NIH/AHRQ Announce Change in Business Process Concerning eRA Commons Verifications of Electronically Submitted Applications

**Notice Number:** NOT-OD-06-055

**Key Dates**
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**Issued by**
National Institutes of Health (NIH), (http://www.nih.gov)
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) (http://www.ahrq.gov)

The purpose of this Notice is to inform the research community of a change in business process concerning eRA Commons verification of electronically submitted applications.

The original process for electronic submission of grant applications required that both the Signing Official (SO) and the Project Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) access the electronic grant application in the eRA Commons, check it for completeness, and verify it via a form checkbox. This verification served as the electronic signature for the application and completed the electronic submission process.

As indicated in Guide Notice NOT-06-054, the PD/PI signature on a grant application has been replaced with an institutional compliance requirement. The application guides have been revised to reflect this business process change and to add the PD/PI assurance as an Institutional compliance requirement. This change, and the recognition of the Authorized Organization Representative’s (AOR) signature at the time of application submission to Grants.gov, has allowed NIH/AHRQ to simplify the eRA Commons verification process.

Effective for applications submitted for May 10, 2006 and beyond, NIH/AHRQ will no longer require the verification of the grant application by the AOR/SO and PD/PI. The verification step will be replaced with a two business day period for checking the assembled application in eRA Commons, after which the submission process will be complete and the application will automatically move forward to the Division of Receipt and Referral, Center for Scientific Review. Within the two day period, the AOR/SO will have the ability to "Reject" the application and stop further processing. PD/PIs must work through the AOR/SO to "Reject" an application.

- Once an application package has been successfully submitted through Grants.gov, any errors have been addressed, and the assembled application has been created in the eRA Commons, the PD/PI and AOR/SO have two business days to view the application image.

- If everything is acceptable, no further action is necessary. The application will automatically move forward for processing by the Division of Receipt and Referral after two business days.

- Prior to the submission deadline, the AOR/SO can "Reject" the assembled application and submit a changed/corrected application within the two day viewing window. This option should be used if the AOR/SO determines that warnings should be addressed. Reminder: warnings do not stop further application processing. If an application submission results in warnings (but no errors) it will automatically move forward after two business days if no action is taken. Please remember that some warnings may not be applicable or may need to be addressed after application submission.

- If the two day window falls after the submission deadline, the AOR/SO will have the option to "Reject" the application if, due to an eRA Commons or Grants.gov system issue, the application does not correctly reflect the submitted application package (e.g., some part of the application was lost or didn't transfer correctly during the submission process). The AOR/SO should first contact the eRA Commons Helpdesk to confirm the system error, document the issue, and determine the best course of action. NIH will not penalize the applicant for an eRA Commons or Grants.gov system issue.

- If the AOR/SO chooses to "Reject" the image after the submission deadline for a reason other than an eRA Commons or Grants.gov system failure, a changed/corrected application still can be submitted but it will be subject to the NIH late policy guidelines and may not


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be accepted. The reason for this delay should be explained in the cover letter attachment.

- Both the AOR/So and PD/PI will receive e-mail notifications when the application is rejected or the application automatically moves forward in the process after two days.

Although the AOR/So and PI will no longer need to complete the verification process, NIH/AHRQ strongly encourages applicants to take advantage of the two day window to view assembled grant applications in the eRA Commons. The eRA Commons provides the only opportunity to see the grant application just as a reviewer will see it. Once the two day window has elapsed, any changes to the application must be made through and with the permission of the assigned Scientific Review Administrator and can potentially delay the processing of the application.

Please note that the following resources continue to be available for assistance in the electronic submission of grant applications to NIH/AHRQ through Grants.gov:

**General Information:**
http://era.nih.gov/ElectronicReceipt/
http://www.ahrq.gov/path/egrants.htm

**Grants.gov Customer Support**  
Phone: 800-518-4726  
Hours: M-F 7:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m. ET  
Email: support@grants.gov

**eRA Commons Help Desk**  
Web: http://helpdesk.nih.gov/eRA/  
Phone: 301-402-7469 or 866-504-9552 (Toll Free)  
TTY: 301-451-5939  
Hours: M-F 7:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m. ET

**Inquiries**

Inquiries regarding this Notice should be directed to:

Grants.gov  
Office of Extramural Research  
National Institutes of Health  
Phone: 301-435-0714  
TTY: 301-451-0088  
Email: grantsinfo@nih.gov

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