**TRANSCRIPT**

**NIH Grants Process Primer: Application to Award Part 2**

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Megan Columbus: Let's go ahead and get started. My name, again, is Megan Columbus, I am the Communications Director in the NIH Office of Extramural Research, and I am so proud to bring you the NIH Grants Process Primer: Application to Award, Part 2.

Okay. So today, we talked a little bit about RePORT yesterday, today we're going to do a deeper dive to truly understand how the use of RePORT can help you as you're identifying contacts with your application. We're going to help you understand how to find and understand a Notice of Funding Opportunity. We're going to get a little bit deeper into writing the application, and what you're thinking about in specific sections. We're going to have a break, and then we are going to come back and take a deeper dive into looking at Summary Statements, going through an actual Notice of Award, talking about administrative supplements, and when and how those happen. Do another quick dive into Monitoring and Reporting, and then get some final tips from NIH Program Officials and hear a little bit from you about what you've been learning.

Okay, with that, let's go ahead and get started. Remember -- all your questions go in the Q and A box, please.

So now I'm here with Sheri Cummins. We are going to leave that Chat open so that you all can be answering some of the questions that we are posing to you in the Chat. With that, Sheri, do you want to take us away?

Sheri Cummins: Absolutely. Let's get started. So, what we're really going to do here is, we're just going to do a little recap. We're going to get those brain -- we're going to stretch those brain muscles and get ready for some more information that we're going to learn throughout the day. We're going to start with the systems involved in the NIH grants process. We'll talk a little about the systems we talked about yesterday, make sure you remember. There's concepts we learned, and then we'll go into a little bit of terminology to make sure that you all understand the way we're talking. We have all sorts of grant speak here at NIH that may or may not be familiar, so it's important to make sure that all of our acronyms and our terminology is familiar to you.

So, let's start with the first question. And again, we're going to go ahead and put answers in the Chat. So, as we go through this grant process, so what federal systems do organizations need to be registered in to submit a grant application to NIH?

Megan Columbus: All right, I am seeing that people are starting to come in with answers already, so that's good. I am seeing that a lot of people are providing kind of single systems; I'm seeing SAM, I'm seeing eRA Commons.

Sheri Cummins: eRA Commons.

Megan Columbus: eRA Commons, SAM, eRA Commons . . .

Sheri Cummins: Oh, I saw grants.com.

Megan Columbus: Saw grants.gov there? Okay.

Sheri Cummins: All right, so we're getting it. Okay. So hopefully most of you are already registered, but if you are not -- and remember, it can take up to six weeks to get these registrations in place, you're going to want to get started. Now these are organization registrations, okay? So, the first one, which most of you got there, was the system for word management, and SAM is the system that everybody that does business with the federal government here in the United States needs to be registered with. And that one does require an annual renewal. Now we did have some questions yesterday in our Q and A box about PIs registering in SAM, and that's not typically done. So, SAM registration would typically be just a single entity administrator, and within SAM they call organizations "entities," okay? So, organizations, entities, institutions -- all interchangeable. But within SAM, they call them "entities." And there's an entity administrator, and there's typically one, or maybe a couple for your entire organization; principal investigators would not be registered in SAM. Then we have our grants.gov, and remember, all of the NIH applications go through grants.gov; it's a federal-wide portal used by all federal grantmaking agencies. So, you'd need to be registered in grants.gov. You need somebody with signature authority registered in grans.gov, and they have an AOR type of designation. But again, the only reason a PI would be registered in grants.gov is if they're actually preparing their applications through an interface that grants.gov has called "Workspace," otherwise, it's really just the people submitting your applications.

Then we have eRA Commons, and that's the NIH system that we're exchanging information with, right? That is required to do business with NIH. You would have both administrators and other scientific staff have accounts within eRA Commons. So, this is one where you would have other individuals in there as well, and then if you're a small business, the SBA.

What is NIH's official system used to post Notices of Funding Opportunities, policies, guidelines, and grants administration information? Go ahead and put your answers in the Chat there.

Megan Columbus: Okay, I've got Newsletter, I've got grants.gov, I've got NOFO.

Sheri Cummins: Okay.

Megan Columbus: I've got question mark. [LAUGHTER] Okay, eRA -- so I'm really glad that we're actually going over this, because a lot of people are giving the answer of NOFO. I see someone threw out the NIH Guide -- that's great.

Sheri Cummins: Now, we're talking system here.

Megan Columbus: We are talking system. eRA Commons.

Sheri Cummins: Okay.

Megan Columbus: I think we could probably give a little bit of clarity on this.

Sheri Cummins: I think we can. So, let's go ahead and do that. It is the NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts, and remember, we also refer to it as the NIH Guide, just simply the NIH Guide, all right? So, this is where the NOFOs are posted, right? So that would be your official announcement of an opportunity, but those are all housed within the NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts. And we mentioned several times yesterday how you can keep apprised of things that are going on at NIH, if you remember; that subscription that you can get to a weekly email that goes out with everything we've posted for the week. And right at that blue box at the top of the page, there's a link to the Subscribe feature there. So, I highly recommend, if you haven't done so already, this is my plug for today, to get that done.

Megan Columbus: I see some people subscribed yesterday, so that's good.

Sheri Cummins: Yay! I love it. All right let's move on, then. What systems are available to access, prepare and submit grant application forms to NIH?

Megan Columbus: All right, so I have a bunch of people coming in quick with ASSIST, eRA, Cayuse, which is a system-to-system solution. eRA Commons.

Sheri Cummins: Commons, ASSIST . . .

Megan Columbus: Grants.gov and ASSIST.

Sheri Cummins: Yep.

Megan Columbus: So, people understand the core options, that's nice.

Sheri Cummins: Absolutely.

Megan Columbus: Keep looking through those options.

Sheri Cummins: Absolutely. So, a lot of people come to our website looking for a set of forms you can just download and fill out and submit to any opportunity we have out there, and unfortunately, it just doesn't exist. You have to submit an application to the application package that is associated with that NOFO, with that Funding Opportunity. And to do that, to access and prepare and submit those application forms, you need to use one of these systems. NIH ASSIST -- so that is our own system that we have for preparing and submitting applications. Grant.gov Workspace -- so that is a generic application system that grants.gov manages and develops, and then Organization System-to-System Solutions, and we saw in there, Cayuse is one example, and FOA. There's many others out there as well. And the System-to-System -- if you think about when we do our taxes, we can prepare our taxes using TurboTax, or TaxCut, or whatever the service is that you like. That's really a System-to-System solution to prepare applications or forms for the federal government. Those systems exist for grants as well. There are some benefits to doing that. Some of the institutions that are larger and do a lot of work with us may invest in one of those systems, so that is a great option. In fact, about half of our applications come in System-to-System. And Laurie can give better number when she talks, but about 45 percent, I think, are using ASSIST, and very small numbers, I think about 5 percent are using Workspace.

Megan Columbus: We have a question, actually --

Sheri Cummins: Great!

Megan Columbus: What is easier for a new person? Would it be ASSIST or grants.gov Workspace?

Sheri Cummins: Oh, that's such a hard one for me to answer, because I was the original program manager of ASSIST, and that's my baby. So, I love ASSIST, right? But I think I would answer that anyway because ASSIST was really developed for NIH applications. So that's the way I would go. It's important to understand that no matter which one you choose, we don't really care, to be honest. Whatever option you choose to come in, it's the same registration. It is the same instructions. You're filling out the same forms. We're going to put the same validation rules on it, and we're going to make it look -- we're going to symbol that application and present it to reviewers in a way that they can't tell how it was submitted. It will all be consistent. So really, it's up to you, and really your office of sponsored research. If you're a researcher, you're going to want to talk to your administrative officials, and they're going to help direct you to what options are available to you for your organization.

Megan Columbus: It sounds like you've got lots of support for saying that, in the Chat.

Sheri Cummins: Absolutely. Okay, let's move on, then. What system can applicants use to help identify a potential scientific review group? This is a hard one. This is something that --

Megan Columbus: Well, were you listening yesterday?

Sheri Cummins: We did. We talked about it yesterday with Michelle.

Megan Columbus: Okay, so it said, RePORTER, question mark, Matchmaker --

Sheri Cummins: Oh, I can see one, ART.

Megan Columbus: RePORTER, Matchmaker, these are going by quickly, it's hard to keep track. eRA Commons. Ooh -- Gladys Diaz, nice! Assisted Referral Tool.

Sheri Cummins: Yeah. Okay. Let's go ahead and put you out of your misery on that one. The Center for Scientific Reviews Assisted Referral Tool, or ART. And this is the tool where you can take some text, whether your specific aims or some goals, or whatever it is, about your application. You can put it into the tool, and it will spit out the Scientific Review Groups that you may want to consider, okay? So, it's a great little tool. It can certainly help you in identifying a potential scientific review group. But I think later on today, we're going to be talking about how to do Cover Letters, and how to make some referrals, and to institutes and review groups.

Sheri Cummins: Next one in our systems, after submission, what system is used to exchange information between NIH staff and applicants and recipients?

Megan Columbus: Okay, people are coming in pretty quick with this, Commons, Commons, Commons.

Sheri Cummins: Commons, Commons, Commons, Commons.

Megan Columbus: All right.

Sheri Cummins: All right, great. All right, so eRA Commons -- so once you submit your application, and even when you're completing that submission process, because you're going to have to check your application images and your errors and warnings -- all of those things in Commons. And Commons really is a variety of modules that are all pulled together under the umbrella of eRA Commons. There's a module called Status, and that's where you'll track your application, and view your review assignments and your outcomes. There's a module called "Just in Time," or JIT, and that's where you would submit hat information upon request from an IC. We have a no-cost extension module. We have a reporting module for RPPR, Research Performance Progress Reports. We have a module for closeout. So, all of those things are housed within the eRA Commons, and that's our secure way to exchange information.

All right. What system is used to explore awarded NIH data?

Megan Columbus: Wow, lots of RePORTERS coming in here.

Sheri Cummins: Absolutely.

Megan Columbus: RePORTS and RePORTER -- eRA Commons --

Sheri Cummins: I'm sure you all are anxious to get to that session, because we were teasing it a whole bunch yesterday.

Megan Columbus: We were.

Sheri Cummins: And it is the Research Portfolio Online Reporting Tools, or RePORT. And that is really a suite of tools. And that suite includes things like RePORTER, and the Matchmaker tool that we referenced multiple times yesterday. Also, awards by location, Categorical Spending. And Dr. Danielson is going to be talking about that right after our session. Hold on to that one.

Megan Columbus: [INAUDIBLE]'s message about people are cheating and looking ahead in the presentation. But you wouldn't do that, would you?

Sheri Cummins: See something, say something. I appreciate that. All right now let's move on to some terminology. So, what do we call an individual with signature authority, who can legally bind their organization to the Terms and Conditions of awards?

Megan Columbus: All right. We've got lots of AORs coming through.

Sheri Cummins: Okay.

Megan Columbus: Signing officials.

Sheri Cummins: Perfect. Love it. All right. This was apparently an easy one for you, and I think I actually did touch on this already. But Authorized Organization Representative, and that's what we call that person with signature authority within grants.gov, that's the role they hold. And then within the eRA Commons, we call that same type of person, the same person with signature authority, a Signing Official, or SO. So, both of those terms, just different systems, but same meaning.

What do we call the designated individual with the authority and responsibility to direct the program or project supported by an award?

Megan Columbus: Yeah, I've got PIs, PIs, PDPIs, Principal Investigators.

Sheri Cummins: So that is, in fact, Project Director Principal Investigator, PDPI. Often you will hear just Principal Investigator, or PI. Sometimes you'll hear Program Director Principal Investigator, right? But remember, the awards are made to the institution, so the application recipient is the institution, but it's the designated PI on that award that is going to kind of run that project, and handle all of the scientific and program aspects.

Who at NIH would you reach out to for scientific guidance pre- and post-award? Scientific guidance.

Megan Columbus: People are coming in hot and heavy with this one. The OPO, sometimes people are saying GM. There was an SRO that flew by. Most people are going for Program Official.

Sheri Cummins: Program Official is it, responsible for the programmatic scientific and-or technical aspects of a grant or cooperative agreement. And the Program Official does work very, very closely with their Grants Administrator, with the Grants Management Officers, right? So, our administrators and our Program Officials work very closely together, just like the Principal Investigators and the Signing Officials and administrators within your own organizations.

Who at NIH would you talk to discuss review assignments or other review concerns?

Megan Columbus: People have started to come in quick with that, too. Lots of SROs, some are saying POs.

Sheri Cummins: Okay. So, it is Scientific Review Officer. They're responsible for managing peer review meetings, evaluation procedures, managing conflicts of interest and such. So once that application is submitted, all the way up until the time of the Summary Statement, it is the Scientific Review Officer that is your contact. Once that Summary Statement comes out, then it becomes the PL.

Who at NIH would you reach out to for help understanding NIH policies and requirements?

Megan Columbus: Oh, we have Grants Management Officer, we've got Program Officials.

Sheri Cummins: Okay. And this would be your Grants Management Officer. So, they're responsible for that business management aspects of the awards. Again, working very closely with the POs.

And that's it. So hopefully, we had a little refresher, a little warm-up there. And now we will turn it over to Cindy Danielson.

Cindy Danielson: All right, thanks so much, Sheri.

Sheri Cummins: You bet.

Cindy Danielson: All right, well, hi, everyone. It's great to be here today, and I'm excited to walk you through the resources available on the RePORT website, which Sheri has just told you a little bit about and show you how that can be used to help you target your application and find key contacts at NIH. And the information available in these tools can help you answer questions, such as what is the NIH already funding in my research area? What results came out of those projects? Which institutes and centers have priorities that align with my research ideas? How can I find a relevant point of contact at NIH to discuss my research ideas, and what are my chances of getting funded? So, we'll do some live demonstrations, including a walkthrough of the RePORTER and Matchmaker tools, and explore funding trends and statistics available in the NIH Data Book. You'll get a chance to try out these tools today, too.

So, what is RePORT? The full name of the suite of tools is the Research Portfolio Online Reporting Tools, or RePORT for short. And this RePORT website is part of NIH's commitment to public accountability, and it's a one-stop shop for data on NIH programs. So combined on this website are a variety of tools that you can use to see the investments that NIH makes, and the links between NIH funding and research results. You can access the RePORT website at report.nih.gov, and any support questions can be directed to report@mail.nih.gov.

As I mentioned, RePORT is actually a suite of multiple tools, and the tools you'll find here include RePORTER, where you can view details about individual funded projects. Then there's a Matchmaker tool, which is where you can enter some scientific text to find similar projects in RePORTER, and to identify Program Officials overseeing those projects. There's also awards by location, which give you snapshots of where NIH funding is going each year. Then Categorical Spending, which categorizes NIH's annual spending on various research, Condition and Disease categories. And the Data Book, which provides summary statistics on NIH applications and awards over time.

So, let's start with RePORTER, which is one of those tools, and see how it can help you with your application. RePORTER can be a useful tool to find funded research projects in areas similar to yours to identify potential collaborators, and define projects awarded earlier under similar funding opportunities that you might be considering applying for. Our RePORTER acronym is similar to RePORT, but with an extra E and R at the end, and that stands for Expenditures and Results. So, in terms of Expenditures, it's updated weekly to include any newly funded grants. And in terms of Results, it will show you any patents, publications, clinical studies, and other types of research outcomes linked to the awards. RePORTER includes information from NIH going all the way back to fiscal year 1985, and also includes awarded projects supported by other components of the Department of Health and Human Services, of which NIH is a part, and by Veterans Affairs.

The RePORTER was built to be flexible because we know there are many different types of questions you're trying to answer, and different ways to approach those questions. So, one easy way to search RePORTER is by using the Quick Search, which is a single search box where you can enter one or more terms. This is similar to something like a Google search, where the system will do its best to identify what you're looking for and return relevant results. So, for an example, I can enter something like, "Lauer Cleveland Clinic 2005," and RePORTER will guess that I'm looking for a Principal Investigator named Lauer, a recipient organization called the Cleveland Clinic, and for awards funded in fiscal year 2005. For other types of questions though, you may be more interested in just jumping in and exploring the data. To do this, you can use the interactive charts to explore active NIH projects by either location, or by the institute or center administering the awards. And finally, for more precision, you can use one or more of the many search fields available on the Advanced Project Search Form to tell RePORTER precisely what you are after.

So, let's try us out together and see which search may work best for a particular question. I will put this link in the Chat for you as well, but if you'd like to follow along with this activity, please go to reporter.nih.gov and see if you can figure out how to find the following two numbers. So first, we're looking for how many active NIH projects are awarded to organizations in California, and then second, if you are up for a challenge, we're going to look for how many active NIH projects are awarded to -- sorry, how many projects that are active or administered by the National Institute of Nursing Research. And that uses the acronym NINR. And then we're going to ask for both of those questions, which search strategy did you use to find this information? And I think we'll probably give you about a minute, but we'll take a look at the poll responses when they're coming in and see how you are doing with us.

Megan Columbus: [HUMMING]

Cindy Danielson: Thank you for the elevator music, Megan. All right, and I've got a million windows open and can't really tell how the polls are coming in. Let me see if I can find the right window. All right. This is great, I'm seeing a ton of responses coming in. It's looking good so far, especially if this is your first-time using RePORTER. We are not expecting you to get the right numbers in a minute, really just wanted to give you a taste of how this works and get you feeling like you know where to go, and what questions you might need answered to get the right numbers.

All right let's give maybe 10 more seconds or so, and then we'll move on and reveal the answers. All right. So, let's go ahead and share those results, here. This is fantastic, I do see that the biggest response here was $10,905. We could have some of you answer a different number or perhaps you found another number. So that was for the first question, on California. We saw a lot of you use the interactive charts, and that's great. Some of you used Quick Search and Advanced Project Search as well. Then for the next question about the National Institute of Nursing Research, the winner here, according to the poll, is 439. And interactive charts again was the winner there. So, let's stop sharing that, and move on to kind of go through what we found here. All right, so for that first question about California, you all -- the majority answer there was that $10,905, so excellent work. A lot of you were able to find that. And how did you find that number? So, there's a couple of ways you can do that. The interactive charts, that's definitely the easiest one because that's been built for you, all you have to do is hover over California on the map, and it will tell you that number. Now you can use the Advanced Project Search to get the exact same number, you just have to program a few fields then. But that's definitely another way to go about that. Quick Search for the active projects -- it's not really going to work great for that, but for other questions, Quick Search would work really well.

So, for the next question here, the National Institute of Nursing Research, drum roll here -- 439. Again, great job. That was the biggest answer here, so many of you, I think, figured out that the interactive charts again were the way to go there. You just have to find the right bar on that histogram, and it will tell you that number. But again, you can go about it in a different way, if you want to use the different individual search fields, and you'll get at the same number. So, thanks for playing along. Hopefully that was as fun for you as it was for me, seeing the results on the other end.

Megan Columbus: And Cindy, just so you know, we had some people who weren't able to access the site. I think probably so many people hitting it at once slowed it down, and it was a very quick exercise. So --

Cindy Danielson: Okay, yes, thank you. So, we are stressing our systems a little bit with five thousand of you perhaps trying to do the same thing at the same time. Normally that doesn't happen, but I'm glad it worked for a number of you.

All right, so let's go ahead and move on. No matter how you choose to set up your search, whether you're doing the interactive charts or the Quick Search or the Advanced Project Search, in any case, once you run that search, what you'll see is a list of projects matching your search criteria, and key details like Project Number, Principal Investigator Name, Organization and Funding Information will be presented right on the screen, but you can click on the hyperlinks from this page to be more detailed, like the Abstract Contact Information, Dates, and other administrative details. And in addition to information about the awarded projects, RePORTER also connects these projects to the results that they supported. So, you can click on the Publications, Patents, or other tab at the top to explore those results. And if you've run a search that you'd like to keep an eye on over time, RePORTER has a couple of features that make this easy, from the Share button to a My RePORTER account, where you can set up weekly email alerts when new information is available.

So now that we've seen what information is available in RePORTER, I want to highlight a different way to search using the Matchmaker tool. And the way this works is, you can enter an abstract or any other scientific text, and then Matchmaker will pull out the scientific terms and concepts from your text, compare that against the terms and concepts found in other projects in RePORTER. And you can use this to see a list of those similar projects, or even a list of NIH Program Officials overseeing those similar projects.

So, here's an example where I've started with a researcher's description of their lab from the website. And if I copy that text, put it into the Matchmaker Search Box, and then when I select that similar project, then Matchmaker is going to analyze that text and find the best matches in RePORTER. And in addition to a list of the most similar projects in RePORTER, you'll also see visual summaries of the institutes and centers, activity codes, and the review panels associated with those projects, which can help you plan these details of your application, as you heard in yesterday's section on Review. You can also view the NIH Program Officials who oversee the science most like yours, making it easy to find a relevant point of contact to discuss your research ideas early on in the process while you're planning your application, which we heard was a theme in many of your registration questions, and which you'll hear about later today from NIH Programs Officers, it's important to do before applying.

So, let's shift gears a bit, because I want to show you where you can find more information about more than just one project at a time. So, RePORTER shows the information about each award, and it does have some visual summaries of the search results. But if you want to look across the NIH Portfolio and see statistics on application and award trends, and other information, then you want to look at the NIH Data Book, where the NIH reporting team has already done these analyses for you. And so, the NIH Data Book is an interactive data dashboard that summarizes long-term trends and statistics about NIH research funding. And this is updated annually after the conclusion of each fiscal year. You can explore the charts and data here to answer questions like, what are my chances of getting funded if I submit my application on that particular grant program? And here are just a few examples of the types of trends and statistics you can find in this tool, from the average funding amount from research project grants over time to success rates and the number of competing applications and awards again each year, to the number of principal investigators funded on different types of grants by race, ethnicity, and disability.

So, let's try another interactive activity today, and in this case, I'd like to direct you to the NIH Data Book, and we'll put the direct link in the Chat, but it's also available from the RePORT home page. And so, in this activity here, I'm going to ask you to try find this accessory, or R01-equivalent grants in the latest fiscal year that's available, which is 2023. And you can do this -- there's a couple of ways, places you might want to look. You might be interested in using the categories on the left and choosing success rates, or you can use the Search box to enter some relevant keywords in there. Let's take a look, and we'll give you about a minute or so to try and find this information. We've got the Zoom poll open when you're ready, so we can see what you found. And we'll be asking you for that number, the actual success rate, along with the specific report ID where you found this information. And if you're able to load the data block, and hopefully we're not going to bring down the system when we do this all together, but if you're able to do that and you find a report that has the right number in, when you look up close to the title, you'll see the report ID is located there. And I'm seeing answers coming in, so I'll give you all a little bit of time to allow some more participants to participate here. No elevator music from you this time, Megan?

Megan Columbus: Sorry, [HUMS] do-do-do-do . . .

Cindy Danielson: All right, we're seeing a lot of responses. Let's give about 10 more seconds, and then we'll close this poll and share the results out.

Megan Columbus: For clarification, when you're talking about the end of a year, are you talking about the end of a fiscal year?

Cindy Danielson: Yes. So, the end of the fiscal year, that's the government calendar here. So, when things wrap up at the end of October, then there's a lot of work to be done in terms of looking back at what happened that fiscal year. And all the information you see in the Data Book, those reports take some time and analyzes to get ready. Although the fiscal year has closed, we're still in kind of high reporting season around here.

Megan Columbus: I think our fiscal year is actually the end of September, isn't it?

Cindy Danielson: Sorry, did I s-- yes. End of September. Don't even know what month we're in now. Yes, October 1st, we have moved into another one.

All right, so let's share those results here. And the big winner here from the poll, we have many of you saying 22 percent. We got some other responses for different numbers, and I did set up the poll to kind of be tricky and put some numbers from similar reports. So, if you found any number there, I think it's a good start. But we definitely saw most of you got 22 percent. And in terms of what report ID, how that information -- many of you said REPORT ID 29, a few other reports, and some said Other. So, let's go ahead on to talk about those answers there.

All right, so for the question here, and again, we're looking for the success rate for R01 equivalent grants and fiscal year 2023, the last year for which we have this information in the Data Book. And the correct answer in this case is 22. So great job playing along with this activity. A lot of you were able to find that number. And what report ID had this information in it? So again, you got this right here, this was Report ID 29. And sorry if I tried to trick you, there were a few others. And we have so much information available in the Data Book, that some of those reports will have R01 equivalent grants, some would have RPGs. There's a lot of information out there. Yeah, just take a look, when you have a chance, at all the information there, and figure out what is going to be informative for you.

All right, so with that, thank you so much for listening and for trying out these tools with me today. Again, there's a lot of information in the different tools that are part of the RePORT website, so we don't expect you to know where to go for everything. So please take a look at the RePORT and RePORTER websites when you have a chance, so you can become more familiar with the information available there. That can hopefully help you to answer questions you may have as you're planning to apply. And if you need any help while you're using these tools, you can reach out to the RePORT team at report@mail.nih.gov. Thank you very much.

Megan Columbus: All right. So just a couple of questions here before we move on. I know that you weren't actually showing the screen to show how to do things. Are there any videos or anything for people who are struggling a little bit that might show how to use the systems?

Cindy Danielson: Sure. So, there's a few places you want to go for that. There are a few videos, I believe they're in the eRA Commons. I don't have a link offhand, but there's one on MY RePORTER, for example, which I didn't really have time to talk about, and some other tools as well. And then also, if you're using RePORTER specifically, which is kind of the most used tool here, there's some built-in help in the website. So, there's a lot of question marks, any time you can see one of those, you could just hover over that, and it will tell you more about what that Search field is for, how to use it, that type of thing. We have a number of FAQs on the website as well, again, about what information's in there, where it comes from. So those are a few places to go to learn more about how to use the tools.

Megan Columbus: Okay, so maybe once you get off the screen, you can reply in a Q and A to a question with maybe a URL where people can look for something.

Cindy Danielson: Sure, yeah, I'll take a look.

Megan Columbus: So, what other agencies are available in RePORTER? This particular person was asking about DOD, but what can you find beyond NIH?

Cindy Danielson: Yeah, so we don't have the Department of Defense in RePORTER, it's mostly other agencies that are part of the Health and Human Services, so the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Food and Drug Administration, there's a couple of others. I can put more information in the Chat or the Q and A. But when you're searching in RePORTER, one of the Search boxes we have under Advanced Project Search, if you click on that, it will give you the full list. So, you can decide if you just want to include NIH, or maybe some other agencies. So, it's not everything from the government, but it is a lot of agencies that use our systems and have that information in there together with it.

Megan Columbus: Can you find a project responding to a NOSI on RePORTER?

Cindy Danielson: No, because a NOSI, that's not a funding announcement, we don't have a way to search for that. You can search for Funding Opportunity numbers, that one is easy to do. There's a separate search field, but for NOSI, unfortunately because of the way it's handled, it's not a searchable field there.

Megan Columbus: But if people want to see what types of things are awarded to a particular Funding Opportunity announcement, they could do that?

Cindy Danielson: You could definitely do that. And one thing I know you've heard and will hear more about, the information in the NIH Guide, if you're looking at an announcement that seems like a good fit for you, it's possible that there was an announcement like it previously, that has already closed. You want to look back to find those older numbers. And you can see what happened on your previous iterations of that.

Megan Columbus: Right. Right. So, I have somebody here, I'm going to converge two questions together. They're only seeing similar projects on Matchmaker, and they want to understand how to find funding mechanisms based on the text you put in the window. But beyond that, there's also ways that people can identify Program Officials, right, for specific projects and establish connections with them. So, can you talk about how Matchmaker works to do all those things?

Cindy Danielson: Yeah. So, the way Matchmaker works, as it's really build upon a thesaurus that NIH uses for another purpose, that's for categorizing the research we fund annually, the Categorical Spending information I mentioned. So, there's a thesaurus of scientific terms there. And what happens with Matchmaker, how it uses that is, you enter your scientific text, and then the system is going to kind of pull out those terms that we recognize that are in our thesaurus, match those up against the information we have about funded projects that have those terms in them, and kind of compare to see what is the most similar. So that's it will show you the similar projects. And in terms of the Program Officers there, once it finds the similar projects, it will then connect that to the Program Officials who have most of the similar projects, and that's kind of a way to summarize that there. And so, if you're in the Matchmaker website, there's a little radio button defaults to similar projects, but if you look underneath that, it's Program Officials, and you can select that. If you'd like to see that list of Program Officials, either way, once you run one of those searches, we do have some graphics up at the time which summarizes which institutes and centers have the most funded projects that are most similar to the text that you entered, some other helpful information as well. But it's all based on the information and the scientific terms that are part of NIH's tools there.

Megan Columbus: Right. Can you give some real-life examples of why somebody would need to access or want to access a Data Book?

Cindy Danielson: So, Data Book, it's got a lot of information. I think for someone out there who is maybe considering putting in an application that might go to a particular institute or center, maybe they've put out a special RFA and you want to know, how likely is it I might be funded under this? There's some statistics like that under there. Just a general sense of how many applications come in every year, how many get funded, again, broken down in a variety of ways just to kind of know how you fit in there. Those are probably the more -- the real-world ones. There's information on funding priorities by institute and center, kind of see what percentiles are likely to get funded. Kind of benchmarking, I guess, would be the most real-life example. But there's a ton of information there about what NIH funding is being used for, what it goes to, how it's split across the portfolio.

Megan Columbus: Great. Thank you. I think that's probably the last question that we have time for, so with that, if we could put our slides back on, and if we can welcome the next inv-- investigator? If we could welcome the next presenter. Here we have Dr. Laurie Roman to talk about finding and understanding Notices of Funding Opportunity announcements.

Laurie Roman: Yeah, I was on the other side of the fence at one point, but that was an awful long time ago, I think. As you'll see based on the documents, I'm going to just be showing you, we've been around for a while.

So, the goal of today's presentation is to revisit some of the things that you've heard about already, both yesterday and the lovely recap that Sheri and Megan provided earlier. But we're going to take a little bit of a deeper dive. So, we're going to look at some ways of finding opportunities, walk through those notices, pointing out important points, and then engaging in a little bit of a knowledge check.

So, you've seen this page. Always recommend the first place to start is the NIH Guide to Grants and Contracts. You can see in the middle of the screen; there's opportunities to search by a funding category. That would be, I want to submit an R01, or an R21, or a training grant. The middle one is the IC, I'm working on Alzheimer, major interest of the National Institute of Aging. And then in the last case, you'd be putting in keywords, such as long COVID. So, when you do that, you end up in Search, you end up coming up with applications in this case that have the word "long COVID" only in the title. So, if you really want to take a deeper dive, you want to use the Advanced Search function, which has a lot more granularity in terms of the kinds of things that you can ask for. So, you can actually pull notices that were published within a certain timeframe, and again, looking at different organization types, and things of that nature. So highly recommend starting here.

You already know from RePORTER that if you have a particular area of interest, and I happen to have done research on craniofacial development using Zebrafish as a model system, so here we started at looking at RePORTER to see what else has been out there, you can certainly Google. Those are all viable ways of finding opportunity announcements. But one that I'm thinking that most people are not really thinking about, but you should, is grants.gov itself. So, as you've heard, most announcements for federal funding have to be posted at grants.gov. And there are certain areas of science that you definitely want to query at grants.gov. So, if we, for example, query based on -- oh, I went the wrong direction, sorry -- query based on breast cancer, low and behold, who would have thought the Department of Defense has a very robust program for both uterine and breast cancer. The bottom line is you want to get your work supported. It's probably less important where the money is coming, right? So, you do want to make sure you cast your net broadly enough to really make the decision of where to apply and what to apply with, with all of the information in hand. So again, multiple places to look for Funding Opportunity Announcements.

This is a real take-home message. Read the announcement carefully. I don't care if you've put in 50 R01s -- every single time we basically issue a new version of, say, the parent R01, something has changed. So, for example, in January 2023, we rolled out data management sharing. So, there was a lot of text about what you needed to do about data management and sharing. We have a new form set that's coming out for applications due on or after January 25th, 2025, for some activity codes. There will be a significant change in Section 5, which are the review criteria. So, if you just assume that the version before applies, you're going to be up the creek without a paddle. So really read the whole thing, I would say, several times, because it's a lengthy document, and it's not the most -- I wouldn't read it at bedtime, how about that? You want to make sure that -- you first want to check Participating Institutes. You've heard a couple of times, check for fit before you submit -- if you are really focused on Alzheimer, and Alzheimer's related diseases, or looking at changes in neuroanatomy in the brain over the lifespan of individuals, you'd better make sure that the National Institute of Aging is on that PAR. We've talked about those a little bit. And so again, you ought to make sure that your science is going to match. And we've talked about some of the tools that you can use to figure out that match, and that's using Matchmaker and RePORTER. So again, one of the first things that you want to do is check for that fit.

The other thing that you want to do, and this is equally important, is that you want to look at these related notices down here. Cindy mentioned that one strategy is to look for NOFOs that may have been submitted to a previous version, and you would find that previous version, because as you will all see in the coming months as you prepare your applications, we always have reissue of the previous version. The other thing that you want to check with, so largely here you have policy updates. But I would love to say we are perfect, but we are not. We make mistakes. And if we make a mistake, we put out a corrective notice. And that may change what you need to include in the application. So, you want to check for, again, Notices of Correction, Notices of Change.

You also want to, obviously, look at the due dates. You want to see when the application is due. Posted date is really just that when it's posted. Open date is when you first can consider submitting the application. That's usually 30 days in advance of the due date.

What we now use is a much, much more user-friendly way of displaying the dates -- so what we used to do, is just provide a link to the standard due dates, if the standard due dates apply. And now what you will see is, basically every single Funding Opportunity announcement will display all the dates, and in the case of whether AIDS apply, or whether resubmissions and renewals, all of those dates will be laid out in front of you. It'll give you a pretty good guestimate when those applications will be reviewed, evaluated by council, and the earliest start date. You also want to make sure that you are aware of the expiration date, particularly if you have things like continuous submission. And again, I want to highlight the importance of looking at those related notices, because we had to reissue, or we are in the process of reissuing so many of our research program NOFOs for the streamlined review framework. Many of those NOFOs that were planned initially when they were published to have due dates in the future, we are going to be expiring them early and then posting the new updated NOFO. And in some cases, you will actually see two version of a NOFO open at the same time, because we need to accommodate the AIDS date, in this case for new applications submitted on January 25th, 2025, applications on Forms H, which is the current form package, has an AIDS date on January 7. So, we will keep that NOFO open with the G package for AIDS date, close it, we'll expire it, and then you would use if you were intending to submit to that application for, for example, a February deadline, you would use that new NOFO, and the Forms I packets.

I expect there'll be some questions in the Chat. And so, the NOFO has some interesting guidance, and we set up a Table of Contents. And I'm just going to walk through what I consider the important parts of the NOFO. But before I do that, I want to again reiterate something that Sheri mentioned, in as much as there are three ways that an applicant can choose to prepare -- or their sponsored research office -- can elect to submit the application. They can submit using ASSIST. And for ASSIST -- I'll come back to that in a second -- there actually will be a green button that will take you to ASSIST. For Workspace, or grants.gov, you need to click on grants.gov and then log into Workspace. S2S is an organizational choice. As Sheri indicated, there are multiple companies and systems that are created in-house, and so we don't know what those links are, so we don't provide those in the NOFO. Up front, we tell you everything that you need to know about how to prepare your application by using the How to Apply Application Guide. And Sheri showed you that yesterday, it's a link that basically walks through every single form, every single field, and tells you what you need to do in terms of completing that form.

However, our colleagues at the ICs, in the context of a PAR where R is special receipt dates or review criteria, or RFAs, Request for Applications, may want additional attachments, or you include additional information that is not captured in the standard instructions. And so those are referred to as NOFO-specific. And you'll see language such as, "follow the instructions," and "how to apply," and "any NOFO-specific information," and then you'll see a box. So, you do need to make sure that you read that NOFO again to capture all of that NOFO-specific information. And then I'll show you an example of that when we talk about the review criteria.

The other thing, this again reiterates what Sheri brought up earlier -- we give you the forms for the NOFO that you are going to use to submit your application. You don't have to go find them. We give you exactly what you are expected to complete to submit your application. And as I mentioned, or for applications due on or after January 25th, 2025, you will be using Forms I. So, we're drilling that home because it's important, and the changes in Forms I are pretty significant for many of the research programs, but also for the fellowships and the training programs.

You want to take a look at the award information. So first it tells you what you can submit. So, for example, if you have a -- or you submitted an application and were not successful, in most cases, you can submit a resubmission as you can indicate here. In some FOAs, if you are -- what the IC will basically also allow you to renew an application, but as you can see, for this particular NOFO, there's no renewals permitted. So don't prepare your renewal application for an award using this particular NOFO. For many of you, you're probably aware that we also have in the title of every NOFO the clinical trial status, and they are basically four flavors. Clinical Trials Required, which means you have to have a clinical trial, Clinical Trial Optional, which is it's up to you, Clinical Trials Not Allowed, we don't think about putting one in, and then some of the ICs also support clinical trials that are mechanistic in their purpose. So again, you want to make sure that if you are preparing a clinical trial that you are picking a NOFO flavor that supports clinical trials, so either Optional or Required. And there's a lot of guidance, as you can see within the NOFO, that helps you make those choices. We had a couple of questions yesterday about eligibility, and the answer is, yes, it depends, and you have to read the Section III of the NOFO. There are things like limited competitions, where, for example, only individuals with a previous award can apply. There are single source, where if you have an organization that is providing a perhaps national service, and they need to renew, only that organization is eligible to apply. So, you really want to make sure that you are eligible to apply, and your organization is eligible to apply. And also, some FOAs limit the number of applications per organization. So those are all the things that you want to make sure that you write down on your score sheet about whether this is a good FOA for you, or not.

Now we're in what I think is one of my favorite parts of the application, and that's Section IV. And this is, again, provides largely step-by-step instructions about what to include in the application. We try not to be redundant, so if the explanation is present in the How to Apply Application Guide, we're not going to say it again. I mean, our NOFOs are long enough as it is, so we are expecting that individuals are looking at that guide as they're preparing that NOFO. The individual listed here is for the Letter of Intent. The Letter of Intent is not required, it is not binding. It does not really impact at all the outcome of the review in 99.9 cases -- percent of cases, sorry. And really, the ICs just use this to estimate workload and maybe review needs. So, this is really not the person that you want to contact if you have questions about the NOFO. Those people are found in Section VII, and they break down into scientific contacts, as well as branch management. So those are the people that you want to contact.

Okay, as I indicated, sometimes we make a mistake, or we use imprecise language, creating ambiguity. So, when we do that, we recognize that is not a good service to our applicant community, and we publish a Notice of Correction. And we basically provide text, which is what the language looks like now, and then what the specific changes look like in terms of what you really need to do to get your application in the door. And there is a hierarchy in terms of the relative importance. And I'm going to use a visual that will explain how long I've been at NIH -- so the instructions, I don't know if you can see this -- maybe not. It is a paper version of the SF424 Instruction Guide from December 22nd, 2009, our Forms B, so you can see that we've come a long way. So that's where you start. Ooh, the slides are going crazy. So, after the Instruction Guides, you want to go with the NOFO, and then you want to go with Notice. So, the hierarchy is, Notice is the most important. Oh, I think I gave away the poll, sorry.

Megan Columbus: Okay, so now who's going to get it wrong? That's what I want to know.

Laurie Roman: Yeah. Who gets it wrong after you're getting the answers?

Megan Columbus: I think you could probably show the results now.

Laurie Roman: Sorry about that. Where is it? So, the Notice is the most important, followed by the NOFO, followed by Instruction Guide. Sorry about that. Sorry about that. It took away a little bit of fun, but I get so excited. I'm sorry.

Okay. Now, NIH is implementing SRF for the selection for not all of the research project grants, but a selection of them. Those are well-published in the notices that have been generated. Those that are part of this pilot have had Section V significantly reorganized. So, it is reorganized into factors, which are Factor 1, the importance of the research -- should the research be conducted to really what you're going to be needing to address here. It's made of both significance and innovation. Factor 2 is really -- sorry, I'm blanking here -- can the work be done? And this is really addressing approach. And then are these the best investigators to do the work? And that is the investigators themselves, as well as the environment that they're in. So, what I want to call out in this particular case is, this is from a PAR where there are the IC, because of the nature of the NOFO, has entered NOFO-specific criteria. So, these are evaluated in the context of both the overall, and in Factor 1 and Factor 2, which get separate criterion score. Factor 3 does not get an individual score but does contribute to the overall assessment of the application. So really early in your writing of your application, when you really have the science sort of in its kernel, and you have all of the essence, you really, really, really need to look at these and pore over them. And as we talked about yesterday, revise-repeat, revise-repeat, read-revise-repeat, read-revise-repeat, because you want to make sure that you are clearly and succinctly addressing all of the elements that are covered in these criteria, okay? So not just the standard, but also the NOFO-specific. So, really important. So, you need to look -- so these are the criteria by which your applications will be evaluated, and so you want to make sure that you are including the information that will allow the reviewers to assess whether you have, for example, in the research strategies, address outcomes that will impact effective management of human pain conditions. You have to make sure that you really address those points.

Megan Columbus: All right, Laurie, we are being very close to --

Laurie Roman: And this is my last slide.

Megan Columbus: Perfect, and I want to get one question in. So -- are you finished with that?

Laurie Roman: Well, I was going to say check before you submit, look at the description, make sure your science match what they're looking for. Very importantly, many, if not all, PARs have responsiveness and non-responsiveness, so they tell you what they don't want. Make sure your science matches one of the ICs on the NOFO. Make sure that you are putting in the right kind of application per what's allowed in the NOFO, got the right clinical status, and are eligible.

Megan Columbus: Perfect, thank you so much, that was super-helpful. Okay, I'm going to take a moderator's prerogative and go for two questions. Can you just confirm again that if new applications can basically be submitted anytime between the open date and the expiration date?

Laurie Roman: They can; however, for many NOFOs, and let's take the parent as an example -- there are three major submission dates in the year, and if they accept AIDS, then it's six. And as you heard yesterday from Michelle Timmerman, humans need to look at that and make assignments of those applications. One of the things that they assign to is that council round, that second level of peer review that Stephanie Constant talked about. And so, what that really means is that we think about submissions per council rep. So, if you submit a new application, a new R01 application in April and it's not AIDS, there could be changes, NOFO expirations -- all kinds of things before that next receipt date, which would be June 6th. And so, what we really try to sort of put as a guideline is, best not to submit more than 60 days or 30 days in advance. Thirty days in advance is probably best. If you are, because people leave the country, they have life experiences that may require that and take longer, include that in the cover letter, that you are submitting this application with this due date in mind.

Megan Columbus: Perfect. Thank you. And just one more, if an applicant is searching through the Guide or searching through grants.gov, and they can't find a Funding Opportunity that matches their area of science, what do you recommend?

Laurie Roman: Two things. First, I would probably go to RePORTER, and for the following reason. We have these Parent Announcements, which are investigator-initiated, so it may not be that we have a dedicated NOFO. So, the bigger question is whether the application that you were envisioning to write is within the vision of NIH. So, you want to take a look by looking at RePORTER, if NIH has ever seen an application like yours. And again, if the answer still is no, I would basically reach out to one or more of the individuals, as you heard yesterday, and contact Program staff to see if there is a fit. I have seen applications that are basically returned to the individual because it was not within the mission of NIH.

Megan Columbus: Great, very helpful. Thank you so much.

Laurie Roman: Sure.

Megan Columbus: Appreciate you, and with this, let's welcome LeShawndra to come on and talk to us more about grant writing, because she gave some great tips yesterday.

LeShawndra Price: Thanks so much, thanks, Megan. I am LeShawndra Price. I am Director of the Office of Research Training and Special Programs at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. And yesterday, you'll recall that I talked with you about the How to Apply Application Guide formatting, and I gave you tips and advice for drafting your application, including not to be overly ambitious. Today, I am going to continue along that same vein with writing tips, and walk you through a few of the resources, including the How-To Guide. And I might even test your knowledge.

So, let's go ahead and get started. You'll recall that a lot goes into applying for NIH applications, and we want you to be successful. In addition to ensuring that you read the general instructions, and the specific instructions for the specific activity code for your application, how can you make sure that your application is as strong as it can be? So, let's talk about a few critical areas of the application. So, the Chat box is open. What do you remember about the specific aims? So, what are the specific aims, and why are they important? So, this is not -- uh-oh, someone says -- okay, clear, [INAUDIBLE] set the hook. Oh, wonderful -- their first impression, they explained the project at a high level, they talked about your central hypothesis, proposing the aims, experimental aims. It's going so fast -- these are great, and fantastic. You are exactly right. The specific aims are the road map for your application. You want to be clear and concise, and successful applications talk about the hypothesis, the long-term objectives, and the expected impact. And the specific aims tell the reviewers what the results will mean. So, thank you so much for having that there.

Now let's do a poll. We talked yesterday about the research strategy. The research strategy is the largest narrative section in most applications. It's the why, the what and the how of your proposed research project. So, what three sections should you always include in the research strategy? And this is a multiple choice, and you've got a lot of choices here. Professional experience, significance of the research, organizational support, scientific approach, scientific background, past publications, or innovation of the project. And you can choose multiple answers here.

Okay, so let's see the answers to the poll. Ah! Can't fool you all at all. Absolutely correct. The significance of the research, the scientific approach, and the innovation of the project, those are the correct answers.

So, let's get into that a little bit. Let's see, the three main sections of the research strategy are significance, innovation, and approach. Significance, of course, answers the "so what" question. Innovation is where you present a strong case for how the research will be paradigm shifting, how your research will refine or improve what we know about your science, and the approach is how you're going to do it. Excellent.

All right. So, let's do another poll. So, what should you be thinking about in developing the research strategy? And this is a single choice answer. Should you be thinking about making sure the science is reproduceable and rigorous, how your preliminary data supports the project's central hypothesis, explaining exactly how your research adheres to human subject research and clinical trial guidelines, or a detailed budget. Then you have a combination of answers 1 and 2, of 2 and 4, and I believe there may be -- well, you let me know which of these answers is correct.

Okay. Well, let's see here, okay. I understand why you chose the answer that you did. The actual -- the poll was actually missing one of the answers. The true answer is 1, 2 and 3 -- it is all three of the top three here. So maybe that was a little bit of a trick question.

Let's see here, okay. The research strategy -- this slide describes additional attributes of strong applications, and some things that you want to keep in mind. I encourage you to use the link at the bottom of the page titled, "Learn More Research Strategy," to link to guidance and specific advice in the how-to application guide, specific to the research strategy content. A key tip here on this page is actually using the tables, the charts, and figures in your application to help explain key concepts, or to summarize information or topics in your application.

So, let's do a more advanced poll. When we think about the letters that are required in NIH applications, almost every NIH application requires at least one kind of letter. So, let's check your knowledge here. What is the difference between each of these different types of letters? And I'll get -- this is sort of a matching exercise. So, we have the Letter of Support, Reference Letters, Cover Letters, and the Letter of Intent. And you'll see on this page in front of you the different answers. So, I'll give you a little bit of time to answer this particular poll. So, Letters of Support, Reference Letters, Cover Letters and Letters of Intent.

Megan Columbus: This is feeling more and more like a real test, LeShawndra.

LeShawndra Price: I know. I'm reminded of the days when I used to be an adjunct professor at a few different institutions.

All right, well, let's go ahead and see the answers here. All right. And you'll see that Letters of Support are required for most applications, Letters of Intent. And these moved around a little bit. So, we have quite a few different answers there in the poll. But let's get into the details a little bit further. So, your Letters of Support are required for most of the applications, and they provide information about -- they document the commitment and the role of particular team members. So, you can use those especially to document consortium agreements, the role that those individuals will have, individual who are contracted for services on grants. And those are included in most applications, because you want to talk about the individuals that are supporting you in the work that's being done. Reference Letters are required for mentored opportunities, for instance, the fellowship awards or career awards. And they are not actually included in the application. When it comes to Letters of Intent, Letters of Intent are not required, and they're not binding. They're typically due at least 30 days in advance of the submission deadline. Now why they're helpful is that they actually help us here at NIH at estimating review workload, and they help us recruit the best reviewers for the type of science that you're proposing. So, they do help us give a bit of information. So, I always recommend that individuals do complete a Letter of Intent. The other thing is that sometimes, we learned, that your application, because of the information in the Letter of Intent, we're able to reach you and contact you if we think that your application may not actually be the best fit. All right. So, Cover Letters are typically optional. They can convey information to the Division of Receipt and Referral.

All right let's get into the budget. Now we talked about the budget before. Now where can you find information that will help you get your budget started? Why don't we open the Chat really quickly and see if we have a couple of quick answers to this? Well, I will tell you exactly, looking in the NOFO is a great place to start. Be sure that when you're looking for information, you're going to look for the budget requirements in the NOFO, and you may want to work with your office of sponsored programs and departmental administrators when you're working on components of the budget. You also, if you have questions or you want additional explanation, be sure to reach out to an NIH financial or Grants Management contact when you have questions. And don't forget to reach out if you need prior approval for a budget at or above $500,000 in any year of the proposed project.

All NIH applications require a bio-sketch. Let's open another quick poll, and you tell me what tools area available to help you develop your bio-sketch. And you have a single choice here. Your ORCID ID, the SciENcv, or bio-sketch informs pages, or all of the above. Well, let's see the answers to your poll, to the poll. Can't fool this group at all -- correct. All of the above. Now, your bio-sketch, of course, talks about -- tells the reviewers about the investigative team. I want to make sure that you all are aware that changes are coming to the NIH bio-sketch in May of 2025. We are working to use the Science CV and the ORCID ID to help to make it easier for you to prepare your bio-sketch. So, for more information, click on the link at the bottom of this page where it says "Tip: Changes are coming to the NIH bio-sketches in May of 2025," and there you can find more information.

Now I'm going to quickly go through how to request a specific science review group, or an institute. Now we did just talk about that with our last presenter. But I want to make sure you are aware of this opportunity through the Assignment Request Form that is on the Center for Scientific Reviews webpage. Now, what does it look like? When you click on that link, that was the blue link on the last page, you'll see specifically it takes you to this page, and then that will take you directly to the form. And at the top of the form, you'll see where you complete the information, you'll print this out and include it, the Funding Opportunity announcement number or the NOFO number, and the NOFO title, and then below that there is information where you can suggest an NIH institute and center, and-or a scientific review group. Now when you do that, keep in mind that we do often consider it, but we're not obligated to consider that. You can also provide information there about specific expertise that may be needed, and those other kinds of things. So please consider using the Assignment Request Form.

Now I know that we are short on time, and I want to make sure that we have an opportunity, Megan, to talk about some of the questions that you may have received, or that you've seen in the Chat.

Megan Columbus: Yeah, thank you so much. This is so important to have such practical information for folks. There are some questions about things like Letters of Support. Are MOUs needed, for example?

LeShawndra Price: So, I think in terms of the Letters of Support, I think that a Letter of Support is what would be required based on what's in the NOFO. You certainly would want to describe that in terms of your investigative team, that you have an MOU in place. But be sure to look for the actual requirements in the NOFO.

Megan Columbus: Okay. And I see that our folks in the background are helping with questions about things like, should you include Letters of Support from co-investigators who are at your own institution? It's not required, right? But --

LeShawndra Price: Right. Right. It's not required, but it certainly shows that those individuals are members of the investigative team, it can show their enthusiasm, and they can speak directly to their role and explain even further what they're going to do and the commitment that they have to the particular area of science, and that particular project.

Megan Columbus: Great. Why would requesting a specific review group be important? They have to --

LeShawndra Price: See, requesting a particular study section can be important because you know your work very well, and it allows you to potentially match your science to a group of experts that would be reviewing your application. Now it's not a requirement, so you're not required to request an NIH study section. The Center for Scientific Review will assign applications to study sections based on a number of factors, including the application's fit with the review group's guidelines. Also, the terms of the NOFO and the mission of each potential institute and center. So, you don't have to complete it, but it can be very helpful. And we just talked about using the Assignment Request Form to request a particular study section. It does allow you to list the expertise needed for the review. It can allow you to exclude reviewers, and it also allows you to request an institute assignment, or multiple institutes if you think maybe more than one institution may be interested in the work that you're presenting.

Megan Columbus: If an applicant already submitted and is now thinking about a resubmission, who would they talk to about that for guidance?

LeShawndra Price: Hmm, okay.

Megan Columbus: How do they find that person?

LeShawndra Price: This is a great question. I would say speak to your Program Official. You can reach out by email to schedule a phone call or a virtual meeting by Zoom, or one of the other platforms. That way you're able to ask specific questions. You can talk about -- if you send them an email in advance requesting an appointment, you can talk about your proposed plan for the resubmission in your email to give that Program Officer an idea of how to prepare for your discussion with them. Now the PO's name, phone number and email address can be found on the Summary Statement, and it also is listed in the eRA Commons Account.

Megan Columbus: Perfect. Thank you so much.

LeShawndra Price: My pleasure.

Megan Columbus: Just because there's been so many questions about Letters of Support, can an application -- and I know applications are very different, but how many would you expect to find, and from whom?

LeShawndra Price: Oh, wow. How many would you expect to find, and from whom? That's a very good question. But I would say Letters of Support, you want to make sure that there are Letters of Support for anyone that -- not only the individuals that you've described, individual school systems, healthcare systems, you want to have documentation of anyone that is going to be doing particular services, or if you're doing something in the community, for example, or with that healthcare system. You need to have someone who's going to say that they agree to do what it is that you're proposing to do with them in the application. There's nothing worse than reading an application that sounds absolutely fantastic, is a joy to read, but there's no Letter of Support from the key individual or system or community that's going to be providing -- that where the work is going to be done, for example. That shows that you may not have feasibility. So, anyone that helps to ensure that your work is going to be feasible is who you want to make sure you have a Letter of Support from.

Megan Columbus: Sounds good. And so, would that include people like community organizations?

LeShawndra Price: Definitely would include community organizations, yes. If you are partnering or proposing community-engaged research but you don't have a Letter of Support from the community, then the reviewers are likely to assume that there is no true relationship or evidence of a relationship, and there's no evidence that this would actually be feasible in working in that community.

Megan Columbus: That's really helpful. And there is a final question here about whether or not they have to follow the formatting guidelines of the other elements of the application, and we would not expect them to have to follow margin guidelines in those kinds of things.

LeShawndra Price: That's correct.

Megan Columbus: Super-helpful. Hey, thank you so much. I appreciate it.

LeShawndra Price: My pleasure.

Megan Columbus: All right. So, moving on, if we can get the presentation back up again -- lovely. Great. Good time for a bio break. I love the images here; in case you want to know what it is, and you can find out. But we'll see you back very soon when we start up again. If someone can put in the chat for us what time we start up again, that would be great. Okay, 2:38. You've got 10 minutes. See you soon.

All right, welcome back. How about we get people warmed up again with -- give me in the Chat, give me a good takeaway from what you have heard in the last hour and a half or so. Is the Chat open for everybody? Read the NOFO. Read, revise, repeat. Yes. Do your homework. Letters of Support information -- yes. ORCID and SciENcv are important for bio-sketches, yes. Read, read, read. Yes. Okay, yeah, RePORT can be very helpful. Start early. Specific aims are absolutely important, yes. Measure deadlines with calendars, not clocks. Yes. Project management -- yeah, it's an important part of this all, isn't it? Love this. Love this. Great. Okay.

So, as we are going into Part 2, we're going to be looking at the submission of your application in the eRA Commons, so that everyone understands, even if that's not your role, right, because it has to happen by assigning official or AOR. A walkthrough of a Summary Statement so you can understand what you're looking at when -- to see the results of peer review. More about writing your application, and Notice of Award, and looking at monitoring of reporting. And then ending with some final tips from you all, and some final tips from our Program Officials. All right.

With that, I'm going to turn it over to Laurie again. Welcome back.

Laurie Roman: Thank you, Megan, it's been a long time.

All right, so in this session, we're going to take a slightly different dive and perspective on a couple of the things that you've already heard about. And that has to do with registration, submission options, plans, finalizing submit and actual tracking. So again, you've heard about this a bunch of different times, and so it's just worth repeating as many things as you've heard today -- registrations must be done before applications are submitted, because your submission -- your one renewal isn't in place is not a reason for us to take a late submission. And for the most part, these are organizational. So, there is, hopefully, at your organization people who are way on top of this. But you know, you should always check.

The one thing I did want to talk about, because we really didn't flush this out in great detail, is it's the organization that registers for eRA Commons, and then the SO, or the person at least responsible for that in Commons is charged with the responsibility of affiliating individuals at that organization with the organization. So, for example, if someone wants the role of a PDPI on an application, they need to be affiliated with the organization and have the role of PDPI. Same thing for fellows, and then of course trainees, and those are important for when trainees are appointed to training grants. We're not talking about that too much in this section, but it's critical that again, that not only has everyone gotten their Commons registration and their affiliation, but the proper roles are assigned for them to do what they need to do in Commons. And again, just to reiterate that every individual that's listed on that senior key does need to have an active Commons registration, or Commons ID. So hopefully we beat that one to death.

The other thing I do want to highlight in a little bit greater detail, for those of you that are in positions where you can influence which system is used to submit applications, in some cases there are not options. So, for example, Workspace does not accommodate complex applications, and I'll talk about that again in just a second. But the bottom line, and I think you've seen this sort of summary, but you have ASSIST, system ASSIST, Workspace -- all of those applications are submitted to grants.gov, and we pull them down. And what we do with them is, first we make sure that all the registrations are in place. And some of that, for example, SAM is done at the level of grants.gov -- we make sure that every required data field -- and that's data fields by the by the schema of the form, as well as business requirements -- like, for example, we require a Commons ID is on the cover page -- are all in place. I'll come back to that in greater detail than that. Those applications are first routed through grants.gov, we pull them down, we validate them against our business rules, we assemble the them in a consistent format, we put a Table of Contents in, we bookmark them, we put page numbers in -- which is why you should not put page numbers in -- and then we put that application in the grant folder. So, we're going to talk about all of those within the next few minutes. But it doesn't matter how you submit it; we're going to do the very same thing.

So, I do just want to take a minute here to flush out at least -- and again, just to remind you to check with your sponsored research office what they want you to use to submit your application. I do want to compare a couple of features from ASSIST to Workspace, because they're both free systems provided by the federal government. So, the things that are in advantage of using ASSIST is that all of that information that you, as a PI or a fellow enter into FOAM, or your organizations enter into the organizational profile, we use that information to pre-populate fields in the application. So, you will not have to add your address or the city or state of your organization. We know it, we will pull it, and so we reduce a little bit of the burden that you have for data entry. The other beautiful aspect of it is one-stop shopping. You are able to submit and track your application in a single system. If you use Workspace, you will be logged into grants.gov, which means to view the status of your application, you're going to need to log in to NIH's Commons, go to Status, and check the status of your application. So, you have to go into a second system. Lastly, ASSIST, and many of this is kudos to Sheri since she was with the project in terms of its breakout first for complex applications then single project ASSIST is, we support all kinds of applications. So single project, multi-project applications -- that is not the case for Workspace. They do not support applications when there are more than one component.

I've already highlighted this before. We give you the green button for ASSIST. When you click on that, it takes you to ASSIST, which stands for the Application Submission System and Interface for Submission Tracking -- now you know why governments have acronyms, because they have large titles like that. In this case, you would need to enter your Commons username and the password that's associated with that account. When you do that, you will be taken to -- right, you can also log in via Commons, you can also Google NIH ASSIST to get here, so you don't necessarily always just have to go from the Funding Opportunity Announcement.

This is what ASSIST looks like. And I just want to call out a couple of things. And the first one is that every single form that you need to complete is displayed as a tab across the top, where the red, purple, maroon -- whatever kind of arrow is pointing to. So, in this particular case, if the blue tab is highlighted, which is for the research plan. The left-hand side is the navigational bar. And I want to bring your attention to Managed Access -- this is a really nice tool that allows you as the PDPI, or several other different roles, to grant access to collaborate, to allow them to work on the application more or less at the same time. And this is really nice for complex applications. It has the ability, too, to restrict them to specific fields. For example, if you don't want them to receive budget information, you could basically zero that out. Partly occluded by that arrow is a tab called "add optional forms." LeShawndra talked about the Assignment Request Form -- we actually include that form with the applications as an optional field, and I would highly recommend that you use the one that's associated with the application, because what we do when you complete a form, when we process that application, we map some of those structured data elements to our database, so they are represented elsewhere within the NIH modules that you've heard described. If you pull it from CSR, it gets flattened because you have to attach all attachments as PDFs, and we can't pull that data. So again -- recommend taking that from the Assignment Request Form, but absolutely do this if you want to suggest reviewers and assignments in terms of ICs with your application. Then again, there are a couple of other navigation tools, which I'll talk about in a second, particularly Preview.

You've gotten some good advice. I'm going to take this to a slightly different level in terms of breaking it down, and who you need to be on your team for getting this application successfully submitted. So, you've already identified your Funding Opportunity announcement, you've established -- who are your team members? Who's going to be a senior key on the application? Have you gotten their Commons ID? Later, they're going to need that ORCID, and they're going to need to have prepared that bio-sketch and SciENcv, and you want to make sure you don't want to touch it, because it has a signature associated with it. You want to make sure that you've got your Commons ID and registrations are in place. You know how you're going to prepare your application. And this is really important -- who's doing what? I know in many cases, at least academic institutions, I've been associated with, you work with your sponsored research office, your departmental folks, to get the budget ready. Who does data entry? Are there internal approval processes that the application needs to go to before submission? Who are you getting your images from?

And this is a really important one post-submission -- who's going to be looking at the status of that application once it's submitted. Remember, the PI is not the person who's submitting. It's the individual with the AOR credentials for grants.gov. So how are you going to communicate back and forth to check the application is error-free? I remember from my days when I was in Division of Receipt and Referral, we had a very, very frantic call from an administrative assistant whose PI basically handed the application off, they submitted the application, it had errors. No one knew that they had responsibility to correct their errors. They got on a plane, application due date passed. That application was not processed. So very important to have your post-submission responsibilities well hammered-out, well in advance. Always make sure you have a backup.

We talked a little bit before about making sure that you understand the hierarchy of information, about how you prepare your application, starting out, of course, with the how to apply, making sure you've read through that Funding Opportunity, particularly Section V, and also related notices to see if there's anything that corrects those notices, and then if they are to follow those notices. I do want to provide a resource link here -- this is the annotated form set, which basically gives you field-by-field instructions of how to complete the application. And again, we've talked about this. Important action -- so you filled your application out, you want to make sure you pre-validate it, make sure that you pass all the business rules before you submit, that, again, will just cut down on the churn. You also want to make sure you take a look at the application image beforehand. I, myself, have seen a lot of placeholders. There is a famous application that had a cranberry margarita recipe that was included in one of the attachments.

You want to make sure you follow all the instructions for the system that you're using. Only the AOR is authorized to submit. Once they submit to grants.gov, you can use the grants.gov timestamp to verify on-time submission, and that's seen by timestamp. You will want to make sure you know that grants.gov number, if you do have things that you need to correct you will need to put a change corrected and use that number as a reference. If your application is processed, then this is example of the one-stop shopping, eRA Commons Succession Number -- you click on that number, and it takes you directly to the grant folder, where you can see in this case there is just some warnings. You scroll further down on this form; you actually can then see the link to the grant application image. And as I indicated, this will look exactly what it will look like for the reviewer, so you want to make sure you take a look at that.

So, an on-time submission is 5:00 local time. You want to make sure that you give yourself a window of correction, just in case something does happen, you notice a typo. But again, you want to make sure that you give yourself some time to correct early, submission on a calendar, not a clock.

For the sake of time, I'm going to pass that through. For folks that are using System-to-System and Workspace, you need to log in eRA Commons. This has been brought up; it's a common portal whereby we exchange information between the applicant and the agencies. You need to log in, and then effectively make sure that everything looks copasetic on your application, and authorize individuals that can check this, or the Signing Official, the AO, the PDPI and the assistants. We do send notifications, but we do recommend that you proactively check your applications, because as you probably have spams, email can be unreliable or puts things in places that you may not obviously go to look. You have to -- must, must, must -- correct errors. They stop the processing of your applications. Warnings don't stop the processing, but it's up to your discretion whether you address them or not.

This is how you correct, which is basically moving it back to a Work in Progress status, making the corrections, adding the grants.gov tracking number so it knows which previous submission to overwrite. You need to do this before the due date, and again, retrack the application through Commons. This is what it looks like. We put bookmarks in, the bookmarks are hyperlinked to specific sections. We put page limit, page numbers on, we put a Table of Contents in place. For complex applications, we build summary tables. But the important part is, if you can't see it, we can't see it. And if we can't see it, we can't review it, and we certainly can't fund it. So, it's critical that you do evaluate the image before the due date. Submit it, evaluate it, before the due date.

Michelle has touched on a bunch of these different things that captures whose -- what validations are in place. It is automated at grants.gov, it is automated by eRA when we look at things like file names and page limits and required attachments. And then real people evaluate whether your applications on time, whether you've put things in appropriate places. So, what I want to give you as a last moment is, there are ample opportunities for you to be creative and innovative in writing your science and focusing in on the science that you're proposing to do, coming up with innovative strategies to solve whatever scientific question needs to be solved. Innovation and creativity are two words that should never, ever be associated with the process of preparing and submitting your application. Follow the rules. Follow the instructions.

Avoid the pitfalls -- read everything -- read, read, read, read, read. Confirm everything's in place. Every attachment has to be a flat PDF with a file name that is unique and 50 characters or less, spaces count. Make sure you preview the application image and pre-run the validations. Get a plan, submit early -- remember that calendar. And then track. If anything goes wrong, and you don't see that confirmation within literally an hour on a busy day, call the Service Desk. Better in doubt to reach out than to be captured -- to be into La-La-Land and run the risk of the successful submission.

Megan, you're mute.

Megan Columbus: We just have a couple of minutes for questions. So, for PIs, do they need to register for ASSIST?

Laurie Roman: They do not. There is no registration involved in ASSIST; you just need to have Commons credentials.

Megan Columbus: Perfect. Can ASSIST be used for progress reports?

Laurie Roman: No.

Megan Columbus: Is Manage Access available to standard applications, or only complex applications?

Laurie Roman: It's available for all applications.

Megan Columbus: Great. And going back to forms for just a second, how often does NIH update forms and application formats for submission?

Laurie Roman: Oh, my goodness, way more now than we used to. It used to be sort of like on a four-year, and now it really seems like every two years. We're already talking about Forms J. I do want to let everyone know that we are actively in the process of posting Form Packet I's to current NOFOs, and NOFOs that were published early without packets, the parents will be out around Thanksgiving. Again, everything submitted for application due dates on or after January 25th must be on Forms I -- again, it's really for research, particularly, and the [INAUDIBLE], they're very, very different.

Megan Columbus: Hey, thank you so much. Very helpful.

Laurie Roman: Yep.

Megan Columbus: With this, we're going to go and look a little bit more deeply into Review, with Sudha.

Sudha Veeraraghavan: Okay, everyone. Thank you for taking the time to listen to what we have to say. Our goal is to try and help you to make sure that your applications are going through and can be successful. I am Sudha Veeraraghavan, and I am a Scientific Review Officer at CSR.

So, what I want to do today, is to recap very briefly some of the things you already heard, and then walk you through what a Summary Statement looks like, and then you're going to work with me to answer some questions to figure out when you have questions, whom to contact and when you should contact those people.

So, let's go through really quickly about, what is CSR? CSR is the Center for Scientific Review, and it's one of the institutes and centers at NIH. One special thing about CSR is, we manage peer review at CSR. As I mentioned, I am a Scientific Review Officer, and there are about 250 of us who manage the review of all the applications that come to CSR. So, you can see on this graph, out of the many applications that came in, 67,000-ish, which is about 77 percent of all the applications that came to submitted to NIH for the 2024 fiscal year, were reviewed by CSR. So that's a lot of review that we do. The thing to remember, though is, CSR does not fund research. We do review, we don't fund research, okay? So, we keep that in mind, and then move on to the next point, which is, you heard that NIH uses a two-stage system of peer review. You can see this is like somewhat of a complex slide, but it's really simple. It says that the investigator, you, have an idea, your institution submits an application, comes to NIH that goes to the Center for Scientific Review. And you heard talks yesterday from Division of Receipt and Referral -- and that's who sees the applications first. And then the Referral Officers and staff at DRR send the applications over to Review Grant Chiefs, and the Review Grant Chiefs will manage various study sections in their group, or supervise those SROs, will send those applications to the study sections. And the SROs then will run the study sections to evaluate the scientific or technical merit of the applications. That's Stage 1 of the review system.

Then the institute and center use the information that comes out of these study sections and use that for recommending for funding. And the institute's Director takes the final action of whether or not to fund an application. So, what can you do to help this process? How can you be a savvy applicant that can actually help your application? So you heard several of these things already, but first thing, foremost, before you apply, you can see at the top of the slide, please check to make sure the signs that you're proposing fits with at least one of the institutes or centers at NIH, because if we cannot assign your application to an institute, or an IC, then your application is stuck. It cannot move forward. So, it's really important to make sure when you look at a NOFO that you can see under the components that the institute or center that fits your science is actually listed there. So then, if you really have some doubts about it, can you really submit your applications, with the institute accept it -- these are good questions for the Program Officers who are at the institute or the center or the IC.

The other things you can check is, if there's a NOFO that's, let's say, for early-stage investigators, then are you eligible? And there was a lot of discussion about this yesterday. So, there are a number of things you may want to do before you put your application in. There's nothing worse than you taking all the time -- months, they said, right -- to prepare the application to spend months to put the application in, only to find out that it has to be withdrawn because there is no IC, or because of some other issue eligibility sort of things.

So, the next thing you can do is, with your application, submit that Assignment Request Form. You just heard about that today as well, and let me point out that once again, those components, ICs that you might want to include as suggestions, you can include up to three of those ICs on the component in the Assignment Request Form. You can also include study section suggestions. These are also referred to as Scientific Review Groups. So, you can suggest up to three of these SRGs, or study sections, on there. And there are tools available to you, you've heard about these as well -- there's Matchmaker, there's ART. And you can just go to the public facing website for study section descriptions, which clearly gives you what study sections cover what science. You can also look at their overlap statements and see what other study sections might also be suitable for your science to be reviewed.

So, then you can give under the Rational box, you can say why are you suggesting these things; you know, why these three ICs out of the many that are at NIH? You could say, for example, "I spoke with the Program Officer, Dr. Pat Fine, who is at this institute," or you could say, "I spoke with or emailed Dr. Sam Nice of this study section," and so forth. You could also say, "I looked at the public facing website and I see the description fits the science that I'm proposing. All of those are perfectly reasonable. So, the other thing you want to do is, use the space to include areas of your science. You can propose keywords, and you can also include any conflicts that you may have, so that that information can all be taken into account. And you heard this previously, I'm going to read -- just because you make these suggestions, doesn't mean your request can be granted, because we have many factors to consider when we assign an application to an IC or to a study section, all right?

So, the next step is the review process itself. So now your applications in a study section. What happens? The review process typically uses a bunch of different reviewers who have been recruiting for that meeting, for all the applications. If it's a standing study section, you have some reviewers who come back every time, and then you will also have some ad hoc reviewers. Three reviewers are assigned to each application, most of the time. And each of them will provide written critiques and preliminary scores. Other reviewers on the panel also provide additional expertise, though. And even though the three assigned reviewers start the discussion, all the committee members who are in the meeting and who are not in conflict also participate in the discussion. So, in the end, the review outcome, the final score, is really a committee decision, not just the three reviewers who are assigned to the application. So, keep that in mind, because it's the entire committee that's present during the discussion that works.

The roster for the study section is available 30 days before the meeting, and I do have that fine font underneath which gives you a warning to please not contact any of those study section members, because that would be a violation of review integrity. So, it's there for you to know. And then if you have any questions about the expertise on the panel, you can certainly contact the SRO. But that information is just there for you.

Then at the end of the meeting -- so what happens is, when the discussions are complete, then somehow, we have to communicate what happened at the meeting so that the application can move to the next stage, which is the second stage. Therefore, the SROs will prepare the Summary Statement, which is the product of the discussion that took place. And it can take up to 30 days, 30 calendar days after the meeting, to get to your Summary Statement.

What is the purpose of it? The purpose is, as I mentioned, to make sure program staff at the ICs who have an interest in the application, they can get this information about the scientific and technical merit of each of the applications in the meeting. It shows not only the major score drivers that led to the final overall impact score, but it also makes sure that the PI can understand how the application was reviewed, right? So, it has a lot of different components, but we'll talk about that in just a second. So, the PI gets a copy of the Summary Statement as a matter of transparency. So, we actually tell the reviewers to please not speak to the PI when they are writing their critiques; they should really be evaluating the application. So, it should really just be, how was this application submitted, received? And all applications in the meeting do get a Summary Statement. If the application is discussed, it will not only have an overall impact score, many times it will have a percentile score as well. But it will also have a resume and Summary of Discussion, and it will have scores from the review criteria, written critiques of the assigned reviewers, and administrative notes, if any. And if it's not discussed, it'll have all the same things. The only thing will be missing will be the resume and Summary of Discussion, after all, the application wasn't discussed, so there's nothing to actually say how it was discussed.

So, here's what a Summary Statement stock sheet looks like. You can see your PI's Last Name and First Name on the left side, and then on the right side you can see the Application Number, the first stat on the top corresponds to an Application Number. That's the application that was reviewed. And on the bottom, you can see the Project Title, and it'll also show the Impact Score and Percentile Score. Now you will remember the Impact Score and Percentile Score are actually available within three business days of the application's review. It's the Summary Statement that can take up to 30 days, but the scores are released within three business days, okay?

So very importantly on here, on the top left-hand corner, you will see the Program Contact information. This is your Program Officer, their phone number, their name, their email address is available. So, when the Summary Statement is released, at that time, the baton has been passed from Review to the Program side for the second stage of review.

So, what's in the Summary Statement itself? So, it does contain the PI's description, the abstract, as well as the narrative that they provided in the application, verbatim. We don't change it. What you will also see is the SRO's brief description of the Summary of Discussion. There is a main Summary Discussion section, gives you what happened at the meeting during the discussion. It shows you the critiques from three reviewers, and here you see the first reviewer gave scores for the different criteria, and then they provided the written text about the strengths and weaknesses. And the scores, though, tend to be the pre-meeting scores. Although the written critiques themselves could be updated after the meeting, the scores do not change after the meeting. So those are the pre-meeting scores. And of course, there's the final roster of the meeting, that is the batch who was actually there at the meeting.

So, whom to contact and when -- you already heard this. Planning your submission, you would need to contact the Program Officer if you want to make sure that your application will fit the IC that you're thinking about, whether you are eligible, and whether there will be responsiveness met -- that would be the Program Officer who decides that. And once the application is in the study section and before the meeting, Scientific Review Officer handles most of those questions, as well as post-submission materials and any information related to conflict of interest. And after the Summary Statement's released, we send it right back, now it's the Program Officer again, and they will use the Summary Statement and help make recommendations for funding, and if you have questions about whether to prepare a new application or resubmit, all of those are actually in the court of Program Officer. If you have any other questions or concerns, we would really like to hear that as soon as possible, so that we can make sure you have the full range of options for addressing it. If there is any concern about fairness in the review, or reviewing integrity issues, you can report those on the websites here, which is the reportbias@csr.nih.gov, and csrrio@mail.nih.gov. If you are not sure whom to contact at any point, so long as you know the application's already in a study section, contact the SRO -- they'll be more than happy to find out who else you can contact to additional information if they can't provide the answer to you.

All right, so now we're going to play a game, the game of questions and answers. So, if you thought we were done with testing today -- here we go. So, the first question is, I want my application assigned to -- and in all of these cases, we actually have -- I think the quiz is not coming through quite right, so the question is varying, but the answer choices are the same for all of them. You have the Program Officer, Assignment Request Form, Cover Letter, Division of Receipt and Referral, and SRO -- those are the choices. So, in this case, you already know which ICs you think would fit, and you know what study sections would fit, and you're making these suggestions -- where would you put this information? And I think you can see -- ah, there we are. Yes, the main place to put that in is the Assignment Request Form. As you heard yesterday, for over eight years or so, we've been using the ARF -- Assignment Request Form -- and that's the best place for you to put it. You can also include it in cover letter, which will also be read.

Okay, the second question is, my research is about -- now you're describing what your work is about, and you're asking, is this going to be suitable for funding by a particular institute or center? And again, in this case, you can see you want to think about the moment you see the word "funding" or "IC" -- you would think -- so let's see how you did. Yes, Program Officer. Correct. Because remember CSR does not handle funding. So, this is really the IC and their Program Officer. Let's go to the next one. So here we have conflicts of interest -- you're saying, "Please don't assign to" -- and you're saying, that's because I have these reasons why it shouldn't be assigned to these people, and who would that be? And I think I'm going pretty fast here. So, I think I already gave the answer away, I think I clicked it once too quickly here. So, let's go ahead and stop that poll -- and that was right. You would put that in the Assignment Request Form, but if it was after the roster is released, and you certainly know that something is happening, you can also write the to the SRO and let them know.

And then the next question is, "I'm checking to see if study section XXX is appropriate for my application." So, who would you write to about this? And let's see what we got. That's right. So, you can write to the Scientific Review Officer -- this can be before the meeting -- or you can also, when you're discussing with the Program Officer, they go to a different meeting, so you can actually ask them as well. Then if you are requesting a study section but your application went somewhere else, then the question is, why did it go there? And you want to know that. And in this case, the question also says, "I'm a standing member of YYY." And the obvious answer is, if you are a standing member, your application cannot go to YYY. So, it has to go somewhere else. And part of the answer I gave you -- and let's see what you did. Right. So, you would ask the SRO. And part of the point is that it would go to a member conflict, but if there is another study section that is also suitable, then it can also go to that study section.

And if you have a resubmission application and you forgot to include introduction -- and this is true, you heard this -- any missing component cannot be added. But who would you write to? Yep -- the Scientific Review Officer. And that's right. So, the application is in the meeting, and so it's not the Program Officer, it's the SRO who will be dealing with this at this point. And then if you are an early-stage investigator, or any investigator actually, and you want to serve on a study section, what can you do? You can ask either A or B -- who would you do? Let's see what you said. Right. You could ask any of the SROs you think would be reasonable, or you can ask a Program Officer. And Program Officers do make recommendations to SROs of reviewers as well. And we're always trying to increase the number of reviewers, and have a broad representation, so please do volunteer.

And on this question, it's, "My recently reviewed application did not get a score. Will I get a Summary Statement?" And I think I gave you the answer just a moment ago, and the answer -- and I'm just going to jump to it -- and the answer is yep, you would ask the SRO, and you already know the answer, that you will get the Summary Statement, whether or not your application was discussed. The score for my application is -- and you'll want to know, is this within the funding range for that IC? Who would you ask? I think this one's pretty obvious to most of you -- and yes, you would actually ask the Program Officer, because remember, we are talking about funding. Funding is, what, IC. SRO who is running this may be at CSR. So, they cannot really answer this question, and the baton has moved from the SRO, from CSR to the IC.

All right, and then you have question, because you have a different kind of an award. In this case, "I have an NSF Career award, and I would like to apply for an R01 funding from NIH. Am I eligible to apply?" Again -- the keyword here is funding -- who are you going to ask? Program Officer? That's correct. I think you've got it; you've nailed it.

So then, "My application was withdrawn. What options do I have?" And it's kind of sad to see it, but you do want to know at that point, to get some guidance, who would you ask? Moving forward -- yep. In this case, actually, you could ask the Program Officer, but you would also ask the Division of Receipt and Referral, because you don't really know why the application was withdrawn. The Program Officer would know, you could ask them. But you could also ask the Division of Receipt and Referral.

And "I served as an ad hoc reviewer; can I submit my own application late?" And you can also be saying something like, "Submitting my application late, please consider it." Who would you write this to? Or where? Let's see. Aha, we got a variety of different answers. This is actually a Division of Receipt and Referral and Cover Letter item. Let me go over it for just a moment. Basically, if you're a signing member or an ad hoc reviewer, you might be able to use the late submission privilege, and I say "might" because there is a notice that says which NOFOs allow or don't allow. And so, you have to look at that carefully. But you can ask this question to Division of Receipt and Referral. No one can give you permission ahead of time. You would just include that you did serve within two months of your own application submission that you served as a reviewer, and you can put that in the cover letter. And if you're a signing member, you can also have continuous submission privileges if the PA allows it. If it's a PAR that doesn't allow continuous submission, then you may get just the late submission privilege for two weeks.

And lastly, when can I get my Summary Statement? And I actually gave the answer to this already, so let's see if you remember it. And who would you ask this? Yes. The SRO because the SRO is the one who's putting out the Summary Statement, and I mentioned in an earlier slide that all Summary Statements should be released usually within 30 days, 30 calendar days. So, you can ask the SRO, but you really know the answer, so you don't even have to ask them. Just let the SRO do their job and release that Summary Statement so that everybody gets their Summary Statement on time. And I think that's pretty much it. I do have a slide that gives you helpful NIH websites. You can take a look at that, and hopefully this has been helpful.

Megan Columbus: Okay, thank you so much. That was super-helpful. We also are over time, so we don't have time to get questions, but we have been answering plenty of questions in the Q and A, and feel free, Sudha, to jump onto the Q and A and answer them in writing afterwards.

Sudha Veeraraghavan: Thank you.

Megan Columbus: All right. Let's go ahead and move on to Crystal and Sean to talk about the Notice of Award, and also how you ask for additional money with supplements.

Crystal Wolfrey: Okay, great, thanks, Megan. Hello, everybody. We are back. Crystal Wolfrey from NCI, Chief Grants Management Officer; Sean Hine, who also works with NCI. We're once again taking you through the last step in the process of getting your research project funded. And that is the award process.

So, we're going to do a couple of things in these last few minutes. We're going to talk about -- we're going to walk you through the Notice of Award, which, as a reminder, is a legally binding document. It is our way of notifying you that the project has been funded, and that you can start drawing down funds. And then with a little bit of time left at the end, we're going to talk about what happens, or what your options are, if you actually need more money than we provided in the Award Notice.

So, the first part is walking through the Notice of Award. We're going to cover the cover page, and then we're going to talk about some important sections to pay attention to in the NIH Notice of Award. I think first, we're going to do a quick poll, and we just want to see how many of you have actually seen an NIH Notice of Award in the past three years, so it's a Yes or No poll. We'll just let it run for a couple of minutes to see how many people have seen one. I don't know how these polls -- oh, 74 percent -- that's a lot. Okay, great. So, I won't ask you how many of you have actually read the Notice of Award, but that's fine, because what we're going to do is walk you through each of the important parts. So, Sean, yesterday we talked about a cover page that goes on all Award Notices from the Department of Health and Human Services. I'm guessing that's what this is. So, do you want to walk everyone through the parts that you feel like they should pay attention to?

Sean Hine: Absolutely. And with our experienced group that we have out there -- so some of this may be a great refresh, and for the few that are actually going to be going through this for the first time, hopefully this is some really important information for you to know about.

All right, so what we're going to do with this -- there's a lot going on, on this particular screen, so we're going to now break this down a little bit into kind of the main points we thought it would be good for you to focus on. First, identify the recipient name. I know this is really obvious, right? But we've been doing this for a while, I've been at this for a little bit -- and there's a number of times that we can remark, I've come across where the recipient gets in touch with us and says, "This award went to the wrong spot." So that's based off of the information that's being provided to us. Some organizations are very complex, and sometimes it goes to this particular division of the institution, or that division, so sometimes it doesn't end up in the right spot that you were thinking it would. Which also gets us to the employer identification number, the EIN. This is actually where the money goes. So please, make sure you double check this, for all the administrators out there, make sure you're really looking in on this particular piece of information, making sure that that goes to the right source, and the money goes to the right spot.

The grant number -- I know this is rather straight-forward, like this should be pretty well-understood. But we get a lot of emails with the Subject Line, "I need help in this." It's, like, great, but there's no grant number being referenced. We really have to go back and say, "Do you have this grant number? That would be really helpful." Just make sure you include the grant number in all of the communications. Also, the research title is included here, too. For the grants administration side, this one doesn't actually move the needle too much, but from a programmatic side, it definitely is important. Make sure as you're communicating that information out to the appropriate site, or people within the NIH, include that information as well.

I'm just going to keep on rolling a little bit. So that was the top half. Just imagine this is one big sheet coming at you with all this information. That was just the top half, it was fun trying to put all this on one slide, so I was, like, "You know, we need a second one after this." So, breaking down a few more pieces of this -- the Budget Period Start Date is listed right up here. That's going to specify this particular budget period that we're funding in this year. So, in this example, it was March 1st, 2024, to February 28th, 2025. That gives you an idea as far as how much time we're supporting within this particular budget period. Generally speaking, you're talking a year. This also will provide you the information that's associated with the entire performance period. So, let's refer to it as the "project period." So, in this particular grant, it's not going to be funded for the two years, starting March 1st, 2024, and it's going to end up on February 28th, 2026. I should have said at the beginning, Crystal -- this is completely made up, by the way, if there's anybody out there that's right now taking pictures and trying to really highlight this thing down -- this is a completely made up one. I don't think Hermoine Granger is going to be a great authorized official. She may broadcast a spell in order to get some money coming her way, but probably this isn't going to work too much.

Then the last piece on this slide is that the NIH Grants Management and Program staff member information is included on this particular page. So, if you ever need to reach out to us, phone and email address are included there as well.

Crystal Wolfrey: Okay, thank you. So, this is the NIH part, and this is where you get to talk about reading the fine print. It gets very, very dense, and very information loaded. So, let's go through what parts are important here.

Sean Hine: Yeah, it's like the fine print on this page, right, Crystal? So, there's a lot of stuff going on here. So, this is the NIH portion of it. So, let's talk about a few of these things that we just happen to see on the administrative side, and also a few of the programmatic with our colleagues and program, what comes up. The very top, you've got your principal investigators. In this particular example, Dr. Moody, Lupin, Potter and McGonagall -- fantastic group -- again doing amazing research. So double check this list of names. This list is really important to make sure, are these the people that you intended to have being listed as the PIs? Occasionally we will see it come up to where it's, like, "Dr. So-and-So, we'd love this person to be a part of this, never intended to be a PI." So, something must have gone amiss on that particular case.

Another argument that comes up often is, "Hey, how do I get my award?" There's two options that come with this, which is, your award's going to be available in the Commons, but it's also going to be emailed. So, then this particular case, there's an email address that you, as the recipient -- so it's really important to emphasize this, because we get an email, every once in a while, I'll be, like, "Hey, can you update the information in the Commons so that the award goes to the right spot?" Now it's really important that you manage that particular piece as the recipient. So, make sure you check your Commons, Commons information that the award is going to go to the right address. So, we don't manage that here. We can point you in that direction, but that's where it's going to be at.

This is an indication -- now, we talked this just really briefly yesterday, which is, accepting those Terms and Conditions. So, this one-sentence paragraph is really short and sweet, unlike me. So really it comes to acceptance, as soon as you draw down a single dollar in the payment management system, you have now just acknowledged and accepted all the Terms and Conditions are included in this award. There's a blurb in the middle here that's really important to hone in on, because I'm sure, you just got an award, right, from NIH, so you want to go out and tell everyone about that. This whole section talks about what is required when you do that, in terms of sourcing this particular award. So that way, everyone out there knows what's going on with it.

All right, so next page, so that's one page, and that was even chopped a little bit, so you can tell how much is going on here. So next page is more information but gets a little bit more into the details of this particular award. So, it's going to break down the costs included in this year's awards -- you see Direct Costs, Federal F and A, i.e., Indirect Costs will soon be updated, the Indirect Costs, the approved budget, and what's authorized, and so on. Just highlighting a couple of items within that, the total amount of funds authorized for this federal share -- what that is, it's a lot of government wording. That premise is telling you how much can you spend within this budget period. Again, this particular section at the top is all about this budget period. And then this particular item, which is the amount of this action, is actually the new money that's being provided through this award. So yes, generally speaking, a lot of those numbers are going to be the same. But if a revision was done, and mostly you've got a little bit of a bump because it was originally cut because of the continued resolution, finalized budget -- it goes up, you're going to see a dollar change in that. It's just highlighting what's going on with this particular action.

There's a chunk below in this table, which is a really nicely laid-out table -- I reference it all the time for folks, which is, this is the Statement of Future Year Commitment. So, this is what the NIH has built on the award, in order to show what the future year could look like. But it's really important to note that the future years are very much dependent. So, they're first dependent upon funds availability for us as the government, and then secondly, it's also dependent upon your progress. So how is this grant doing? All of that money is indicators of what the funding may look like, but there's more to that story.

We threw this one out here, just because actually it came up just recently with a completely different award here at NCI, about how do I get my money? So, this is actually a nice section in Section II. It's very straight-forward as far as getting access to funds. And it walks that through for you as the recipient of the award. And then it gets into Section III, which is the standard Terms and Conditions of the award. So now we're going to take a little bit of time to understand that for a bit.

Crystal Wolfrey: Okay, thanks, Sean. So, I just want to put in a plug, this is where we really need you to start reading, because these are the parts that are very, very important as you manage these projects, going through the lifecycle of this grant. So, Sean, let's point out a couple of the things that get missed on this page.

Sean Hine: Absolutely. And I heard earlier during one of the presentations that this may not be the material you want to read as you're trying to go to sleep, because it'll knock you out. These are really important pieces to make sure you understand. So, all of this section's really important, but we're going to highlight a few of them, of course. So yesterday, we talked about carryover authority being brought in the Notice of Award. In Section III, that's where this is highlighted. The grant's office actually selects this within a system as to how this shows up, so on this particular award, it does say the "unobligated amount," so any funds that remain from this year that's currently going on may be carried over into the next year without Grants Management Officer prior approval. So, you want to make sure you're keeping track of that. It also identifies whether it's a SNAP, which is a streamlined approach to it -- that will indicate how much you're providing on your report, and when it's due. Public access reminder -- we talked about this yesterday -- make sure you're complying with it. You can't get another award without it. And I did bring up yesterday during our presentations our specific award conditions from the individual institute. So that's what this is going to be talking about. So, this is where the institute can actually drop in, very specific information regarding this grant, the nature of research in this grant, anything that they want to highlight because of the program, anything that maybe is very specific to this space. Please be careful, read through all of this section, make sure you understand, are there any restrictions, any additional requirements, anything that the IC may be adding on.

A Summary Page of everything we just talked about, Crystal, I mean, lots going on within these sections. So, Section III, a lot of policies being appropriated across all the NIH awards. The specific award conditions which is in Section IV, they're going to be detailing now a lot of what's going on with the NIC, methodologies, the type of the grant, particularly if there's human subject research involved, human fetal tissue, human [INAUDIBLE] stem cells -- all of that can be showing up within that section as well. Just items that the institute may really highlight. Of course, any restrictions on those funds -- you, as the recipient, are responsible for understanding it all. So, if you're not sure, ask some questions if you're not comfortable with what's going on. Make sure you ask before you start drawing down funds. Again, the acceptance is at the time of draw-down.

We're going to do another poll, and then I'll finally climb down. So, another poll here, which is the question, where would you find whether you have funds restricted in the Notice of Award? Section II, III or IV? We'll give it just a few seconds here. All right, people were paying attention, I like it. So over half of you said Section IV, so yes, that's going to be the special award conditions that are being brought up, special Terms and Conditions being provided by the IC. So, great job.

Crystal Wolfrey: All right, Sean, thank you so much. So, we've got one more poll that we want to do. This talks about administrative supplements. We want to know if you've ever requested an administrative supplement from the NIH. Yes, or no? No -- oh, this one is going in the reverse, no, okay, good. Maybe I'll actually be able to help you, teach you a few things about it. So, let's talk about administrative supplements. Yes, it is possible, although you do your best to budget the project out and we do our best to provide the funding that we can, sometimes you need more money for a project. So, it is possible to request an administrative supplement, so that the NIH can provide additional funding to a currently funded award. It's really used to meet unforeseen or unanticipated costs or activities that you did not think you were going to do, or going to need, when you put together the original application. One really, really important point -- administrative supplements must fit within the scope of the previously peer-reviewed and approved project. They cannot be outside of the scope. They must be within scope.

There's a bunch of different ways that administrative supplements can come in. The NIH can solicit administrative supplements through either a Funding Opportunity announcement or a NOSI that's tied to an announcement, where we're looking for specific things that we are offering the opportunity to submit a supplement to an existing grant for. It also can be driven by you as the applicant. Let's say you have a piece of equipment that broke, or you have an animal problem, and you need more animals, or you need to hire more staff -- you can also submit an application for an administrative supplement. One note -- every administrated supplement must be submitted electronically: it's a very similar process to submitting a competing application. You fund a Funding Opportunity announcement, you can apply through ASSIST -- it's a truncated application, it's not the whole application, but the announcement in ASSIST guides you through what you need to submit. There are a few pitfalls to look for. If it is a solicited supplement from the NIH, please make sure that you know what the deadline is so that you don't miss the deadline, just like any competing application. Make sure you read the eligibility criteria to make sure that your grant is eligible to submit an application for the supplement opportunity. Also, administrative supplements must fit within the approved project period, so you cannot have a supplement that extends beyond the existing project period into a no-cost extension period. Please make sure it's within the originally peer-reviewed and approved scope of the research. And a really important last point -- if your parent grant, your grant that you're asking to supplement -- has a large balance that it has accrued, it's going to -- or there have been any progress issues -- getting an administrative supplement is going to be very difficult. So, pay attention to that before you decide to request.

I think that's it for us. We're at Q and A time. Megan, do I have any questions? Sorry I'm late.

Megan Columbus: We've got lots of questions.

Crystal Wolfrey: Oh, good. Yay.

Megan Columbus: We're going to try and keep answers a little bit short so we can get through some of these.

Crystal Wolfrey: [INAUDIBLE]

Megan Columbus: What would be the difference between a project period and a budget period?

Crystal Wolfrey: Oh, interesting. Okay, so the project period is the entire length of time in that competitive segment that the grant was approved for. So generally speaking, grants are requested for two, three, or five years in time, that would be the project period -- that's the competitive segment. The budget period are the annual increments that we fund those awards.

Megan Columbus: Perfect Thank you.

Crystal Wolfrey: Clear? Okay.

Megan Columbus: Yeah.

Crystal Wolfrey: Great.

Megan Columbus: If budgets are cut, would the Notice of Award include any explanation for them?

Crystal Wolfrey: Yeah, Sean, you want to take that one?

Sean Hine: Yeah, I'll take this one. So yeah, typically speaking, an institute should include some sort of notification within the Terms. I know here at NCI, we definitely do. We'll include a funding level term to say, "It's been reduced down to X-percentage because of..." So that's what you would see in these particular instances.

Megan Columbus: Okay. Will the Notice of Award include any overages from prior year carryover that you can spend?

Crystal Wolfrey: Oh, now we've got -- that's a great question, but it's a little more complicated than a quick answer. But yes, so if a grant has automatic carryover authority, in other words, remember that term, if you can carry funds over automatically, the Notice of Award will not reflect that because you can just add those funds to the next year. If the grant does not have automatic carryover authority, NIH can choose one of two things; we can either use those funds to help pay for the next year, and it will show as an offset, or we can allow you to use those funds in addition to the next year, and it will be reflected as a carryover. They have two different spots in the Notice of Awards where it's reflected, but you'll see it on that Page 2 of the budget -- of the bottom of the cover page, which way we went with that. I did that as fast as I could, Megan, I'm sorry.

Megan Columbus: No, you're doing great, I love it. Okay. Okay, so we've had a number of questions about sub-awardees, that I think people just fundamentally don't understand the relationship between the sub-awardee and the prime, and NIH's relationship with the prime, which is not with a sub-awardee, right? So, the sub-awardees get an email about the award as well. And what information about the award did they have access to?

Sean Hine: So, I'll jump in on that. So, our relationship, as you already mentioned, or alluded to, Megan, is, our relationship here at NIH is with the prime. And so, we do not submit, or send that award information to the sub-awardee, that's the responsibility for the recipient to handle, or I should say the prime to manage. So, we would not provide that information directly to the sub-awardee.

Crystal Wolfrey: So not only does the prime have to provide the information on the award and how much has been dedicated to the sub-award, it's very important that the prime also flow down terms of the award to the sub-award recipient. Everything flows down through the prime to all the sub-recipients.

Megan Columbus: Thanks. Can you provide people some advice about -- can you provide people some advice about what to include in the application for salary if someone's salary is not at the budget cap, but there's escalations in future years?

Crystal Wolfrey: No, I cannot. Sean, do you want to try that?

Sean Hine: Yeah, I'll be happy to. I highly recommend including in the Budget Justification what you have going on. So, for instance, if you were a PI that is well over the NIH salary cap based on the institutional-based salary, mention that in the Justification. You've still got to comply with the cap. But mention that in the Justification. There's a famous quote out there, "No askee, no getee," so just keep that in mind as you're preparing the applications and reach out to the grants office if you would like any additional assistance.

Crystal Wolfrey: Yes. Generally speaking, NIH doesn't provide cost of living or anticipated salary increases, but I'm with Sean, if you don't ask, then we definitely can't provide it, remember, grants are pursuant to applications. So just make sure your justification is clear on what you're doing, and we will ask questions if we're not sure.

Megan Columbus: And does rebudgeting apply in that situation?

Crystal Wolfrey: No, well, it depends. It depends. See, I'm not kidding when I say it depends --

Megan Columbus: That's okay. That's okay.

Crystal Wolfrey: It really depends on how the application is put together, and what the award looks like when we do it. So, we would have to talk each situation out.

Megan Columbus: So, the answer would be, contact Grants Management.

Crystal Wolfrey: Contact Grants Management, absolutely. Yeah.

Megan Columbus: Can you request more than one no-cost extension?

Crystal Wolfrey: You can. So, most grants have the first no-cost extension is automatic, and you can request a second no-cost extension, but it does require prior approval. You would submit it through the NIH prior approval module, which I think maybe Jason's going to talk about, I'm not sure. But you would submit that through the prior approval module. You need to provide a justification for the extension, a budget for the extension time, and so forth, but it is possible to request more than one no-cost extension. Yes.

Megan Columbus: Great.

Sean Hine: Sounds like a great Post-Award Primer going on here, Megan, I like it.

Megan Columbus: I know --

Crystal Wolfrey: Are you sliding us into this?

Megan Columbus: We will be holding a Post-Award Primer early in the new year. What documents are needed for carry-forward requests?

Crystal Wolfrey: So, a carry-forward request also submits through the prior approval module. What we request is a justification for the carry-forward, a budget for the carry-forward. We request an explanation for where that money came from, and what you're going to do with that money in addition to the budget that we've already provided to you. Sean, can you think of anything else? Sorry I jumped on you --

Sean Hine: No, I think that really covers most of it. And really, the big portion of that, more than anything, is make sure that we have an understanding of what is going on, like what resulted in this occurring, where you have money still left, and what do you plan on doing that's unique based off of what you already received?

Megan Columbus: Great. Is there a budget cap and period limit for the administrative supplement?

Crystal Wolfrey: So, each NOSI might have -- it depends on what you submit, right? So, if it's in response to a NIH initiative that's published, that will likely have a cap in the NOSI. So, make sure you read that NOSI, or that Funding Opportunity announcement. For regular research, like if you initiate it because you're missing something, the cap is, it cannot exceed the amount of the parent award. That is a big supplement, and we would ask a lot of questions why you would want to match the amount of the parent award. But that is, in effect, the cap. In terms of the time limit, it can't exceed the length of the current approved project period. I think that was the two things, right?

Megan Columbus: What is the best place to find the correct RPPR and FFR due dates?

Sean Hine: NIH's site really covers a lot of that, so a lot of that is also dependent upon -- any of the due dates are dependent on the type of selection within, are you a streamlined application, or are you not? So, if you're within what we call a "SNAP population," then it's 45 days prior to the cycle date. If it's anything non-SNAP, so U01, U54, and the like you're 60 days prior to.

Megan Columbus: So, they would fund it in the Grants Policy Statement, so we said?

Sean Hine: Absolutely, yeah. And it's all on NIH's website, the power of Google there, not that I am pushing Google at all, but it's out there.

Crystal Wolfrey: I also think that that's in the -- I think that's in the Co-- I think institutions can run a list in the Commons of our RPPR due dates, and FFR, can't they, Megan? I'm pretty sure they can.

Megan Columbus: I believe they can, yeah. Why are some key personnel, as indicated during submission, are dropped as key personnel in the Notice of Award?

Crystal Wolfrey: So, it's two separate things, right? So key personnel is identified by you as the applicant, or who you determine are key to your research. Key personnel by NIH is what we put, or individuals that we name in the Notice of Award, that we have determined those individuals are key. So, for NIH, the Principal Investigator, the PIPD, or the multiple PIPD, are always designated as key. We will often not designate the other individuals as key in the Award Notice, because then if we do, all of the prior approval requirements on reduction of effort apply to those individuals. So, we sort of leave it up to the investigator to determine the level of effort for those individuals, and who you believe are key to the project.

Megan Columbus: Can you talk a little bit about how to initiate an admin supplement request?

Sean Hine: I'll jump in there. My recommendation is, your first conversation, especially from the principal investigators out there is, please go talk to that Program Official. Have a discussion with your Program Official for various reasons associated with that, just to kind of get a sense of funds availability, where it is in your particular area of research, and particularly that state -- that would be your first step, and what I would recommend. But outside of that, as we mentioned earlier, everything has to come in electronically, so it has to be in response to something. And a lot of those somethings has the tendency to be called what we call the "parent" announcement for administrative supplements. There's a lot of specialized supplements; diversity supplements, individual in ICs, NOSIs, you know, area that they're interested in, but again, that conversation probably should start, for the most part, with your Program Official.

Megan Columbus: But basically, they'll respond to a NOFO.

Crystal Wolfrey: The respond to -- they need to respond to a NOFO. Yeah. So, if it's not a NOSI or a NOFO published and you just do a general supplement, you have to respond to the supplement NOFO, which I can't remember the number for, but it's out on the NIH Guide. It's actually in the NIH Guide under Parent Announcements, the NOFO for that, yes.

Megan Columbus: So, if a grant application lists that it has a number of investigators, they win the award, but one investigator drops out, or something else changes, will this affect the receipt of the award? And what should they do since they're in that intermediary state between review and award?

Crystal Wolfrey: Oh, that's a great question. So, if the individual was named as a PI in the application, and they are going to drop off for some reason, which does definitely happen, prior to the award, when the Grants Management Specialist reaches out for a negotiation, that's when you would notify them that the individual had dropped off. If it's a multiple PI application, which it would be, we will ask you for an updated MPI Leadership Plan to talk about what the impact will be of that -- losing that investigator, and how the responsibilities would be shared. If it's not a named PI in the application and it's a co-investigator, they could come up in the negotiation, but it's not necessarily something that you would have to share with us at the time of the award, because it's not a named PI in the application.

Megan Columbus: All right, I have to say, fabulous lightning round here of questions. Thank you for staying brief and letting us get through so many of them. I think we are one minute overdue for our time, and so if you want to jump in and start answering some questions in the Chat, that would be great. Or, in the Q and A section, sorry.

And so, we're going to go ahead, and we'll forward to our next speaker. There we go -- I'm so sorry. All right, Jason, take it away.

Jason Wan: Thank you, Megan. Definitely a lot of questions for things that go on during the award. Evidently, there's a lot more that goes on, and what I'm going to talk about today is going to deeper dive about Monitoring and Reporting, so this is what to expect post-award. Hi, I'm Jason Wan, a Program Officer at NIDCR, the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, and we'll talk about what goes on when we are monitoring.

So, what to expect -- throughout the post-work process, there's monitoring, reporting, different kinds of reporting, and I'll mention a little bit about auditing and closeout requirements. So, what is monitoring, and why do we do it? Recipients are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the grant-supported activities, and this is to ensure that there's proper stewardship of NIH funds. An act of monitoring is accomplished through review of reports and correspondences, audits, site visits, and other information that's available to the NIH.

So how do we monitor? Monitoring is done through reporting. Reporting is anything that, of course, is submitted to NIH. These are often required on an annual basis. These include financial and progress reports. Failure to submit these reports in a timely manner may lead to delays or enforcement of actions by the NIH, and this is where NIH has teeth, and will use it.

So now we'll go into our poll, our first poll, just to see your knowledge -- what reporting is required? So, what are you familiar with, and what do you think is required? So, the question here is for the poll. What reporting is required? Progress reports -- on the screenshot to the left is an example of a Progress Report Summary. We've been talking about financial reporting, inventions, and products -- C. So perhaps your project has products. What about human subjects? Are there clinical trials involved? And last answer is E -- all of the above. So put into your poll what answer you think is the correct one for what reporting is required. I'll give you a moment to answer that, and four choices, or all of the above. Okay.

Megan Columbus: Just so you know, Jason, we also have lots of people who are answering in the Chat, so you've got lots of right answers over there.

Jason Wan: Okay, great. Yes. Thanks. All right. And looking from this poll here, everyone's -- great -- well aware of the reporting that's required. So, the correct answer is, indeed, E -- all of the above.

So, for reporting -- all right, so we've been mentioning a lot about reporting and progress reports. So, the research performance progress report, or RPPR, is what's usually required annually, and informs us, NIH, of what's been going on in the project. Now this is usually annually reported based on the non-competing awards; however, you should check your Notice of Grant Award to see what the frequency that is required for your particular award. There are other reports that are required, as we just saw. There's invention reporting -- perhaps you have some inventions, patents, exciting results or products that need to be made aware to the research community. So that is needed to be reported. Perhaps you had, for example, we were just talking about supplements -- perhaps you had a diversity supplement. That needs to be reported. Any extramural trainee reporting, and career tracking is also required to be reported, as well as if your project had any clinical research studies, human subjects' reports are required. And, of course, don't forget we have Financial Conflict of Interest reports that are required for you to let us know what conflicts of interest there are.

Now a little bit about finances -- so we have the Federal Financial Reporting, or FFR. This can also be required on an annual basis, or it can be required more frequently -- again, refer to your Notice of Award. So, this is different, based on your particular situation. There have been some changes to Transaction reports recently; keep in mind, bottom line, all financial expenditures need to be submitted using the payment management system.

Just a little bit about auditing -- so how does NIH check these finances? In general, audits are required annually, and an audit is a systematic review or appraisal made to determine whether the internal accounting provides reasonable assurance. Keep in mind, it's the NIH and its recipient institutions that share the responsibility for compliance and oversight, to ensure good stewardship of federal funds.

Now we're almost done -- almost done with the webinar -- getting to the closeout portion. This is the closeout phase when your projects near completion or has been completed. You've completed all the specific aims, and now what is required? So, recipients need -- they must submit these components: A final FFR, the final RPPR, and the final Invention Statement and Certification. And all this needs to be done within 120 calendar days of the end of the project performance. Failure to submit timely and accurate closeout documents may affect future funding, so keep that in mind. I also want to point out, as part of the closeout and the Final RPPR and the Progress Report, there's this Outcome section shown here on the right as a screenshot. So, this Outcome section is what's publicly available, and so you want to make sure that's written concisely in the lay language that anyone can look up your project and be able to understand what you did, and what was accomplished in your project.

Now lastly, just doing a quick closeout knowledge review -- so this is just open up the Chat for everyone to see, to type in what they think is the answer to this question for closeout: How many days does a grantee have to submit the final FFR, the Final RPPR, and final Invention Statement and Certification? So, is it 45, 90, or 120 days? It's just a knowledge check to see if you're paying attention. Please just use the Chat there, type in those responses. Great. Glad to see you're all paying attention. A hundred and twenty days is the correct answer.

Now I'll turn it back to Megan for another lightning round.

Megan Columbus: Here we go. All right, if I could bring my Program Officials back on screen, please, and I am going to ask each of them to give me, really quickly, their top tips.

Lanay Mudd: Well, Megan, I'm happy to get started. Again, my name is Lanay Mudd, I am the Deputy Branch Chief at the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health. I think you've heard multiple times through this workshop to contact program staff. And I would say one of my top tips is, don't wait for everything to be perfect before you contact us. It's okay to be in draft form, and we actually prefer getting contacted early so that you have time to incorporate our feedback and advice.

The other tip, I would say, is review those aims with friends, family, colleagues, mentors, strangers if you can, multiple times to get feedback on your specific aims page in particular, because that's really the roadmap for your entire application. You want to make sure it makes sense to multiple audiences. And you need to be persuasive. Make sure that you are making the case for why the science is important, and why you're prepared to conduct it. So, I'll stop there and let one of my colleagues go.

Megan Columbus: All right, we have to do this in 30 seconds or less. Jason, go.

Jason Wan: All right, just to add on to Lanay, so in addition to contacting the Program Officer before, it's also advisable to contact the Program Official during your award if you have any questions, that's important. And of course, read, read, read. Read your NOFO, read your NG -- Notice of Grant Award.

Megan Columbus: Very good. All right, Tracy?

Tracy Rankin Sure. Every one of us -- and you've heard this many, many, times -- start early, start early. And when you're reviewing those NOFOs, always a good idea to look at the review criteria as well as the submission criteria, because you want to make sure the reviewers have all the information they're looking for when they're reviewing that application.

LeShawndra Price: I will close us out here. My tips would be, start early. Use all the resources at your disposal. Don't be overly ambitious. And I think the last thing I would say is to be persistent. If you're not successful the first time, please, try, try again.

Megan Columbus: Great points. So just to close us out here, I just want to remind you about resources -- so the final PowerPoint, because there are some changes that were made, the recording and the transcript will all be available in 7 to 10 business days after the event. I'm sure you'll be getting an email with that information. We have lots of things that you can subscribe to follow us, right? We're on X, we're on LinkedIn. We already talked about subscribing to the NIH Guide Grants Events ListServ. You know, subscribe to the Extramural Nexus. Explore the Grants and Funding websites.

And final tips -- don't let the entire staircase overwhelm you. Just focus on that first step. There's a lot going on. You've got lots of resources from this -- stay connected to us. You know who to reach out to -- talk to us. But know we're a partner in this process, and we're looking to help you be successful.

But such a great audience. I love the enthusiasm; I love the interaction. Let us know when you get the survey about the events -- like types of interaction worked for you and what didn't, because we'll be putting on many more of these types of things. Also, let us know what other topics you'd like us to touch on. All right?

I love all the "Thank Yous" in the Chat, and presenters that are appreciating your enthusiasm, so thank you so much. All right. With that, I think we're at time. Appreciate you all.