

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

PROPOSAL PREPARATION CHECKLIST AND RESOURCES

This is intended as a quick reference guide. For full details, refer to the National Institutes of Health grants application guide: [GENERAL APPLICATION GUIDE FOR NIH AND OTHER PHS AGENCIES](#)

In this Guide:

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**The notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) will include specific instructions and forms for submitting your application. The instructions of the NOFO supersede this checklist.*

** If an NIH deadline date falls on a Federal Holiday or weekend, the deadline is extended to the following business day.*

[eRA commons](#)

- Proposals are not submitted through eRA commons.
- PIs can view their proposals, summary scores, award notices, and submit Just-in-Time (JIT) information.
- All senior/key personnel in a grant application are required to have an eRA commons username
 - [DSP eRA commons registration form](#)

Submission Methods

**Most proposals are submitted using UFIRST, our system-to-system SF424, which connects to grants.gov. This is the preferred method of submission, as a large portion of information will be imported from UFIRST Proposal SmartForms and Budgets.*

- SF424 via UFIRST (Preferred)
 - [UFIRST](#)
 - [UFIRST/SF424 Training](#)

- [SF424 – RSH281 Course Guide](#)
- [ASSIST](#)
 - NIH's system for multi-project applications or if the RFA/NOFO is unavailable through SF424
- [Grants.gov Workspace](#)
 - NIH applications may also be submitted directly through grants.gov if the opportunity you want to apply for is not supported by UFIRST and you prefer not to submit in ASSIST

General Proposal Instructions

Review the following:

- [Format Requirements](#)
- [Page Limits](#)
- [Dates and Deadlines](#)
- [NIH's Advice on Application Sections](#) *for additional information and details*
- [Performance Sites](#)
 - Primary location should be that of the applicant organization or identified as off-site in accordance with the conditions of the applicable negotiated F&A agreement
 - Include any subaward sites
 - See [special requirements](#) for human and animal work
- [Project Summary / Abstract](#)
 - 30 lines of text maximum
- [Project Narrative](#)
 - 3 sentences maximum
- [Facilities and Resources](#)
- [Equipment](#)
 - List major items of equipment already available for this project and identify their location and pertinent capabilities
- [R&R Senior/Key Person Profile](#)
 - [Biosketches](#)
 - Needed for all key persons
 - 5 page maximum per person
 - [What to include](#)
- [Current and Pending](#)

- Generally required at JIT stage, but check your solicitation
- For more information: [DSP Disclosing Activities to NIH](#)
- [Budget](#)
 - NIH's [Develop Your Budget guidance](#)
 - [DSP's Budgeting Overview](#)
 - [Modular vs. Detailed Budgets](#)
 - [Subawards](#)
 - [subaward info required in UFIRST](#)
- [Specific Aims](#)
 - 1 page maximum
- [Research Strategy](#)
 - Describe your proposed project, its significance, and how you will conduct your research
 - Must include the following main sections, in this order:
 - 1. Significance
 - 2. Innovation
 - 3. Approach
 - [Maximum number of pages](#) vary based on type of funding opportunity
 - Example: R01 maximum is 12 pages
- [Bibliography & References Cited](#)
 - Do not include hyperlinks unless otherwise stated in the NOFO
- [Resource Sharing Plan](#)
- [Data Management and Sharing Plan](#)
 - Usually attached in the 'other plans' section
 - [DMS policy details](#)
 - [UF Library DMS site](#) for more information and templates
- [Authentication of Key Biological and/or Chemical Resources](#) (if applicable)

Optional/Conditional Content Requirements

- [Multi PD/PI Leadership](#)
- Subaward Materials
 - [Subaward/Consortium Budget](#)
 - [Consortium/Contractual Arrangements](#)
 - Notice on Foreign Subawards [NOT-OD-25-130](#)
- Proposals Involving [Human Subjects and Clinical Trials Information](#)

- For Human Subjects visit the [UF's Institutional Review Board](#) website for additional information
 - For Nonhuman or Exempt Human Data, approval must be gained via [UF IRB's automated determination tool](#).
 - If the application includes a Clinical Trial, additional information is required
- Proposals Involving Live [Vertebrate Animals](#)
 - Review the [IACUC](#) website for additional information
- [Program Plan](#)
 - Primarily needed for training grants
 - See the [Training grants instruction guide](#) for further details
- [Reference Letters](#)
 - Primarily required for fellowships, and mentored career development awards
 - Are provided by referees directly to NIH
- [Letters of Support](#)
 - Usually from consultants and/or subaward collaborators
 - [Letter of Organization's Commitment](#)
 - Required for institutional training grants to be attached in the letters of support section
 - Describe the organization's commitment to ensuring that proper policies, procedures, and oversight are in place to prevent discriminatory harassment and other discriminatory practices.
- [Letter of Intent](#)
 - This letter is not required, binding, or considered during peer review. This letter helps NIH staff estimate the potential review workload and recruit reviewers with the expertise needed to review your application.
- [PHS Assignment Request Form](#)
 - Used to suggest a potentially appropriate NIH institute, center or office assignment
 - Ensure that the suggested NIH institute is participating in the NOFO you are applying to
 - If you are responding to a Notice of Special Interest (NOSI) it may instruct a specific section request to be entered here
- [Cover Letter](#)

Additional Resources

- [Sample Applications and Documents](#)

- [Frequently Used Facts](#) from UF's Division of Sponsored Programs (DSP)
 - Includes: UF Institutional Profile, Budget Information, and IRB & IACUC Information
- [Proposal Submission Deadline Policy](#) from UF DSP
- [UF Templates, Tools and Resources](#)
- [Disclosing Activities to NIH](#)
- [Just in Time \(JIT\) Info](#) from UF DSP