

May 28, 2004

Dear Investigator,

The Center for Scientific Review (CSR) would like to thank you for considering the option of being an earlier user of the Competitive Grant Application Process (CGAP) i.e., electronic submission. The development and implementation of this system is a high priority for NIH extramural research and a critical step in our efforts to improve the grant application process and shorten the time from submission to potential award. We appreciate the willingness of "pioneers" to help us bring the CGAP process to wider use. More information on electronic research administration (eRA) can be found at this site: <http://era.nih.gov/>.

Some investigators have voiced concern that their application may be somehow disadvantaged by CGAP. The CSR is committed to preventing this from occurring during the referral and review of these applications. The applications will be assigned to Institutes/Centers for funding consideration and to review groups using the same process as for paper applications. The CGAP submission incorporates the opportunity to include a cover letter with suggestions for such assignments and discussion of other important information such as identification of critical scientific areas and potential conflicts of interest.

The assigned reviewers and readers for CGAP applications will receive paper copies of the application just as they receive the paper copies of applications submitted in the traditional way. In addition all members of the review group who do not have a conflict of interest will be able to see the image of the application on a CD ROM. These images are of higher quality than those from the scanning of applications submitted in paper. Any figures presented in color will retain that color on the CD ROM which is not true for applications submitted in paper. Therefore, in one sense the CGAP applications will have an advantage over traditional paper submissions. Finally, the reviewers will receive an explanation (copy attached) of the minor format differences of CGAP and paper applications.

Staff in the CSR, working with many others in the Office of Extramural Research at NIH, have devoted many hours to the analysis of the processes needed for CGAP, the planning for the early pilots, and implementation of the system. We are convinced that the checks and business rules built in to the CGAP system will result in applications that are complete and conform to the requirements for submission. Indeed, the CGAP process is designed to prevent applicants from making the common errors that can lead to problems in grant submission or delays in review. Our expectation is that this process will result in applications that consistently meet all of the NIH requirements and will allow investigators to concentrate on the scientific aspects that they know best. CGAP applications submitted in these early pilots will receive careful handling and should unexpected problems arise we will work with investigators and their institutions to correct them so that the review process is not delayed.

Therefore, we hope that you will seriously consider working with the staff in your institution to submit an application using the CGAP system. Not only will you be helping yourself submit a grant application that conforms to the NIH requirements, you will be doing a service for future scientists and their grant submissions. If you have questions about the logistics of CGAP submission, please contact your Sponsored Research Office or Scarlett Gibb (301-435-0690 ext 603; [gibbs@mail.nih.gov](mailto:gibbs@mail.nih.gov)) in the Office of Extramural Research. If you have questions about the handling of the applications in CSR, please contact Dr. Suzanne Fisher, Director, Division of Receipt and Referral (301-435-0715; [fishers@csr.nih.gov](mailto:fishers@csr.nih.gov)).

Sincerely,

Brent Stanfield, Ph.D.  
Acting Director  
Center for Scientific Review