Navigating the NIH Submission Process

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Agenda

- NIH Overview
- NIH Funding Announcements
- Proposal Preparation Steps
- NIH Budget
- Submission Systems
- NIH Forms and Documents
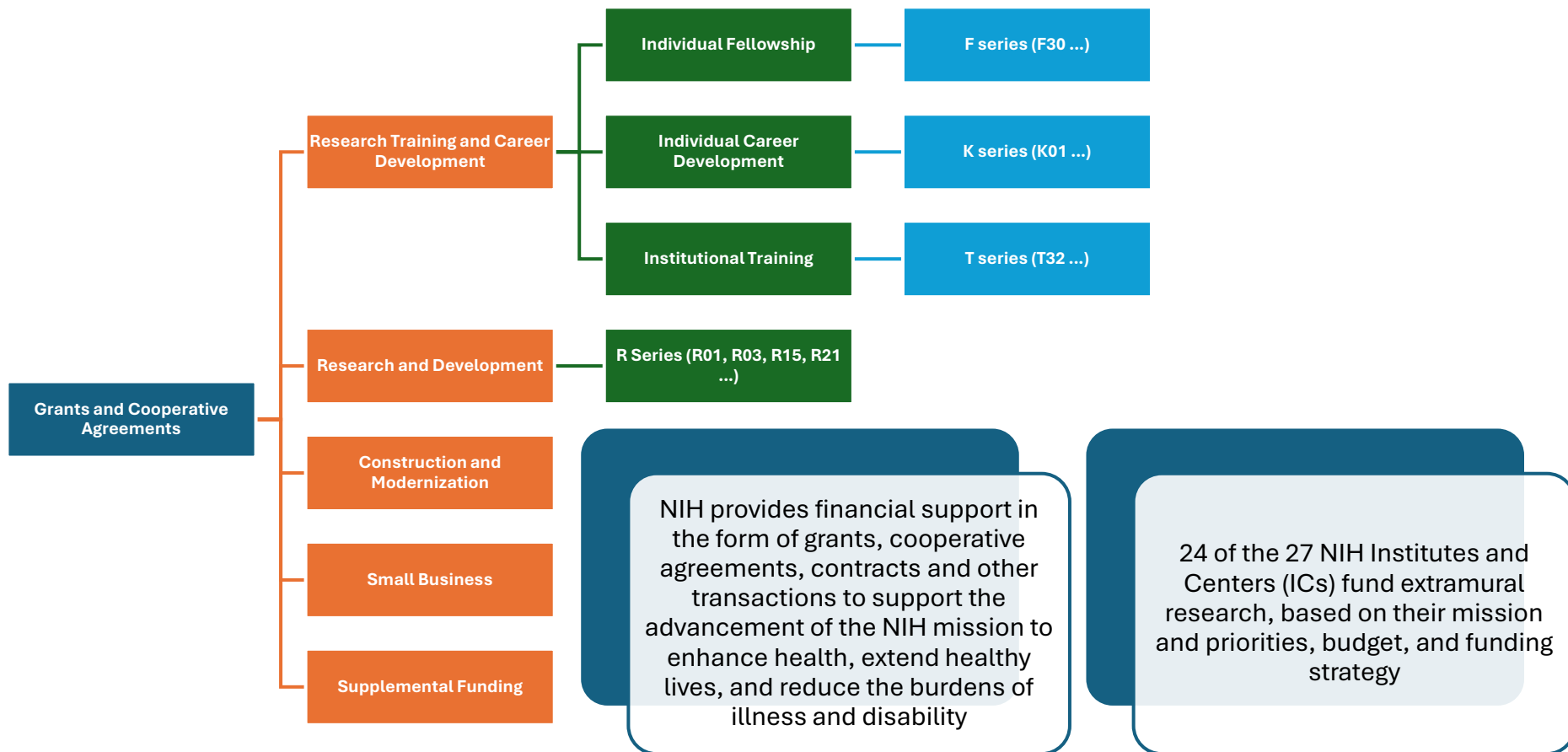- Tips and Resources

NIH Overview

- The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is the largest public funder of biomedical research in the world

- NIH is located within the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the United States' principal agency for protecting the health of all Americans and providing essential human services.

- NIH's mission is to seek fundamental knowledge about the nature and behavior of living systems and the application of that knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce illness and disability.

Categories of Funding Opportunities

Grants and Cooperative Agreements

- **Research Training and Career Development**
  - **Individual Fellowship** — F series (F30 …)
  - **Individual Career Development** — K series (K01 …)
  - **Institutional Training** — T series (T32 …)
- **Research and Development** — R Series (R01, R03, R15, R21 …)
- **Construction and Modernization**
- **Small Business**
- **Supplemental Funding**

NIH provides financial support in the form of grants, cooperative agreements, contracts and other transactions to support the advancement of the NIH mission to enhance health, extend healthy lives, and reduce the burdens of illness and disability

24 of the 27 NIH Institutes and Centers (ICs) fund extramural research, based on their mission and priorities, budget, and funding strategy

NIH Funding Announcements

- Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs)
  - Parent Announcements – unsolicited, investigator-initiated, with standard deadlines.
  - Program Announcements (PAs) – issued by one or more NIH's Institutes or Centers to highlight areas of scientific interest.
  - Request for Application (RFAs) – more narrow interests and sometimes funds are set aside. They usually have a specific submission date.

- Where to find NOFOs:
  - NIH Grants & Funding Webpage https://grants.nih.gov/funding/nih-guide-for-grants-and-contracts
  - Grants.gov

- NIH Matchmaker tool to find NIH Institutes or Centers who have funded similar research projects https://reporter.nih.gov/matchmaker#matchmaker_search

Reading a NOFO

Overview Information

Key dates

Funding opportunity description

Eligibility information

Submission requirements

Agency points-of-contact

Review criteria

Award information

Award administration

Department of Health and Human Services

Part 1. Overview Information

Participating Organization(s)	National Institutes of Health (NIH)
Components of Participating Organizations	NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH (NIH) This Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is developed as a Common Fund initiative (http://commonfund.nih.gov/) through the NIH Office of the NIH Director, Office of Strategic Coordination (https://dpcpsi.nih.gov/). All NIH Institutes and Centers participate in Common Fund initiatives. The NOFO will be administered by the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR) (http://www.nidcr.nih.gov).
Funding Opportunity Title	Pilot Projects to Enhance the Human Virome Program (R03, Clinical Trials Not Allowed)
Activity Code	R03 Small Grant Program
Announcement Type	New
Related Notices	• **April 4, 2024** - Overview of Grant Application and Review Changes for Due Dates on or after January 25, 2025. See Notice NOT-OD-24-084. • **August 31, 2022**- Implementation Changes for Genomic Data Sharing Plans Included with Applications Due on or after January 25, 2023. See Notice NOT-OD-22-198. • **August 5, 2022**- Implementation Details for the NIH Data Management and Sharing Policy. See Notice NOT-OD-22-189.
Funding Opportunity Number (FON)	RFA-RM-25-006
Companion Funding Opportunity	None
Number of Applications	See Part 2 Section III. 3. Additional Information on Eligibility.
Assistance Listing Number(s)	93.310
Funding Opportunity Purpose	The Common Fund Human Virome Program (HVP) aims to extensively and comprehensively characterize the human virome and create tools, models, and methods that will enable an in-depth study of its variation and composition in relation to host factors and its influence on health and disease.

Understanding Due Dates in the NOFO

Key Dates

Posted Date   September 22, 2025

Open Date (Earliest Submission Date)   October 24, 2025

Letter of Intent Due Date(s)   Not Applicable

Application Due Dates			Review and Award Cycles		
New	**Renewal / Resubmission / Revision (as allowed)**	**AIDS - New/Renewal/Resubmission/Revision, as allowed**	**Scientific Merit Review**	**Advisory Council Review**	**Earliest Start Date**
November 24, 2025	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	March 2026	May 2026	July 2026

All applications are due by 5:00 PM local time of applicant organization.

Applicants are encouraged to apply early to allow adequate time to make any corrections to errors found in the application during the submission process by the due date.

No late applications will be accepted for this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

Expiration Date   November 25, 2025

Due Dates for E.O. 12372   Not Applicable

Early-Stage Investigators

An early-stage investigator (ESI) is a Program Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) who has

- completed their terminal research degree or end of post-graduate clinical training, whichever date is later, within the past 10 years and
- who has not previously competed successfully as PD/PI for a substantial NIH independent research award.

NIH is committed to supporting ESIs

- Reviewers give early-stage investigators special consideration
- Applications with meritorious scores may be prioritized for funding
- NIH has programs targeted specifically for this population

More Information for Early-Stage Investigator Policies:
[Early Stage Investigator (ESI) Policies | Grants & Funding](#)

Proposal Preparation Steps

Submit information sheet (InfoSheet) to ORS at least four weeks before the sponsor deadline.

Receive budget/budget justification templates from your Proposal Services contact.
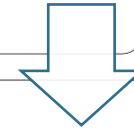
Provide internal routing documents which include a draft summary, final budget, and budget justification, to your PS two weeks before the deadline. If you have a subcontract, it's best to allow for extra time.

Send final, required submission documents to your PS at least three business days prior to deadline to be uploaded into the submission system. Work with them to ensure all documents are included and complete. Review draft of entire proposal before granting permission to submit.
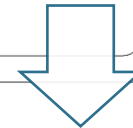
After ORS submits the proposal, the PI will receive a conformation email from eRA Commons.

NIH Budgets

- Cost Considerations- costs must be actual, allowable, reasonable, necessary and consistent.

- NIH Grants Policy Cost Principles: https://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/nihgps/HTML5/section_7/7.2_the_cost_principles.htm

- NIH uses 2 different budget formats: Modular and Detailed

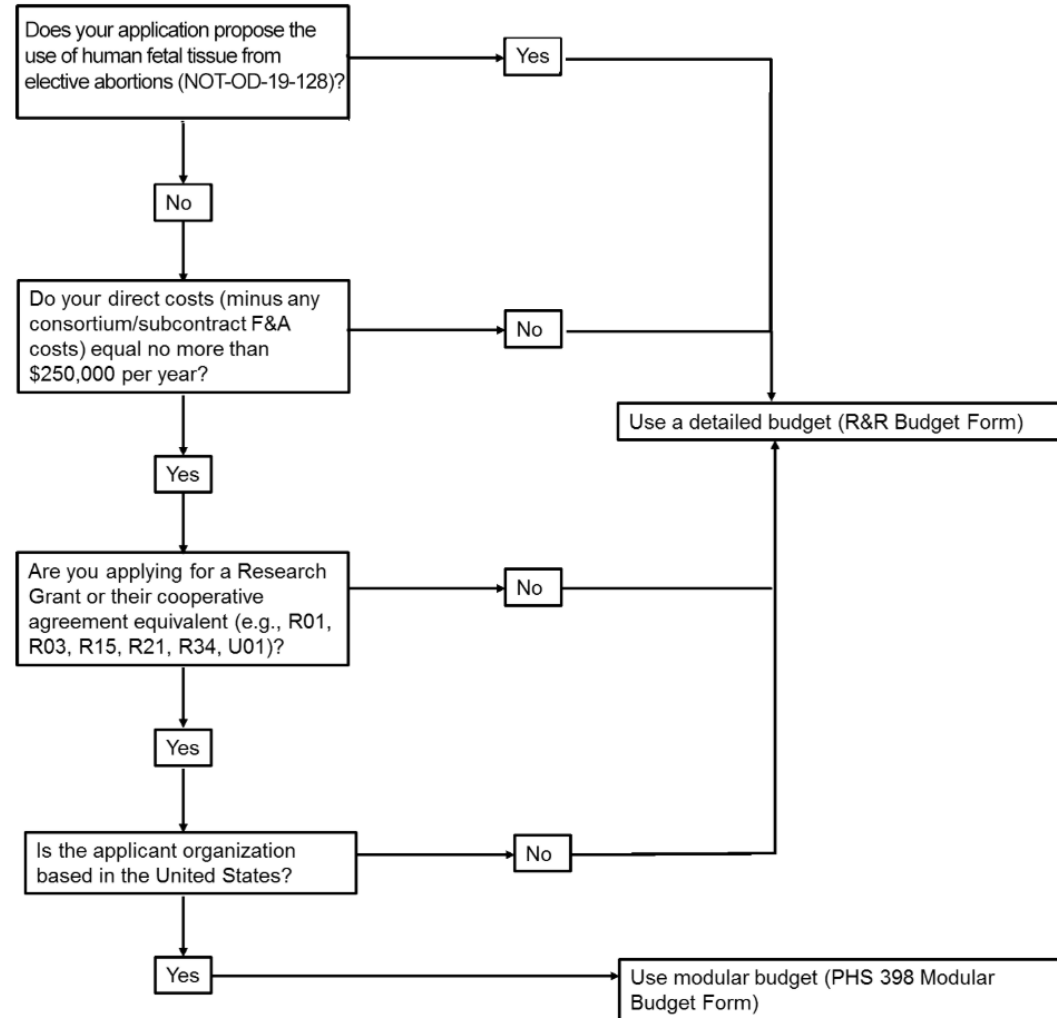|	Modular	Detailed
When to use	Max module is $250,000 direct cost/year	Any budget request over $250,000 direct cost/year
Budget	$25,000 modular increments	Normal, detailed budget
Justification	Only required for personnel expenses and an additional narrative, as needed – i.e. F&A exclusions & requesting different modules per year.	Normal, detailed budget justification
Subcontracts	Abbreviated Consortium budget justification	Normal, detailed budget and budget justification
NIH Form	PHS398 Modular Budget	R&R Budget

Modular *vs*. Detailed Budget Flow Chart

Does your application propose the use of human fetal tissue from elective abortions (NOT-OD-19-128)?
— Yes →

↓ No

Do your direct costs (minus any consortium/subcontract F&A costs) equal no more than $250,000 per year?
— No →

↓ Yes

Use a detailed budget (R&R Budget Form)

Are you applying for a Research Grant or their cooperative agreement equivalent (e.g., R01, R03, R15, R21, R34, U01)?
— No →

↓ Yes

Is the applicant organization based in the United States?
— No →

↓ Yes

Use modular budget (PHS 398 Modular Budget Form)

Develop Your Budget | Grants & Funding

THE UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA
OFFICE OF RESEARCH SERVICES

Budget Considerations

- When requesting more than $500,000 in direct costs in any one budget period, approval from the Institute or Center is required prior to submitting the application.

- Congress restricts the amount of direct salary paid to an individual under an NIH grant. The current Salary Cap, for Executive Level II is $225,700 (Office of Personnel Management Salaries & Wages).

- Internally, you will have an OU spreadsheet which is a detailed budget that routes for internal approval.

- Your PS will load the budget in the application based on whether a modular or detailed budget is required.

NIH Submission Portals

NIH ASSIST

- NIH-developed submission system, normally not used at OU except for special, multi-project proposals.

Grants.gov Workspace

- Rarely used by OU or OU PIs and is primarily for fellowships paid directly to a PI.

System to System (S2S)

- Primary and preferred system used by OU – used to submit NIH proposals most of the time.
- Program within Cayuse that allows for extra error checks and draft copies of the proposal for review before submitting.
- Transmits the submission to Grants.gov and provides a tracking number.

eRA Commons Registration

- An **eRA Commons** registration is required for all individuals listed on the grant application.
  - [Submit an eRA Commons account request](#)

- **Upcoming ORCID iD Requirement**: As part of the transition to Common Forms in 2026, all senior/key personnel on the application must have an ORCID iD linked to their eRA Commons profile when using SciENcv to generate NIH Biosketches.

How to Apply for an NIH Grant

- [How to Apply – Application Guide | Grants & Funding](#)

- [Advice on Application Sections | Grants & Funding](#)

G	General Instructions	Comprehensive guidance, including standard instructions that apply to all applications and all program-specific instruction call-out boxes (research, training, fellowship, career development, multi-project, and small business)	[HTML](#) / [PDF](#) **Alert** Updated March 18, 2025. See [Significant Changes](#).
R	Research Instructions	Standard instructions that apply to all applications plus research instruction call-out boxes. Activity Codes: Research (R), including Research Education (R25), and equivalent Cooperative Agreements (U)	[PDF](#)
K	Career Development Instructions	Standard instructions that apply to all applications plus career development instruction call-out boxes. Activity Codes: Individual Career Development (K), excluding Institutional Career Development (K12, KL2, KM1)	[PDF](#)
T	Training Instructions	Standard instructions that apply to all applications plus training instruction call-out boxes. Activity Codes: Institutional Training (T), including International Training (D43, D71, U2R) and Institutional Career Development (K12, KL2, KM1)	[PDF](#)
F	Fellowship Instructions	Standard instructions that apply to all applications plus fellowship instruction call-out boxes. Activity codes: Fellowship (F)	[PDF](#)
M	Multi-Project Instructions	Standard instructions that apply to all applications plus multi-project instruction call-out boxes. Activity Codes: Program Project Grants and Center Grants (P) and equivalent Cooperative Agreements (U)	[PDF](#)
B	SBIR/STTR Instructions	Standard instructions that apply to all applications plus small business instruction call-out boxes. Activity Codes: R41-R44, SB1, U43, U44, UB1, UT1, UT2	[PDF](#)

Research and Related (R&R) Project Information Documents

Standard proposal files needed from the PI/PD are:

- Project Summary/Abstract
- Project Narrative
  - 1 page
  - Relevance of research to public health

Project Performance Sites Form

- Biosketch

- Signed Letter of Intent to Form a Subcontract Agreement

- Detailed budget justification

- R&R Budget Form

- Letter of Support from PI

Research and Related (R&R) Project Information Documents (continued)

- Bibliography & References Cited
  - Required on all submissions unless otherwise noted in solicitation
  - Should cite any reference included in the Research Plan form and the Human Subjects and Clinical Trials Information form
  - No page limit but you are expected to be concise

- Facilities and Other Resources
  - Required on all submissions unless otherwise noted in solicitation

- Equipment
  - Required on all submissions unless otherwise noted in solicitation
  - All available resources to support the proposed work
  - Scientific environment and how it contributes to probability of success

- Other Attachments – only if requested in the NOFO

Public Health Service (PHS) Research Plan Documents

- Introduction File

- Research Plan Section
  - Specific Aims
  - Research Strategy
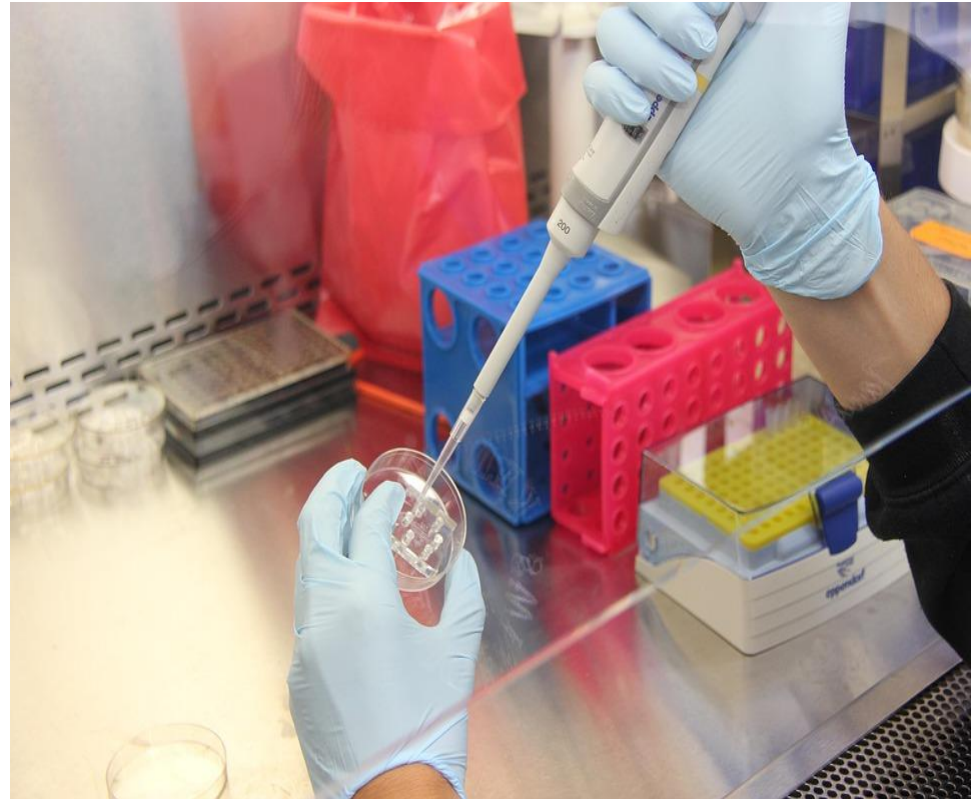
Public Health Service (PHS) Research Plan Documents (continued)

- Other Research Plan Section
  - Vertebrate Animal
  - Select Agent Research
  - Multiple PD/PI Leadership Plan
  - Consortium/Contractual Arrangements
  - Letters of Support
  - Resource Sharing Plan(s)
  - Data Management and Sharing Plan
  - Authentication of Key Biological and/or Chemical Resources

NIH Policy on Foreign Subawards

- **Effective May 1, 2025,** NIH will not issue subawards to foreign entities (new, renewal, or non-competing continuation). Additionally, NIH will no longer accept prior approval requests to add a new foreign component or subaward to an ongoing project (NOT-OD-25-104).

- **Effective September 30, 2025:**
  - Foreign collaborations are not nested under the prime award
  - Instead, foreign work will be tracked through linked but independent awards, while scientific progress will still be reported by the prime recipient
  - Applies to all NIH grants and cooperative agreements (new, renewal, and non-competing) to both domestic and foreign entities
  - Does not apply to:
    - Foreign consultants
    - Purchases (unique equipment or supplies) from foreign vendors

NIH Financial Conflict of Interest Disclosure and Training Requirements Before Submission

- **New NIH Requirement (Effective Oct. 1, 2025):**
  - Institutions must provide training on **disclosure of Other Support**. (Policy Notice: NOT-OD-25-133)
  - All senior/key personnel must complete this training **prior to proposal submission.**
  - Training available via Navex Disclosure Management System.

- **PHS-FCOI Disclosure**
  - Required for all senior/key personnel listed on the grant application.
  - Complete through http://ors.ou.edu/fcoi/fcoireport.asp

ORS Submission Policy

ORS submission policy requires all final proposal documents be uploaded **at least three business days** prior to the sponsor submission deadline.

Proposal documents uploaded at least three business days prior to the submission deadline will be reviewed for compliance.

Documents uploaded *later than* three business days will be submitted without a review or compliance check.

- *The PI and their respective Department or College will assume the responsibility for any rejections due to non-conformity/non-compliance. This includes resolving any financial discrepancies with the budget.*

Key Takeaways

⚠ Hyperlinks and URLs are only allowed when specifically noted

✓ PDF – Use Flattened PDFs; disable security features like password

📄 Do not use the appendix or other sections to circumvent page limits

💵 Decide what institutes your research might fit within. Read the entire NOFO- contact the IC to talk about "fit". Highlighted Topics | Grants & Funding

⊹ Establish relationship with Program Officer(s)

🚑 Stay up to date with all recent notices – biosketch, other support, ORCiD, SciENcv, eRA Commons registration

? Ask ORS if you need help with your NIH proposal; let your PDS know of any difficulties you may encounter with logging in or uploading documents.

Resources

- **NIH Resources**
  - Review | Grants & Funding (nih.gov)
  - Peer Review Policies and Practices | Grants & Funding (nih.gov)
- **ORS Website:** https://www.ou.edu/research-norman/research-services/

- **ORS Training Website :** https://www.ou.edu/research-norman/research-services/training

- **ORS FAQs:** https://www.ou.edu/research-norman/research-services/faq

- **Center for Faculty Excellence (CFE);** The Research & Creative Activities Team: https://www.ou.edu/cfe/research

- **ProposalShortTips.pdf**

- **Proposal Development Page**

Contact Information

- **Research Information Services** (ris@ou.edu) can answer general questions or direct you to the appropriate person

- **Sogol Rasouli,** Associate Director of Research Information Services (Sogol.rasouli@ou.edu)

- **Bonnie VanWinkle**, Associate Director, Proposal Services (bvanwinkle@ou.edu)

- **Leslie Flenniken Kelly**, Associate Director of Award Administration (lflenniken@ou.edu)

- **Jennifer O'Hern**, Faculty Relations and Operational Excellence Manager (jennifer.ohern@ou.edu)

CoRA for Frequently Asked Questions and Website Navigation

https://www.ou.edu/research-norman/research-services/research-services-home