



Applying to NIH: Tips and tricks



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Outline

1. Overview of NIH
2. Before proposal development
3. Proposal development and submission
4. After proposal submission
5. Tips and tricks
6. Questions and discussions



Before proposal development

- National Institutes of Health (27 ICs)
 - National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID)
 - National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)
 - National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)
 - Fogarty International Center (FIC)
- Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR)



OBSSR

- Research Support
 - “OBSSR supports behavioral and social sciences research at the NIH by coordinating and/or participating on funding opportunity announcements (FOAs) and by providing co-funding to NIH Institutes and Centers that support this research”
- Training
- Events



Before proposal development

- eRA Commons (<https://era.nih.gov/>)
- NIH eReporter (<https://projectreporter.nih.gov/>)
- Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs)
 - Program Announcement (PA)
 - PAR—PA with special receipt, referral and/or review
 - PAS—PA with **set-aside funds**
 - Request for Application (RFA)
 - Focus area with **set aside funds**, special review, single deadline
 - Request for Proposal (RFP)



Example NIH eReporter





Example FOA

(check for [foreign institution eligibility](#))



Before proposal development

- Webinars (various ICs and Offices)
- Talk to program officer
 - Email/Phone call
 - Names listed on FOAs
 - Names listed on NIH grant awards (eReporter)
 - Should have a specific aims page sent beforehand
 - Prepare questions/bullet points
 - Ask for paylines



Types of grant applications

- Small research grant program (R03)
- Exploratory/developmental research grant award (R21)
- (Clinical trial) Planning grant program (R34)
- Research project grant program (R01)



Types of grant applications

- Small grant program (R03)
 - 100,000 USD maximum
 - Up to 2 years
 - No preliminary data required
 - 6-page research plan
 - Secondary data analysis
 - New technology/methods



Types of grant applications

- Exploratory/developmental research grant award (R21)
 - 275,000 USD maximum
 - Up to 2 years
 - No preliminary data required
 - 6-page research plan
 - Exploratory, novel studies that break new ground
 - High-risk/high reward studies



Types of grant applications

- (Clinical trial) Planning grant program (R34)
 - 450,000 USD maximum
 - Up to 3 years
 - No preliminary data required
 - 12-page research plan
 - Establish research team
 - Finalization of protocol
 - Pilot studies or collection of feasibility data



Types of grant applications

- Research project grant program (R01)
 - 2,500,000 USD maximum (general R01s)
 - Up to 5 years
 - Preliminary data/pilot studies required
 - 12-page research plan
 - Flagship award at NIH
 - Renewal allowed
 - Supplement allowed



Research project grant program (R01)

- Allowable costs
 - Salary and fringe benefits
 - Equipment and supplies
 - Consultant costs
 - Alterations and renovations
 - Publications and miscellaneous costs
 - Contract services
 - Consortium costs
 - Facilities and Administrative costs (indirects)
 - Travel expenses



The application

- Project narrative (3 sentences)
- Project summary/abstract (30 lines)
- **Specific aims (1 page) (passionate, no citations)**
- **Research strategy (6-12 pages) (CF/theoretical lens)**
- References (unlimited)
- Human subjects (unlimited)
- Biographical sketches (5 pages per person)
- Facilities and resources/environment (unlimited)
- Letters of support/collaboration (unlimited)

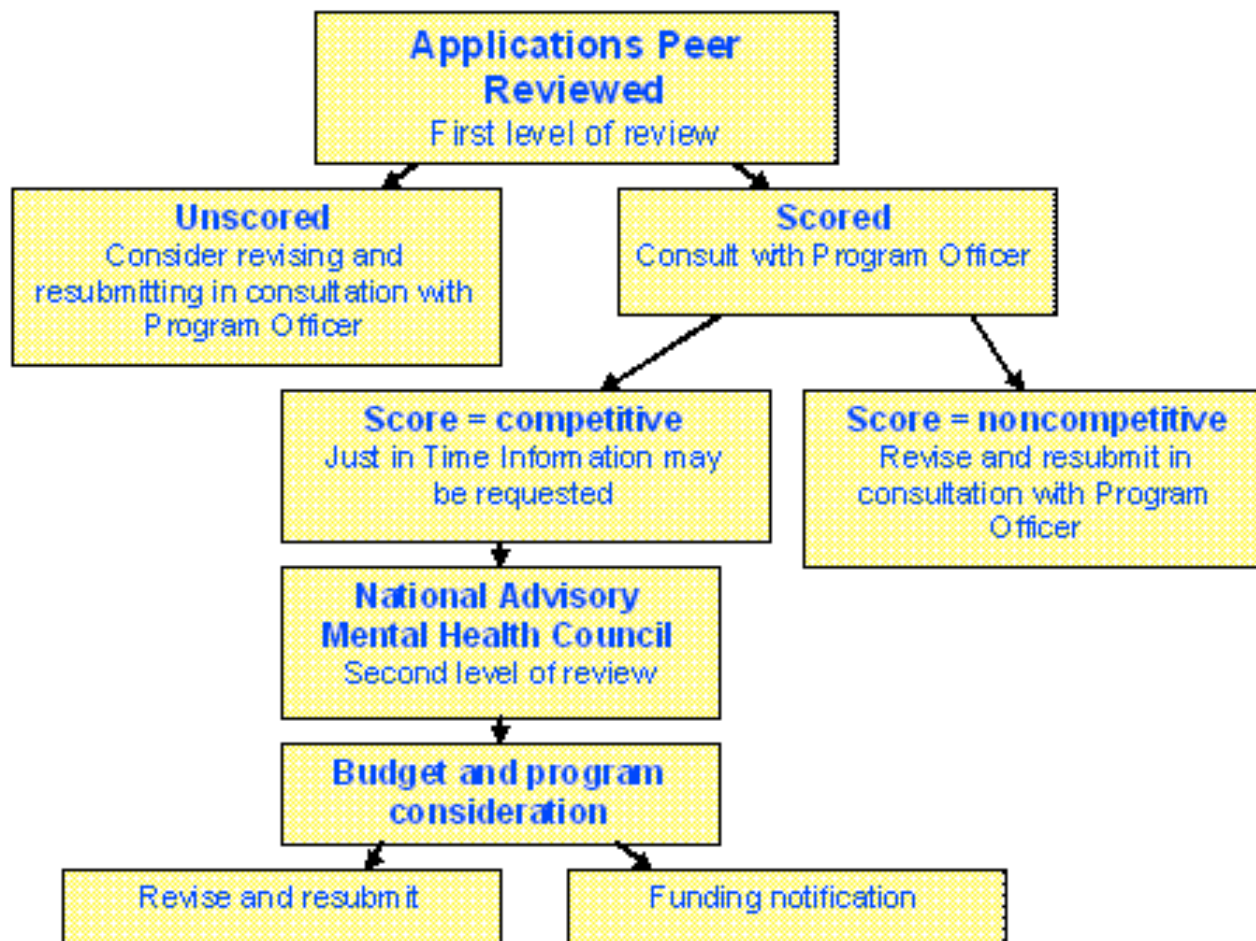


Proposal development

- TIME!!! (to read)
- TIME!!! (to write)
- TIME!!! (to read)
- TIME!!! (to rewrite)
- TIME!!! (to read)
- Others to read and give feedback
- Choose scientific review committee (recuse)
- Choose IC
- Submission deadlines
- TG: 6 months to 1 year



Proposal development





After proposal submission

- eRA Commons
- Center for Scientific Review (SRO)
- Scientific Committee Review date
- Council Review data
- Scoring, “unscored” and resubmission
- Paylines
- Just-in-time
- Additional documents for Council/foreign clearance



Example of Published Paylines





Summary statement

- Scoring (5 areas)
 - Significance, Investigator, Innovation, Approach, Environment
- Summary of discussion by SR committee
- Score by section by reviewer
- Human subjects concerns



Example

Summary Statement



After proposal submission

- Bad scores or unscored ('Not Discussed'):
OK to be sad, but must be resilient!
- Summary statement (PO)
- Discuss with research team/strategize
- Discuss with program officer



Resubmission

- Introduction (one page), similar to article
- Only 1 time resubmission (A1)
- Unlimited submissions with same title
- Address ALL concerns (e.g., pilot data)
- Talk to program officer
- Applications are usually resubmitted before they are funded (RFA may be exceptions)



My R01 experience

Center for Scientific Review

1st submission: September 7, 2017

- Not discussed
- Change title and submit as new application

• 2nd submission: May 7, 2018

- Resubmit (percentile: 36%)

• 3rd submission: January 7, 2019

- Funded by NIMH (percentile: 7%)



Tips and tricks

- Begin early
- Have collaborators/network of well-published investigators
- Seasoned NIH investigator as consultant/Co-I
- Read FOAs, register to receive automatic announcements (e.g., PAR, PAS, RFA)
- Use eReporter/look at other funded grants
- Don't be afraid to approach POs

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National Institute of
Allergy and
Infectious Diseases