Office of Research News & Notes

Office of Research Updates

Processing Documents for National Science Foundation (NSF) Projects (Excluding Proposals)

During the course of a project it may be necessary to make adjustments or to request changes to some aspect of the NSF project. These actions can include, changes to personnel, budget, or scope of work. NSF utilizes FastLane and Research.gov for the processing of these types of requests.

When documentation is uploaded into FastLane/Research.gov, three options exist to release the action to an Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) or the Sponsored Projects Office (SPO) for submission:

- Allow SPO to view proposal
- Allow SPO to view and edit proposal
- Allow AOR to view, edit and submit proposal

When the option to release the action to an AOR is selected, Fastlane/Research.gov generates an automatic e-mail notification to everyone in the Office of Research that is assigned the 'AOR' permission within FastLane. This automatically generated email is not sufficient for the request to be processed. Communication, and if necessary, supporting documentation are required from the department for these actions to be reviewed and processed.

When the option to release the action to an AOR is selected, Fastlane/Research.gov generates an automatic e-mail notification to everyone in the Office of Research that is assigned the 'AOR' permission within FastLane. This automatically generated email is not sufficient for the request to be processed. Communication, and if necessary, supporting documentation are required from the department for these actions to be reviewed and processed.

What should I do if I want my documents submitted to NSF through FastLane/Research.gov?

1.   Release the action through FastLane/Research.gov.to the Office of Research by selecting "Allow AOR to view, edit and submit proposal"

2.   Send supporting documentation to the Office of Research for review and submission. *Please select the appropriate action on the Grants Management Submission Form* and visit the Office of Research website to determine the documentation required for the action.

SAM Registration

The Office of Research has renewed the annual System for Award Management (SAM) Registration for the University of Pittsburgh. This registration is required for the University to do business with the federal government. If you receive a message or warning that our SAM Registration has expired, please let your Grants Officer know, so that the Office of Research can address this inaccurate information.

Funding Agency Updates

Selected Communications from the National Institutes of Health Office of Extramural Research - *NIH eSubmission Items of Interest – July 28, 2016*

Don't Panic Over Expiration of Fed-wide Forms

As many of you know, NIH's application packages are made up of both agency-specific and federal-wide forms. We just got through updating all of our agency-specific ("PHS") forms, which expired in August 2015, to FORMS-D. Now we need to deal with the forms used federal-wide which are on a different clearance schedule. The forms in our FORMS-D application packages labeled "R&R" or "Research & Related" expired on June 30, 2016 and the Project/Performance Site Location form is due to expire on September 30th (NOT-OD-16-120).

It's definitely a bummer, but there is no need to panic. We knew going into our FORMS-D update that these additional forms would be expiring. Updating the federal-wide forms should have little impact to most applicants. We don't expect the changes to the forms to be significant enough for us to worry about having old and new form versions reviewed together. It certainly won't be the crazy effort we all put into the FORMS-C to FORMS-D transition. It's more of a "FORMS-D1" situation with all the FORMS-D series application packages living together in harmony.

Our Grants.gov colleagues are working with the Office of Management and Budget on the federal-wide form clearance and we don't expect any changes (except a new expiration date) for most of the forms. Of the forms scheduled to change, only the SBIR/STTR Information form is expected to have significant enough changes to potentially warrant application package reposting for our small business opportunities (and even that can't be confirmed until Grants.gov delivers the new forms to agencies).

For now, keep using the forms we post with our funding opportunity announcements (ignoring any old expiration dates on the forms). After we get the updated federal-wide forms from Grants.gov, we'll let you know if there is anything you need to do differently.

Fellowship Applicants Get Their Feet Wet with FORMS-D

August 8th will be our first standard due date for Fellowship applicants using FORMS-D application packages. There were quite a few changes to the PHS Fellowship Supplemental Form between FORMS-C and FORMS-D (see the Significant Changes section [F.120] of the Fellowship Instructions for NIH and Other PHS Agencies Application Guide for details).

If you are planning to submit to the August 8th due date, hopefully, you are already well on your way to completing your application.

Among the changes are the addition of several new attachments:

- Applicant's Background and Goals for Fellowship Training (6 page limit)
- Letters of Support from Collaborators, Contributors, and Consultants (6 page limit)

- Description of Institutional Environment and Commitment to Training (2 page limit; includes Additional Education Information section required for F30 and F31 applications which was previously included as an "Other Attachment" in FORMS-C applications)
- Data Safety Monitoring Plan (used with applications involving Clinical Trials)
- Authentication of Key Biological and/or Chemical Resources (use of this attachment has been delayed - NOT-OD-16-034; don't use it yet)

Before submitting, reread the instructions for each of these attachments and make sure you have provided all the needed information.

We've also consolidated our biosketch instructions used for research, career development and fellowship applicants. Read the entire set of biosketch instructions carefully, paying special attention to section "D: Additional Information: Research Support and/or Scholastic Performance". Applicants for predoctoral and postdoctoral fellowships should use this section to provide information on their scholastic performance (instead of Research Support).

Of course, the application guide has all the nitty-gritty details you need to succeed, but you might also find the Annotated Form Set for NIH Grant Applications to be a handy resource for your last pre-submission check.

ASSIST Use Growing

More and more of you are picking ASSIST as your submission method of choice. ASSIST is NIH's web-based service for the preparation, submission, and tracking of grant applications. Although use of ASSIST is not required, it offers many benefits over Grants.gov's downloadable Adobe forms including the ability to validate your application against NIH business rules and preview your application in the NIH format prior to submission.

As we anticipated, applicants with system-to-system (S2S) solutions have continued to use them. Many of those users already benefit from similar validation and image features. In addition, S2S solutions often integrate with other institutional systems to reduce data entry by pulling and pushing application data to and from internal databases.

The ASSIST numbers are pretty amazing, especially considering ASSIST didn't support R01 applications until the end of April 2015 and we completed our support for all remaining NIH grant programs just six months ago.

If you currently use Grants.gov's downloadable forms, check with your administrative office to see if ASSIST is an option for you.

Submission Options Used
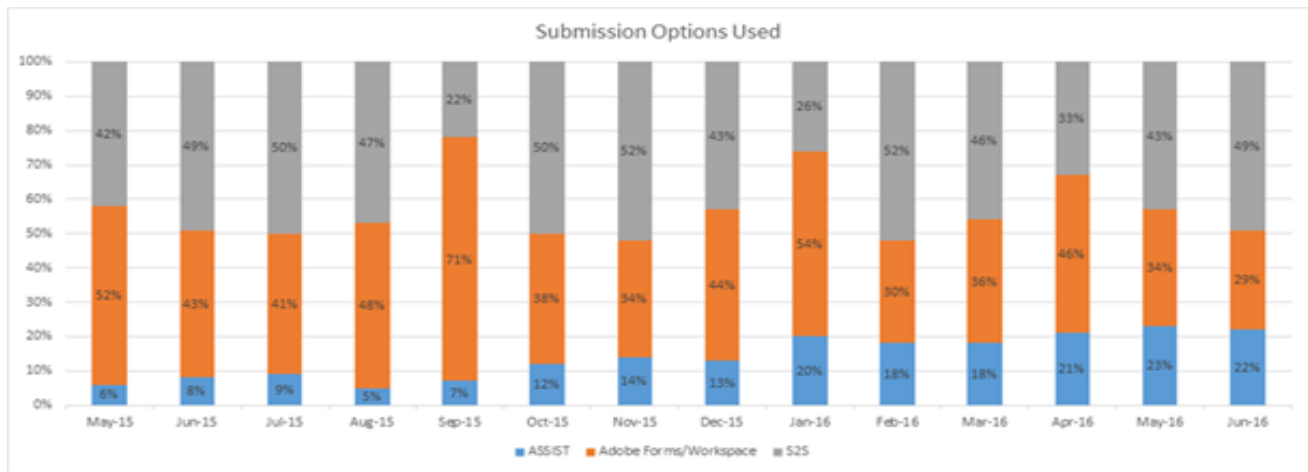
National Science Foundation's Implementation of the Department of Labor's Fair Labor Standards Act

From Council on Governmental Relations (COGR) – July 27, 2016 Email

"Dear Colleagues:

The Department of Labor recently announced the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) final over time rule. The FLSA final overtime rule automatically extends overtime pay protections to millions of workers and could impact some personnel on NSF grants, including postdoctoral researchers. The National Science Foundation continues to acknowledge the important role of postdoctoral researchers on NSF-funded projects, and, in general, NSF postdoctoral programs already include a stipend or salary in excess of the new minimum established by the FLSA final overtime rule.

Since the announcement of the new rule, NSF has received many questions on how this rule will affect NSF-funded projects. NSF has created a set of Frequently Asked Questions in order to address these questions. The FAQs are posted on the NSF Policy Office website at http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/faqs/flsa_faqs.pdf.

We encourage you to share this information with your colleagues. Please direct any additional policy-related questions not addressed in the FAQs to policy@nsf.gov.

Regards,

Jean

Jean Feldman
Head, Policy Office
Division of Institution & Award Support (DIAS)
Office of Budget, Finance and Award Management"