



## eRA Commons Working Group (CWG) Meeting Notes

### Meeting Details:

**Friday**, September 4, 2015

1:00-3:00 p.m.

Lobby Level: Congressional A

Hyatt Regency Washington

400 New Jersey Ave, NW

Washington, DC 20001

[Map and Directions](#)

[Floor Plan](#)

### Notes:

Megan Columbus sent her regrets that a last minute obligation kept her from attending the meeting. Sheri Cummins took the role of facilitator of the meeting for the afternoon.

#### 1. eRA Commons Update

**Facilitator:** Tina Jones & Anastasiya Hardison

- Federated Login (the ability to use your institutions credentials to log into eRA Commons) has been expanded to include delegates.
- Federal Financial Report (FFR) deadline has been extended to 120 days for all projects with end dates on, or after, October 1, 2014
- xTrain notifications for fellowship termination dates (30 days prior, 1 day after, and 30 days after) are now part of the eRA Commons Status Information screen and can be seen in the Grant Folder.
  - Same functionality will be expanded for NCI fellowships in September, 2015.
  - In all cases, notifications are sent to fellow and delegates
  - Sponsors, because they may be sponsoring a number of fellows, get a summary notification of the upcoming fellow terminations
- New SO notification letting them know the PI has initiated a Final Invention Report (FIR)
  - *Comment:* May not be an issue with the FIR, but the RPPR "Route to SO" list is not alphabetized, making very difficult to find the correct SO.  
*Response:* This is a known issue reported earlier at NCURA and the eRA team is looking into it.
  - *Comment:* Reason many reports may get initiated and not completed is that PIs may not know who their SOs are.  
*Response:* With that in mind, eRA is looking to include a reminder to the SO that the FIR needs to be completed 10-14 days from the due date.
- FCOI – is not being used by AHRQ
- Coming Soon
  - Acceptance of electronic signatures for institutional registrations to eRA Commons
    - Will be tied to the initial setting of the SO password during the registration process
  - NCE justification will include generic language with a checkbox that the user accepts the terms. Terms are highlighted in the No Cost Extension tutorial at: [https://era.nih.gov/era\\_training/era\\_videos.cfm#nocost](https://era.nih.gov/era_training/era_videos.cfm#nocost)
  - DOB and SSN data on the Personal Profile will be locked once completed. Changing this information at a later date will require a call to the eRA Service Desk.

## 2. eSubmission Update

**Facilitator:** Jessie Floura

- By the end of December 2015 all competing single project activity codes will be eligible to be submitted through ASSIST. This will be another option for submitting applications to Grants.gov for processing by NIH
- Services available to S2S developers:
  - Submission Validation Service (SVS) – returns system-identified errors and warnings for an application or multi-project component
  - Imaging service (SIL) – the service that creates a preview of the application package, seeing the application exactly as the reviewers will see it
  - Submission Agency Data Service (SADS) – Prior application data checking
- Services do require the use of security certificate – call the eRA [Service Desk](#) for assistance
- Grants.gov may leverage on these services for NIH applications submitted using their new Workspace feature
- New validation documents coming. Since the launch of ASSIST, there were always two versions as eRA worked through the transition of Activity Codes supported by ASSIST.
  - In December when the final activity codes are transitioned, the need for both is eliminated
- Security update: Old browsers will no longer be supported (like IE 6, still in use by some)
- Forms update coming – waiting on OMB clearance
  - *Question:* What percentage of schema changes will the new forms bring?  
*Answer:* About 80% as a rough estimate
  - As schema information becomes available, it will be communicated to the S2S developers
  - Timeline for new forms is to have all FOAs updated with new application packages by March 25, 2016, in time for May 25, 2015 submission date.
  - Communication plan
    - An overview guide notice will be posted that highlights all the major changes coming, outlining transition plan, dates, etc.
    - This will include an interim period starting in January 2016 when some new policies will go into effect, but forms will not yet have been deployed.
    - Attachments will be used to collect the desired information to meet policy requirements between January and May.
- September 17, 2015
  - New validations service will be available for SBIR/STTR applications
  - ASSIST will be opened to support SBIR/STTR applications/FOAs
  - Fellowships will be supported in ASSIST in October
- *Question:* Will the use of ASSIST be required?  
*Answer:* There are no current plans to make ASSIST required.
- ASSIST and the Administrative Official's Manage Access privilege
  - Previously in ASSIST, The AO role was granted the ability to manage access to all of the applications in an institution
  - Security concerns raised as the AO has not been vetted as an authorized representative of the institution
  - *Question to Group:* Would a manage access role in eRA Commons that can be leveraged by ASSIST be a viable solution?
    - Granted by the SO – legal representative of the institution
    - Would apply to all applications in ASSIST for that institution
    - Given one time, but given by SO
  - *Response from Group:* Concerns raised about implications of having role apply to all applications, especially if given to a PI. The ability for an SO to assign Manage Access privileges on an application-by-application basis already exists. The group was encouraged to sign-up for the ASSIST-Development-L listserv ([NOT-OD-15-132](#)) for continued discussion of issue and potential options.

### 3. Explore Prior Approval Work Flow and Needs

- Discussion/Sharing

**Facilitators:** Anastasiya Hardison

Prior Approval Request – an electronic process (see [PowerPoint](#))

- Electronic process would require it to be initiated by SO (not PI as is sometimes the case)
- Or if PI does initiate it, notifications could be sent to SO.
- Pre-Award, approved requests are “tagged” to the application based on Contact PI name and FOA number
- Benefit of better transparency of process
- Possible search feature so SOs could look up requests and status of requests
- Provide feedback, ideas, concerns to [Anastasiya Hardison](#)

### 4. What Are the Best Ways to Provide Application Instructions

- See *Request for Information (RFI): Strategies for Simplifying NIHs Grant Application Instructions* [NOT-OD-15-134](#) for more information for this discussion.

**Facilitator:** Sheri Cummins

Looking for ways to improve instructions.

- Request for Information (RFI) closes September 25, 2015
- Do people still use the paper version(s)?
- Would a web based option, specific to the FOA, be more helpful, kind of ala carte?
- Would more interactive, dynamic, fluid options be helpful (links to policy/instructional information in ASSIST)?
- Please help us help you by responding to the RFI ([NOT-OD-15-134](#)) by the close date

### 5. Changes in Federal Financial Report (FFR): Feedback Requested

**Facilitator:** Tina Jones

- New user interface design (UI), better usability, cleaner look (more like ASSIST and the Personal Profile)
- Users with FSR role can access a Quick Query to search for reports, with no limit now on number of results
- It will show all related years to a grant
- Has improve backend technology (improved infrastructure)
- *Comment:* Need a way to query to see which reports are annual or end of grant, and which are completed or missing
- *Response:* Good suggestion, it will be carried back to development team

### 6. Grant Re-Assignment Functionality and End Of Year Update

**Facilitator:** Mark Siegert

To meet the many requests to reassign grants to different departments within the same institution, eRA has developed the Grant re-assign feature. (See [PowerPoint](#))

- Available now
- Previously, requests came through the eRA Service Desk to data quality
- New status search menu option
- In the future, the ability to add departments will be included

### 7. General Discussion/Wrap-up

**Facilitator:** Sheri Cummins

Friday afternoon of a holiday 3 day weekend, no new business ☺

Next meeting (tentatively): Tuesday, January 12, 2016 1-3PM, Hyatt Capitol Hill