Interest that points to an FOA that they don’t normally participate on. This is OK - remember notice guidance wins and the notice says the IC will accept applications for the specific initiative in the notice. Including the notice number in the Agency Routing Identifier field alerts our Receipt & Referral staff of your intentions regarding IC assignment.

In a few weeks, we’ll be giving our Weekly NIH Funding Opportunities and Notices emails a facelift and include a special section highlighting Notices of Special Interest. If you don’t already receive these emails, you should take a minute to subscribe. They are a great way to stay on top of all the notices and FOAs we publish in the NIH Guide to Grants and Contracts. We’ll make additional incremental changes to our resources over the coming months to ensure you have visibility to all funding initiatives whether they are announced in full FOAs or via notice.

A View with a Smile

*No matter how long the winter, spring is sure to follow.*  ~ Proverb

I love the DC area in spring when all the trees are in bloom. This is the view from my office window. The small stuff can get you down, but it can sure raise you up, too. Here’s to hoping you all have a view that makes you smile.

If you happen to be at our NIH Regional Seminar on Program Funding and Grants Administration in Baltimore next month, please stop by the Grants Information booth and say “Hi”.

Take care,

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