

## eRA Commons Working Group (CWG) Meeting Notes

### Meeting Details:

**Tuesday**, May 6, 2016  
1:00-3:00 p.m.  
Room: Lobby Level,  
Congressional A  
Hyatt Regency Washington  
400 New Jersey Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
[Map and Directions](#)  
[Floor Plan](#)

### Next Meeting:

**Friday**, Sept. 23, 2016  
1:00-3:00 p.m.  
Room: TBA  
Hyatt Regency Washington  
400 New Jersey Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20001

### Meeting Notes:

#### 1. eSubmission Update

**Facilitator:** Laurie Roman

- Visibility and Warning of SAM Expiration
  - ASSIST
    - SAM expiration date to appear on application summary page
    - Warning upon initiation if within 30 days of expiration
    - Warning when using Validate Application action if within 30 days\* of expiration
  - Submission Validation Service (SVS) – used by ASSIST and some system-to-system solution providers to run pre-submission validations; used by NIH when processing submitted applications
    - Warning when using Validate Application action if within 30 days\* of expiration
  - Commons IPF
    - Visibility to SAM expiration information
  - **Concern:** Visibility of SAM expiration to a wide audience who cannot take action to correct it, may result in the individuals listed as SAM contacts and offices of sponsored research getting lots of panic emails
  - **Response:**
    - The organizations represented in CWG are ones that are keenly aware of the need to annually update SAM registration. These organizations don't let their registration lapse and, therefore, would nearly always show an expiration date well in the future.
    - The target audience for these enhancements are organizations that are less tuned in to the consequences of not updating SAM registration. This is a real issue that impacts quite a few organizations.
    - We will think through implementation to try to mitigate impact to large institutions, but feel that providing as many opportunities to help less experienced applicants avoid potentially show-stopper errors is an important goal
      - *\* Update: implementation changed to provide warnings at 15 days instead of 30. This compromise allows more time to complete the update process before receiving warnings, but enough time for less experienced institutions to take action prior to the due date.*

- Enhancement to allow direct access to eRA Commons from within ASSIST (targeted for fall release)
  - Especially helpful when organizations need to reject an application (Reject Application cannot be done from within ASISST)
- ASSIST/Commons email notifications
  - Enhancement underway to provide ability for users to “opt-out” of select notifications
  - Discussion points:
    - CWG would like list of email notifications for which opt-out may be possible
    - Would like more information regarding how the notifications would be controlled?
      - Application/transaction?
      - Organization?
      - User?
      - Category of message (e.g., module)?

## 2. eRA Commons Update

**Facilitator:** Scarlett Gibb

- Visibility to SAM expiration date in Institution Profile (targeted for summer release)
- Enhancement to allow direct access to ASSIST from within eRA Commons (targeted for fall/winter release)
- Providing centralized email for Financial Conflict of Interest (FCOI) notifications
  - Detailed communication will be sent once available
- Internal Closeout changes complete
- Final RPPR will become part of Closeout next FY as final progress report
  - Discussion points:
    - Would be nice to have option to allow PIs to only submit final progress report but not all non-competing RPPRs

## 3. Input on New Prior Approval Module

**Facilitator:** Anastasiya Hardison

- First feature to be released will be the withdrawal of an application
  - PI or SO can start the request
  - Routing to SO
  - SO sends request to NIH Center for Scientific Review
- Future features
  - Change of PD/PI
    - Eventually will cover all scenarios (swap out a PI; remove PI from multi-PI grant; add PI to single-PI grant), but will likely start with a simple swap of PI request
    - Later phase will include being able to view status of request
    - Would be helpful to have an upload for Other Support and ability to provide level of effort
      - Group prefers ability to provide more granular effort numbers than what is allowed on RPPR (rounded to nearest person month)
  - Secondary NCE (if miss project end date)
  - Changes in significant effort
    - Would be helpful to have a list of all folks named in NoA and effort levels
  - Group agreed that requests for carry over should be prioritized given the frequency of requests and potential to help PIs through the process by itemizing the information needed
- Generally helpful to provide PD/PI, grants management specialist (GMS) and program official (PO) contact information on request screens

- Concerns that contact information in eRA Commons is often incorrect (especially for GMS contacts) and doesn't match information provided in notice of award (NoA) leading to confusion

#### 4. Burden Reduction Brain Storming

**Facilitator:** Megan Columbus

- Agencies are looking to reduce burden. From a systems perspective what features would provide the greatest burden relief?

Suggestions from the group:

- Automation of carryover/carry forward requests (very high bang for the buck)
- Add Human Subjects training certificate to personal profile and pull from profile rather than requesting it each time; could require Commons IDs to check profiles and only request ones that aren't already available (high bang for the buck)
- Web service (S2S) for RPPR (would greatly reduce duplicate data entry; impacts PIs and administrators)
- Web service (S2S) for NoA and terms and conditions
- Web service (S2S) for FFR (all required information is already in internal systems)
- Add Final Invention Statement to eRA Commons Relinquishing Statement so both actions can be done at the same time in Commons
- Integrate Closeout and iEdison information
- xTrain report of (1) outstanding terminations and (2) batch pull of terminations and appointments
- Status search – remove default dates; just require some search criteria be entered if needed for performance reasons
- RPPR – list names for routing in alphabetical order
- More consistency between institutes – some requiring administrative type 3/6/7 in different ways (email vs. electronic, sometimes asking for duplicative information to be sent)

#### 5. Impacts

**Facilitator:** Megan Columbus

- FORMS-D – how can we do it better?
  - Appreciate the communications – the more information the better
  - Grace periods can remain hidden from applicants
  - Helps when we can accept both old and new form versions for a transition period
- New Application Guide Approach: Impressions/Feedback?
  - Would like option to print from a single PDF all information including the resource material now accessible via links
  - Like the “one stop shop” strategy; appreciate that there are imbedded links in the form instructions to related notices and additional information

- Hard to support others when you don't know what series of links they took to get to the spot they are questioning
- Continuous Submission- Impacts from an Institutional Perspective
  - Administrators currently rely on due dates to organize workload
  - Continuous submission forces a shift in behavior and process (not necessarily a bad thing)
  - Current continuous submission practice of providing the date ranges that go to each council effectively just moves the due date
  - If continuous submission concept was expanded, would need to think of how to handle council differently to really make an impact
  - Some types of programs (training, conference) are better suited by having specific due dates

## 6. Rules Management System

**Facilitator:** Laurie Roman

- New system to manage eRA system-enforced business rules
- Could be opened up for general use to search by
  - Form
  - Validation
  - Group of validations (e.g., mandatory validations)
  - Activity code
- **Action:** eRA team will mock up some reports and demo at next meeting

## 7. Discussion: Developing Personas to Better Understand Your Needs

Deferred to future meeting due to time constraint.

## 8. Discussion: Web Services

**Facilitator:** Jessie Floura

- Per our [eRA Web Services](#) website instructions, users that need to set-up a certificate in our Ext-UAT or production environments must use eRA's Account Management System (AMS) via the Admin tab in eRA Commons (see [AMS Online Help](#) and follow the Create Accounts instructions for system accounts). As part of that process, users could "Validate Certificate" to make sure everything is working.

Until recently, we had an issue with that feature which has now been resolved.

- NIH has set a standard deployment window for the Ext-UAT environment of Monday-Friday 7-11 a.m. ET. This does not mean that Ext-UAT will experience daily deployments. It does mean that when deployments are necessary, NIH will make every effort to stay within this standard window. NIH will provide notifications to the NIH\_ESUB\_SYS2SYS-L listserv of deployment activities that fall outside the standard window.
- SVS – appears to give erroneous information back if fields required by the schema are not filled out
  - **Action:** eRA team to look at documentation and ensure that it states what information is expected by the service prior to running it.
- Additional services that would be helpful
  - List of Commons IDs for institution
    - **Action:** Debbi Nixon to email request.
  - All FOAs and their corresponding activity codes (current service requires them to be looked up one at a time)

- **Action:** Debbi Nixon to email request.
- My NCBI data via web service
  - **Action:** Debbi Nixon to email request.

## 9. MISC

**Facilitator:** Megan Columbus

- Receiving direct feedback/requests from the community carries much more weight than internal reiteration of your comments in meetings
  - If you feel strongly about something, please take the time to send an email with your request and why it is important. Requests that quantify how the change could reduce burden are especially powerful to help us justify the work and resources.
- Would be helpful for administrators to be able to see PI delegations so when the PI is not available, they can see if someone else is able to complete a task.
- JIT is giving message that HS information wasn't provided even when provided; JIT locks up when HS or vertebrate animal data is entered incorrectly – please send examples to Scarlett Gibb ([gibbs@mail.nih.gov](mailto:gibbs@mail.nih.gov))

Resolution: The JIT is correct but we need better messaging on the screen.