



NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH NEW PROPOSAL SUBMISSION AND PREPARATION CHECKLIST

FOR PROPOSALS SUBMITTED ON OR AFTER JANUARY 25, 2025
(FORM SET I)

UPDATED FOR CHANGES IMPLEMENTED DECEMBER 2025 AND FOR COMMON FORMS
JANUARY 2026

OVERVIEW

The National Institutes of Health has established standard proposal preparation instructions and guidance through the [NIH Application Guide](#) (and as excerpted in this checklist). This checklist is not intended to substitute for the instructions found in the Guide or a thorough, careful review of materials prior to submission.

Please also note that additional information regarding proposal preparation and submission may be available in the funding opportunity announcement and may deviate from this checklist.

OSR will submit the application via the [Application Submission System & Interface for Submission Tracking \(ASSIST\) website](#). If there are any **subcontracts** or if your proposal involves a **clinical trial**, notify OSR as soon as possible to receive more information on required forms.

Roles & Responsibilities: The PI is responsible for assembling the following information and PDF attachments and uploading them to ASSIST (OSR is happy to review and consult, as requested).

Optimal Proposal Timeline	Internal Deadlines
<p>Initiate a Proposal in Sponsor System & Ensure OSR has Access</p> <p><i>Inform OSR if you will need added hands-on support (e.g. budget worksheet drafting, budget justification drafting, narrative review, formatting, or navigating the sponsor's system, etc.). These enhanced services may require extra time to be built into the timeline, but generally can be accomplished over the course of the month leading up to the sponsor's deadline, if we have enough notice.</i></p>	30 days prior to deadline
<p>If including Subrecipients, secure appropriate paperwork from collaborating institution (final approved versions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subrecipient Commitment Form, signed by institutional official • Sub Budget (NIH Budget Form) and Budget Justification • Statement of Work • Biosketches for Subrecipient Key Personnel 	10 days prior to deadline
<p>Internal Routing Process completed by this date. Note, it can take several days to gather the required institutional approvals, so plan accordingly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires Proposal Summary (basic project description, can be draft form) • Requires Final Internal Budget Worksheet • Requires Financial Conflicts of Interest Screening/Disclosure (required at least annually) 	7 days prior to deadline
<p>Upload Documents to Sponsor System for OSR Review</p> <p>Everything should be in final form <i>except</i> for the project narrative components (which may be in draft form for this stage of review).</p>	4 days prior to deadline
<p>Proposal Completion</p> <p>Upload <i>Final</i> narrative components for final OSR review and submission.</p>	2 days prior to deadline

PROPOSAL PLANNING TASKS

COMPLETE	N/A
X	X

		Departmental Planning: As applicable, discuss course release, unpaid leave, additional staffing, or other unusual needs with Department Chair.
		Personnel Planning: For assistance with new personnel salary estimates contact Kelly Robinson in Human Resources (krobins5@wellesley.edu). In the Science Center, discuss additional staffing plans with Cathy Summa.
		Space, Facilities, & Equipment Planning: Discuss new space needs (lab/studio/office), significant equipment/maintenance, or unusual requirements (e.g., biohazards) with your building coordinator. (Sciences: contact Cathy Summa)
		Accessing templates/samples/tools: OSR website has boilerplate/template/sample materials available. OSR also maintains a Successful Proposal Library (not posted, contact OSR for sample proposals if available). https://www.wellesley.edu/sponsoredresearch/proposals
		Computing Resources Planning: Assistance is available for identifying resources and obtaining pricing estimates for your proposal.
		Data Management Planning: Contact your research data librarian for support http://libguides.wellesley.edu/open/DMP
		Subrecipient Planning: If you plan to include subrecipient institutions, follow guidance on OSR webpage. https://www.wellesley.edu/sponsoredresearch/proposals/collaboration-with-other-institutions

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

PROPOSAL FORMAT

COMPLETE	N/A	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Except for the Biosketch, no specific NIH forms are required for any attachments.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	All attachments are PDF files and all file names must be descriptive and contain 50 characters or less. Do not use the ampersand (&) character in file names. Use one space (not two or more) between words and characters. A space counts as one character.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do not paginate individual sections of the proposal or add other information to the headers or footers. eRA Commons will automatically assemble, paginate, and add PI's name to the header.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Recommended typefaces of 11 points or larger include: Arial, Georgia, Helvetica, and Palatino Linotype. Other fonts may be used if the font adheres to the NIH Format Requirements . A "symbol" font may be used for Greek letters or special characters, but the font size requirement still applies.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	All documents must have at least one-half inch margins (top, bottom, left, and right).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Smaller type size may be used in figures, graphs, diagrams, charges, tables, figure legends, and footnotes, but must be in a black font color, and follow the font typeface requirement. Color may be used in figures but all text must be in a black font color, clear, and legible.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Page limits apply in most sections. A listing of page limits for each section by activity code is available online .

SF424 (R&R) TAB

COMPLETE	N/A	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide a project title, limited to 200 characters including spaces and punctuation. The title must be different than any other NIH or PHS agency application submitted by the same PI.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide a project start and end date.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A cover letter is not required (and should not be included) except in unusual circumstances as prescribed by NIH.

OTHER PROJECT INFORMATION TAB

COMPLETE	N/A	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If Proprietary and Privileged information is contained in the application, please consult with the NIH Application Guide for instructions on identifying such information throughout the proposal. (This is not common for basic science proposals.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Project Summary/Abstract: The project summary is a succinct and accurate description of the proposed work and should be informative to other persons working in the same or related fields and understandable to a scientifically literate reader. Avoid both descriptions of past accomplishments and the use of the first person. This section is limited to 30 lines of text.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Project Narrative: In no more than three sentences, describe the relevance of the project to public health to a lay reader.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bibliography & References Cited: Include a bibliography for all references cited in the Project Narrative. Include the names of all authors ("et al" is not permitted). No page limits.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Facilities & Other Resources: Describe the resources available from all participating organizations to support the project (Laboratory, Animal, Computer, Office, Clinical, and Other). No page limits. R15 specific: must include the following in addition to the traditional information above: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A profile of the students of the applicant institution and any information or estimate of the number who have obtained a baccalaureate degree and gone on to obtain an academic or professional doctoral degree in the health-related sciences during the last five years.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of plans to recruit well-qualified undergraduate students from diverse backgrounds, including those from groups underrepresented in the biomedical research workforce (See NOT-OD-20-031) to participate in the research project. • Description of the special characteristics of the applicant institution that make it appropriate for an AREA grant awarded through this FOA, where the goals of this FOA are to: (1) provide support for meritorious research at undergraduate-focused institution or institutional components; (2) strengthen the research environment at these institutions/components; and (3) give undergraduate students an opportunity to gain significant biomedical research experience through active involvement in the research. • Description of the likely impact of an AREA grant on the PD(s)/PI(s). • Description of the likely impact of an AREA grant on the research environment of the applicant institution. • Description of the likely impact of the AREA grant on the ability of undergraduate students at the institution to gain experience conducting biomedical research. • Provide a description of the resources of the grantee institution available for the proposed research (e.g., equipment, supplies, laboratory space, release time, matching funds, etc.). • Although the majority of the research must be directed by the PD(s)/PI(s) and conducted at the applicant institution, limited use of special facilities or equipment at another institution is permitted. For any proposed research sites other than the applicant institution, provide a brief description of the resources and access students will need and have to these resources.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Equipment: Describe the equipment available from all participating organizations to support the project. No page limits.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Other Attachments: Provide only in accordance with the announcement and/or agency-specific instructions.</p> <p>R15 specific: Wellesley College letter certifying institutional eligibility is required to be attached in the Other Attachments section, and can be found in the OSR NIH Toolbox. This should be uploaded to Assist as a PDF, and named "ProvostLetter.pdf" (without quotation marks).</p> <p>If you are submitting a "Multi-PI Application", a signed provost letter is required from each involved institution. Only individuals from R-15 eligible institutions may serve as PI.</p>

PROJECT/PERFORMANCE SITE LOCATION(S) TAB

COMPLETE	N/A	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	For projects with subawards, all subaward recipient sites must be included along with their Congressional District .

SENIOR/KEY PERSON PROFILE TAB

COMPLETE	N/A	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Profiles must be provided for all senior/key persons, as well as other significant contributors and consultants.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	For all individuals listed as Senior/Key Persons, they must provide their eRA Commons ID. Please contact OSR to request an eRA Commons ID. *New as of December 2025 - Key Personnel must link their eRA Commons Personal Profile to their ORCID ID.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Biographical sketches & Biographical Sketch Supplement (effective 1/25/26) must use the NIH Common Forms, and be created within SciENcv.</p> <p>R15 Specific: The PD(s)/PI(s) should include a summary of his or her previous and/or current experience in supervising students in research in the Personal Statement. The PD(s)/PI(s) also should indicate which peer-reviewed publications involved (appropriate) students under his or her supervision.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	After the PI/PD, remaining senior/key person profiles should be listed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unless otherwise indicated, do NOT provide Current and Pending Support documents for each individual.

BUDGET & BUDGET JUSTIFICATION TAB

COMPLETE	N/A	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Foreign organizations may include limited F&A Costs (up to eight percent MTDC less equipment).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>R15 Specific: Applicants may request up to \$375,000 in direct costs, excluding consortium F&A, for the entire project period of up to 3 years. Entire budget will be entered in period 1, even if requesting all 3 years. Do not complete Budget Periods 2 or 3. They are not required and will not be accepted with the application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants submitting an application with direct costs of \$250,000 or less (total for all years, excluding consortium Facilities and Administrative [F&A] costs) must use the Modular Budget. • Applicants submitting an application with direct costs of \$250,001 - \$375,000 (total for all years, excluding consortium Facilities and Administrative [F&A] costs) must use the R&R Budget.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students must be compensated for their participation in the lab's research and in accord with institutional policies. Salaries can be requested for students in the R15 budget or other resources at the university can be used to pay them for their participation. Undergraduate students who are compensated from the R15 grant or other institutional funds should receive at least the national minimum wage. Compensation through course credit hours towards graduation is allowable, but must be justified. If universities/colleges provide room and board for summer research students, details must be provided in the application. NIH does not fund stipends for undergraduates on R15 awards.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>R&R Budget Form (for proposals requesting \$250,001 or more in direct costs per year):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All expenses must be necessary, reasonable, and allocable to the project and must align with the budget justification and research strategy. A detailed Justification for all line items is required. If subawards are included in the project, include the R&R Subaward Budget Attachment Form. Personnel Justification: Since a primary objective of the AREA program is to engage undergraduate students to meritorious research, the research team must be composed primarily of undergraduate students from the applicant institution/AREA-eligible component. Indicate aspects of the proposed research in which undergraduate students will participate. If participating students have not yet been individually identified, the number and academic level of those to be involved should be provided. If there are any Collaborators or Consultants for the project, provide their names, organizational affiliations, and the services they will perform. Costs to support the activities described in the Data Management and Sharing Plan must be requested in the appropriate cost category(ies), e.g., personnel, equipment, supplies, and other expenses. Investigators must also include a justification of the activities proposed in the DMS Plan that will incur costs. This justification must be labeled as "Data Management and Sharing Justification" within the budget justification attachment, followed by the estimated dollar amount. No links are allowed in the budget justification.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>PHS 398 Modular Budget (for proposals requesting \$250,000 or less in direct costs per year):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List the number of modules requested (each module is \$25,000). Personnel Justification: Since a primary objective of the AREA program is to engage undergraduate students to meritorious research, the research team must be composed primarily of undergraduate students from the applicant institution/AREA-eligible component. Indicate aspects of the proposed research in which undergraduate students will participate. If participating students have not yet been individually identified, the number and academic level of those to be involved should be provided. If there are any Collaborators or Consultants for the project, provide their names, organizational affiliations, and the services they will perform. The consortium justification should include a list of subawards rounded to nearest \$1,000 per year, identify whether each subrecipient is a domestic or foreign entity, and identify the subrecipient personnel, including name, percent of effort devoted to the project, and role. Costs to support the activities described in the Data Management and Sharing Plan must be requested in the appropriate cost category(ies), e.g., personnel, equipment, supplies, and other expenses. Investigators must also include a justification of the activities proposed in the DMS Plan that will incur costs. This justification must be labeled as "Data Management and Sharing Justification" and be included as an additional narrative justification on the modular budget page. No links are allowed in the budget justification.

PHS 398 RESEARCH PLAN FORM TAB

COMPLETE	N/A	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Introduction to Application</u> : Resubmission or Revision applications only; no more than 1 page to address study section comments and changes made. If a change impacting the status of the proposal as either single-PI or multi-PI is occurring from the previous submission, explain this.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Specific Aims</u> : The Specific Aims is limited to one page and states concisely the goals of the research and expected outcome(s), including the impact of the results on the research field(s) involved.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Research Strategy</u> : The Research Strategy page limitation will vary by Activity Code . The Research Strategy should be organized into three sections: Significance, Innovation, and Approach. Renewal applications will also include a Progress Report as part of the Research strategy. If a change from multi- to single-PI (or vice versa) is involved in the renewal, explain. R15 specific : Describe how the proposed plan can achieve the specific aims using a research team composed primarily of undergraduate students. Describe how undergraduate students will be engaged in and supervised

		in conducting hands-on, rigorous research. Describe how undergraduate students will participate in research activities such as planning, execution, and/or analysis of the research. Formal training plans (e.g., non-research activities, didactic training, seminars) should not be provided, although a brief description of activities related to enhancing students' research capabilities and progress (e.g., the use of individual development plans, etc.) is permitted. (12 page limit for R15 Research Strategy)
		<u>Progress Report Publication list:</u> for RENEWAL applications only. R15 specific: For renewals, when listing publications, manuscripts accepted for publication, patents, and other printed materials that have resulted from the project, note which of these products have included the work of students conducting research supported by the AREA grant.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Vertebrate Animals:</u> Required only if the applicant yes to "Are Vertebrate Animals Used" on the R&R Other Project Information Form.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Select Agent Research:</u> Required only if the project will use select agents as identified by the CDC and Animal APHIS .
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Multiple PI/PD Leadership Plan:</u> Required for all proposals that will utilize NIH's multiple PI/PD leadership model. Note: any person named as a PI must be from an R15 eligible institution. Collaborators from non-eligible institutions may not be named as PI. If there are changes from previous proposals/awards for this project, explain.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Consortium/Contractual Agreements:</u> Required for applications that involve subrecipients.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Letters of Support:</u> As appropriate, letters of support may be attached to the application to: demonstrate the support of consortium participants; stipulate co-authorship expectations; indicate data or resource sharing commitments; include consultant rates and level of effort/hours per year; and/or demonstrate access to core facilities and resources.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Resource Sharing Plan(s):</u> Include information/documentation on sharing model organisms or research tools.
		<u>Other Plans</u> Includes Data Management and Sharing Plan (including, where applicable, genomic data sharing per NIH Genomic Data Sharing Policy). See NIH guidelines for the specific content/instructions. Generally the DMS Plan includes the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Type • Related Tools, Software and/or Code • Standards • Data Preservation, Access, and Associated Timelines • Access, Distribution, or Reuse Consideration • Oversight of Data Management and Sharing See samples on the NIH page dedicated to DMS plans here . For assistance with Data Management Plans, please contact the LTS Research Data Support Librarian .
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Authentication of Key Biological and/or Chemical Resources Plan:</u> Describe methods to ensure the identity and validity of key biological and/or chemical resources used in the study.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Appendix:</u> Appendices may be included, but only in limited situations. Consult the NIH Application Guide for details.

HUMAN SUBJECTS AND CLINICAL TRIALS TAB

COMPLETE	N/A	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Consult guidelines for instructions. Where applicable, add a record for each proposed Human Subject Study by selecting 'Add New Study'. In some cases a study cannot have defined plans for human subject involvement per agency policies on Delayed Onset Studies. In these cases, select 'Add New Delayed Onset Study' to provide the study name and justification for omission of human subjects study information.

PHS ASSIGNMENT REQUEST TAB

COMPLETE	N/A	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Optional form. This is where you indicate the specific area within NIH that you think should review your application.