



Introduction to NIH Programs, Proposals and Reviews

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Basic steps...

1. Do your lit review and get some prelim data
2. Seriously consider collaborators
3. Find an institute (IC) and funding opportunity
4. Draft a one-page Specific Aims that speaks to the institute
5. Talk it out with CRPDE, peers and external researchers (3-6 months before)
6. Talk to a Program Officer
7. Submit an OU Office of Research Services (ORS) Infosheet (2-4 months before)
8. Submit Application components to ORS and track through eRA Commons



National Institutes of Health

- Where to start:
 - <https://www.nih.gov/grants-funding>
- Finding your institute
 - 27 Institutes & Centers
 - NIH Matchmaker:
https://projectreporter.nih.gov/reporter_matchmaker.cfm
 - Peer knowledge
 - Journal articles
- Learn your institute's research priorities
 - e.g., <https://www.cancer.gov/research/areas>



Find a funding opportunity

- Finding calls for *extramural* funding within NIH
 - Across all of NIH: <https://grants.nih.gov/searchguide/>
 - <http://pivot.cos.com>
 - NIH Email lists:
<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/listserv.htm>
- Search within Individual institutes
 - Look for “Grants” or “Funding Opportunities”
 - e.g., <https://www.cancer.gov/>



New and Early Stage Investigators

- New Investigators:
 - Basically never had an R01
- Early Stage:
 - New investigator & PhD within 10 years
- Institutes award $\frac{1}{2}$ to experienced and $\frac{1}{2}$ to New Investigators
 - Of the new investigators, $\frac{1}{2}$ should be Early Stage Investigators

http://grants.nih.gov/policy/new_investigators/index.htm

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Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs)

- Program Announcements (PAs)
 - Area of increased priority
 - Typically have three “standard” due dates per year
 - Active for at least 3 years
 - Standing review groups
- Request for Application (RFAs)
 - Typically single receipt date
 - May need permission to apply
 - Special review groups

<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/description.htm>

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Research Funding Opportunities

- **R01**
 - Research Grant, 3-5 yrs, no max \$ but up to \$250k/yr modular budget, renewable
- **R03**
 - Small grant program, 2 yrs, typically \$50k/yr, no renewal
- **R21**
 - Exploratory, 2 yrs, \$275k max, no renewal
- **R35**
 - Extended investigator awards , 5-7 yrs, \$250k/yr, no renewal
- Other award mechanisms for fellowships, business, centers, , etc.

http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/funding_program.htm

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Reading an opportunity

- Start with...
 - Due dates
 - Eligibility
 - Funding Opportunity Description
- Looks like a good fit? Read...
 - Application Review Information
 - Agency Contacts
 - Find the Program Officer



Contacting your PO

- Program Officers work for the Institute and plays a role in funding decisions
 - You can talk to them before submitting, then after the review session
- Always make sure your idea fits the institute and funding opportunity
 - Ask for “programmatically relevant”
- Your PO works for you but respect their time
- Once you have an assigned study section, you can ask your PO to listen in on review

<https://loop.nigms.nih.gov/2015/11/talking-to-nih-staff-about-your-application-and-grant-who-what-when-why-and-how/>

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Found an Opportunity?

- ORS: <https://ors.ou.edu/>
 - eRA Commons account
 - Public Health Service Financial Conflict of Interest (PHS FCOI)
- Submit your Infosheet as early as possible
 - Helps ORS prioritize
 - Assigns Proposal Services Specialist
 - Get emails on required components



Items to start working on

- The instructions:
 - <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html>
- 1-page Specific Aims
- Research Strategy (6/12 pages)
- Bibliography and References
- List of Key Personnel / Other Contributors
- Letters of Commitment
- Biosketch (up to 5 pages)
- Detailed Budget & Budget Summary (use ORS form)
- Facilities/Resources
- Project Summary/Abstract - ~1-2 paragraphs
- Project Narrative (Public Health Relevance Statement) – ~1 paragraph



Writing

- <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/format-and-write/write-your-application.htm>
- Address FOA's Core Criteria and any additional review criteria
 - Significance
 - Investigators
 - Innovation
 - Approach
 - Environment
- Join CRPDE's NIH Writing Group!



BioSketch

- Required format
 - <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>
 - Up to 5 pages
 - Helps address “Investigator” criteria
- SciENCv



Choosing IC/Study Sections

- Before submission (in application) you can request Institute/Center (IC) and/or study section in Assignment Preferences
 - Or request not to have certain study sections
 - Or you can request areas of expertise
 - You cannot recommend specific reviewers
- <http://public.csr.nih.gov/StudySections/Pages/default.aspx>
 - Standing Study Sections review most R01s, R03s, R21s
- Can ask SRO (after submission) if the assigned study section is appropriate for your application
- Remember: write “to” your reviewers!



Submissions to ORS

- Start sending items to ORS 3-4 weeks early
- Submit a complete “draft” 1-2 weeks before to allow sufficient time for routing
 - You can still send a finalized version of your application to ORS 2-3 days before the due date



NIH's Review Process



Your
application



am, CRPDE
March 2016

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Review Process

- <http://public.csr.nih.gov/ApplicantResources/Pages/default.aspx>
 - Watch the videos!
- 1. CSR reviews application for completeness and SRO assigns three primary reviewers
 - You can talk to the SRO after submission to NIH for any questions regarding the review
- 2. The 3 Primary reviewers provide preliminary scores to SRO for full review determination
- 3. Typically, only top 50% of impact scores go for full review
 - Lower 50% are labeled “Not Reviewed” but some comments will be provided by you primary reviewers



Review Criteria and Scoring

- Impact Score (1-high, 9-low)
- Individual Core Criteria Score (1-high, 9-low)
 - Significance
 - Investigators
 - Innovation
 - Approach
 - Environment
- Scores and status reported on eRA commons
 - Status codes:
 - https://era.nih.gov/Docs/era_status_codes.pdf



Study Section review

- SRO sits in but doesn't vote
- PO *may* listen in
 - Remember: you can ask your PO to listen in
- One of your primary reviewers “presents” your application to the others
 - Help them advocate for you by writing a good 1-page specific aims page
 - The other two speak to strengths/weaknesses
- All reviewers (dozen or more) score each application equally



Post Study Section

- All applications (with the scores) go back to IC Review Council (includes your PO)
- Review Council uses percentile ranking and IC's payline to recommend which gets funding
 - Payline may or may not be public (ask your PO)
 - New/ES Investigators often get a boost, e.g.,:
 - Experienced payline: ~10%
 - For New/ESI: payline ~15%
- At this stage, direct all questions to PO



Rejected?

- You'll be able to tell in about ~6 months when impact score and summary is available
- High score, yet below the payline?
 - Contact the PO immediately and ask if IDeA funding is available
 - Not sure? Ask your PO
- Comments may suggest you resubmit
 - Talk to PO!... You only get one chance to resubmit
- Otherwise, redesign study and submit as a new application
 - Don't mention previous reviewer comments



Awarded?

- Award will come in ~9 months
- Got an R01?
 - You get a \$5000 VPR Award!



Next Steps:
NIH Writing Groups
NIH Review Panel Discussion

Questions?