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PATTY MABRY'S RESOURCE PAGE FOR NIH GRANT APPLICANTS:
Disclaimer: This is not meant to be a comprehensive list of everything you need to know about applying for NIH funding, but it is a good collection of useful information. It is a living document and is periodically updated. This document is best viewed in its electronic format as it contains hyperlinks. To obtain an up to date version of this document, please contact Dr. Patty Mabry in the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR) NIH mabryp@od.nih.gov. Feel free to share this document with colleagues.

General advice about applying for NIH funding:

- When you apply for NIH funding, *do* contact the appropriate program official listed under "scientific contacts" in the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) FOA well in advance of your application to discuss your project. It is advisable to make your initial contact by email and include a brief description of you project (e.g., abstract or 1-2 page concept paper). Be sure to the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) number(s) you are considering (that is, include the PA or RFA number) as well as the application receipt date for which you expect to apply.

- You *do not* need to apply under an FOA that corresponds to your specific project. A lot of our grantees are funded through the "Parent Announcement". See link to Parent Announcement below.

- In general, your application should appeal to one or more "ICs" – Institutes or Centers at NIH. This means you should a) read up on the ICs mission statement to assess fit with your application (see link below), and b) talk to the relevant program officer at each IC you think offers a match and discuss your application with them. Your objective is to ensure that your project is one that the IC would be interested in funding should you get a good priority score in review. For projects funded by the NIH "Common Fund" http://commonfund.nih.gov/ such as NIH Roadmap activities, the proposed projects are required to go beyond the mission of one IC.

- There is a difference between where your application is assigned for review purposes and where it is assigned for funding purposes. NIH keeps review and funding very separate.

    o **Review assignment** refers to study section or special emphasis panel that will review the application**.** Each study section (aka review panel) is comprised of "peers" who evaluate the scientific merit of NIH grant applications – they do not make funding decisions. An SRO/SRA (Scientific Review Officer/Scientific Review Administrator) is an NIH employee who organizes the review and oversees the review process to ensure that it is fair and unbiased. The SRO/SRA is not program staff. Read about the entire review process by following the link below. At the conclusion of review, the review panel members ("peers") provide their final ratings of scientific merit which are summarized as the "priority score". If your application is "unscored" it was not considered scientifically meritorious enough to be discussed at the review meeting. However, all applications, including those that are not scored, receive a written critique in the form of the "summary statement" (aka pink sheets).

    Applications that come through the Parent Announcement or PA (program announcements) go to Standing Study Sections. The Standing Study Sections are organized by topic area and are comprised of members who each serve a two-year term, although ad hoc members can be brought in when a particular expertise is needed. Each review cycle, some members rotate off the panel, while other rotate on. This means that the Standing Study Section membership is similar, but not identical, from cycle to cycle. Unless your application is being assigned to an SEP (see below), when submitting your application you may request which Standing Study Section you would like to have your application assigned to; otherwise it will be assigned for you. This request is usually, but not always honored. You can look at descriptions of the study sections and their membership by following the link provided in the list of URLs below.

    For RFAs (Request for Applications) and PARs (Program Announcement with special Review), your application is not assigned to a study section, instead it goes to a Special Emphasis Panel (SEP). The SEP is an ad hoc group of peer reviewers pulled together expressly for the applications submitted for a given receipt date under the particular FOA or FOA series. Although they are generally not signed up for a "term" consisting of multiple review cycles like study section members are, members of an SEP may serve for more than one review cycle for a given FOA. When applying to a RFA or PAR you will not have the ability to request a Standing Study Section – it will automatically go to the appropriate SEP.

    o **IC assignment i**s where your application is assigned for funding purposes. IC assignment is made by the Receipt and Referral Office and this process happens simultaneously with review assignment. After scientific review, based on the priority score, summary statement, AND programmatic interest, the program staff at the assigned IC make the decision whether or not to fund each application. Those selected for funding also require funding approval from the IC's Advisory Council (aka "council"). You may state your preferences for IC assignment when submitting your application. You *can* have your application assigned to more than one IC, but only one IC can be designated as "primary assignment".

You may have multiple ICs assigned as "secondary" or "dual" assignment. Following scientific review, the IC with primary assignment is allowed the first opportunity to fund your application (before other ICs can fund it). The "pay line" is the percentage point or cut point at which the best scoring applications are funded. For example, the IC might fund the top 10 or 15% of priority scores. The different ICs have different paylines, and even within an IC the paylines fluctuate over time and funding mechanism. Therefore, if your application gets a very good priority score, but does not make the payline at the IC with primary assignment, it is possible that one of the ICs who has secondary assignment will want to fund you (i.e., you may be within their payline). NIH Program Offices (e.g., OBSSR) may facilitate funding – see bullet below. For more information on grant submission and assignment see: http://cms.csr.nih.gov/ResourcesforApplicants/Submission+And+Assignment+Process.htm

- **About paylines.** Paylines provide program staff with strong guidance about funding decisions, but paylines and priority scores do not dictate all funding decisions. Programmatic interest is a consideration and there may be applications above (outside) the payline that do get funded as well as applications that fall within the payline that are "skipped" or not funded. It is true that if your application is "unscored" it is virtually impossible for program staff to fund your application no matter how interested they are. In fact, it is often difficult to fund even applications with very good scores that fall outside the payline.

- At NIH, **peer review** is designed to be an independent evaluation of the proposal's scientific merit without interference from funding considerations. To preserve the integrity of this process you are asked not to contact your program officer during the review period which in essence begins once you have submitted your application and ends once you receive your summary statement. During this review period you may contact the SRA/SRO with any questions or concerns. Before you submit your application you *should* contact program staff. Once you receive your summary statement you may contact the program officer listed on your summary statement to discuss the disposition of your application and if applicable, options for resubmitting.

- A note about NIH Program Offices. OBSSR is an NIH "Office" not an IC. Therefore, we do not have grant making authority. This means you cannot seek primary or secondary assignment for your application from OBSSR. However, OBSSR and other NIH program offices do have the authority to issue Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs). In these cases, it is a good idea to contact the OBSSR scientific contact listed in the FOA in addition to the relevant IC scientific contact(s). OBSSR staff may be able to help you identify appropriate ICs and program staff with which to speak about IC assignment. OBSSR may also be able to provide advice on applying to one FOA vs. another and help you identify relevant FOAs for your project.

- Read the FOA and any associated notices carefully. Some FOAs in a series appear to be virtually identical, but in fact they are not. Often one or more ICs will participate in one funding mechanism for the FOA but not another (e.g., they will participate in the R01 version of the announcement, but not the R21 version or vice versa). A good rule of thumb is to be sure to look at the exact version of the announcement to which you are applying. Any updates to the FOA are posted as Notices to the *NIH Guide For Grants and Contracts,* aka the "Guide" (see link below).

- Your application can only be under consideration for funding at one place at a time. You cannot "hedge your bets" and submit the same application under two different FOAs simultaneously. If you find an FOA under which you would prefer to submit, you must withdraw your application to the first FOA before submitting under the second FOA.

- You cannot be paid twice for the same work. If your grant from NSF (or CDC or NIH or any other agency) is paying you to purchase a particular piece of equipment, to clean your data, or to perform any other specific task, you cannot ask NIH to fund you to do the same task or purchase the same piece of equipment.

- **Volunteer to be a reviewer** – Serving on a review committee has much to recommend it: 1) you are participating in the system that makes peer review work – without peers who do the reviewing the system of review breaks down. 2) You will learn a lot about the review process by witnessing it firsthand. 3) You will observe other reviewers in action and learn what pitfalls to avoid in your own submissions 4) You will be exposed to cutting edge research which may stimulate your thinking about your own research. 5) While the pay is not exorbitant, you will be compensated for your time, and your travel reimbursed if you attend a review in person; many reviews are conducted by phone. To nominate yourself as a potential reviewer, submit your CV and request to serve on a review panel to the Enhancing Peer Review mailbox at: enhancingpeerreview@od.nih.gov.

- **Foreign investigators/institutions**. Each NIH grant program has its own set of eligibility requirements. Applicants can find eligibility information in section III of each funding opportunity announcement (FOA).

  o Individual Eligibility - Generally, applicants are not required to be U.S. citizens. Some NIH programs/mechanisms have a citizenship requirement. Check the FOA before you apply.

- o Institutional Eligibility - In most cases, domestic or foreign, public or private, non-profit or for-profit organizations are eligible to receive NIH grants. Check the FOA for any specific requirements.
- o In general, NIH has the authority to grant awards to any country, including, Iran Iraq, Sudan, N. Korea, Cuba. International grants do require foreign clearance. Different IC's have different foreign policies, check with P.O. before applying. Some NIH grant programs such as the Small Business Innovation Research programs (SBIR/STTR) are limited to U.S. citizens. Foreign institutions and international organizations are not eligible to apply for Kirschstein-NRSA institutional research training grants, program project grants, center grants, resource grants, SBIR/STTR grants, or construction grants.

  For full details on non-U.S. applications see: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/foreign/index.htm

- **Plain language** see http://grants.nih.gov/grants/plain_language.htm

- **Attend a grantwriting seminar** The NIH Office of Extramural Research puts on two grantrwiting workshops per year http://grants.nih.gov/grants/seminars.htm . OER will also consider requests to hold additional workshops http://grants.nih.gov/grants/presenter.htm/

USEFUL LINKS
***For podcasts on various aspects of applying for NIH funding see:
http://dev.grants.nih.gov/podcasts/All_About_Grants/index.htm

How to apply for NIH funding
http://grants.nih.gov/grants/how_to_apply.htm

Grants Process
http://grants.nih.gov/grants/grants_process.htm

NIH Policy on grant funding:
http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/nihgps_2010/ Lots of useful info on the grants process, despite the fact that it is a huge document.

New Application requirements for 2010:
http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-09-149.html

New Scoring System
http://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer/guidelines_general/scoring_system_and_procedure.pdf

Grant Application Basics
http://grants.nih.gov/grants/grant_basics.htm

Writing Your Application
http://grants.nih.gov/grants/writing_application.htm

Description of NIH Institutes and Centers:
http://www.nih.gov/icd/index.html

NIH Budget
http://www.nih.gov/about/budget.htm

Explanation of types of funding mechanisms (R01, R21, K25, T32, etc)
http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/funding_program.htm

New Investigators Program
http://grants.nih.gov/grants/new_investigators/
http://grants.nih.gov/grants/new_investigators/investigator_policies_faqs.htm#Eligibility

Parent announcement (here's where to submit investigator-initiated applications)
http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/parent_announcements.htm

Multiple Principal Investigators
http://grants.nih.gov/grants/multi_pi/

NIH Glossary and Acronym List
http://grants.nih.gov/grants/glossary.htm

NIH Peer Review
Center for Scientific Review videocasts: http://www.csr.nih.gov/video/video.asp.
Two videos (posted June 2010) incorporate many of the recent enhancements to the NIH peer review and grants systems. They replace a similar older CSR video. Video FAQs are available for viewing at: http://cms.csr.nih.gov/NR/rdonlyres/3C488E85-3D72-4C08-8099-9F7939F53CB6/23512/VideoFAQs1.pdf

Description of study sections
http://cms.csr.nih.gov/PeerReviewMeetings/CSRIRGDescriptionNew/

Study section list http://www.csr.nih.gov/Roster_proto/sectionI.asp

Early Career Reviewer Program http://cms.csr.nih.gov/ReviewerResources/ECR.htm

See also http://cms.csr.nih.gov/ResourcesforApplicants/

Human Subjects see http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/hs/

K Awards – career development awards
http://grants.nih.gov/training/careerdevelopmentawards.htm

Search Engine for NIH Funding Opportunities (aka the "Guide") - sort results by activity code
http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/index.html

NIH Policy on Resubmission vs. New Application
http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/amendedapps.htm
http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-03-019.html
General questions or comments concerning this policy may be directed to the Division of Receipt and Referral at the Center for Scientific Review, 301-435-0715.

NIH REPORTER – a tool to search the database of NIH funded research. You can use it to help identify similar research projects, potential collaborators, and NIH Institutes and Centers that accept the type of research you are proposing. http://projectreporter.nih.gov/reporter.cfm

The following links are to various programs under the **NIH Roadmap** for Medical Research which I thought you might find of interest. These vehicles for funding are attractive because they are cross-cutting and fortified by the trans-NIH Common Fund:

NIH Roadmap **http://nihroadmap.nih.gov/**

NIH Roadmap Director's Pioneer Awards **http://nihroadmap.nih.gov/pioneer/**

http://nihroadmap.nih.gov/pioneer/faq.aspx#general3

NIH Roadmap Directors New Innovator Awards **http://grants.nih.gov/grants/new_investigators/innovator_award/**

Also consider funding opportunities under the *NIH Basic Behavioral and Social Sciences Opportunity Network* (OppNet) **http://oppnet.nih.gov**

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