

eRA Commons Working Group (CWG) Meeting Notes

Meeting Details:

Wednesday, September 10, 2014

2:00-4:00 p.m.

[National Academy of Sciences](#)

Room: 125

2101 Constitution Ave., N.W.

Washington, DC 20418

[Directions](#)

[Google Map](#)

Agenda Items:

1. eRA Commons

- Changes in RPPR
 - On and after October 17, RPPRs will be required to submit electronically for all Type 5 Non-SNAP Progress Reports. This means all progress reporting will be done electronically except for Type 4s. ([NOT-OD-14-092](#))
 - Commons Usernames will be required for graduate and undergraduate with significant effort ([NOT-OD-13-097](#))
- Inclusion Management System (IMS) ([NOT-OD-14-086](#))
 - New Service in Commons
 - Accessible from RPPR and/or Status screen
 - Existing data will be auto-populated to the form
 - Or, data can be manually added at time of report
 - From July until the October 17th release, inclusion data has been gathered from the RPPR using [PDF forms](#) then added to the database on backend
- BioMedical Workforce Initiative (BMW) – eRA Commons IDs for new roles
 - Track all involved with more than 1 month effort (via eRA Usernames)
 - Data from Personal Profile will be used, important users keep it up to date
 - For reporting, is there anticipated concern about users with dual roles (administrative vs. scientific)
 - No concerns (yet)
 - Smaller user population with dual roles
 - Action Item: (NIH Communications Team) Communicate the need to use the appropriate scientific account when reporting in RPPR the participation of individuals with multiple Commons accounts. (Potential FAQ and/or Item of Interest.)
- Fixes in October
 - Link for 2nd to last year report in Multi-Year Funded (MYF) awards missing (to be fixed)
 - An issue introduced when adding Super Storm Sandy FFRs showing some supplements to appear late when no report should be due at all (to be fixed)

Presenter: Scarlett Gibb

2. Changes to Closeout

- October Release
 - New policies / procedures apply to grants with an end date after September 30, 2014
 - Adding Quick Query type functionality to search/find grants that are within 90 days of closeout. Report will also indicate if they are in a No Cost Extension.
 - New query form

- Will include CAPTCHA (Completely Automated Public Turing Test To Tell Computers and Humans Apart) security process
 - Keep hackers from initiating multiple queries that crash the system
 - Publically accessible because:
 - Some institutions have people who need closeout information but do not have to have a Commons account
 - It is public information
 - Query option within Commons (authenticated) still available includes sorting and filtering options
 - New eNotifications
 - Adding an additional 3rd notification
 - 1st 15 days after end date
 - 2nd 91 days after end date
 - 3rd 121 days after end date
 - 3rd will be a reminder to complete report and/or get Final Report Additional Material (FRAM, see below) request completed.
 - Could include language about potential unilateral closeout (not yet automatic)
 - Notifications go to SO, BO, and PI
 - Possible in future to include those people with the FFR role
 - Final Report for Additional Materials (FRAM)
 - Same functionality as Progress Report Additional Material (PRAM)
 - Request triggered by Program Officer (PO) to Signing Official (SO) and Principal Investigator (PI)
 - Also PO can trigger reminders (resend notification)
 - Ability to send to additional recipients
 - Template language with additional editable fields (customizable)
 - Will include link to upload materials
- **Discussion:** Utility of eNotifications for Closeout? Approach.
 - A final Closeout notification to mark retention period? "All closeout materials have to be submitted and accepted" type message
 - Who to send to? Notice of Award (NoA) email address? SOs and PIs?
 - Specific Closeout address added to Institution Profile (IPF)?
 - Recommendation: Add specific closeout email address to IPF. Prepopulate Closeout Address field in IPF with NoA address with option to edit (change) Closeout address
 - Status information on closeout will be added to the Details Status Information screen
- **Discussion:** Looking ahead to RPPR delegation to submit Final Progress Reports/Final RPPRs and FRAM requests?
 - Should submit ability be delegated to PIs?
 - SNAP awards only or all awards?
 - Should it be a separate delegation or rolled into existing RPPR delegation?
- Good to give SOs the option, or ability to delegate RPPR to PIs, then let them decide if PIs should have responsibility
- Feedback Requested on these ideas. Send to [Vickie Bishton](#) or [Tony Corio](#)

Presenters: Vickie Bishton and Tony Corio

3. eSubmission Update

- ASSIST support for single project applications
 - Currently in development
 - Rollout will be by program (activity code) but not linked to specific due dates
 - R01 and R03 programs targeted for late January 2015; firm plans will be communicated in December.
 - Examining how validations are structured/organized/coded; adding flexibility
 - New validations have been posted for S2S developers
- Enhancements/Fixes for October
 - Issue concerning submissions of applications where a previous application was withdrawn, will be addressed in October release

- Explanatory text added to the Total Direct Costs Less Consortium table in the application image
- New Additional Indirect Cost budget Form
 - At Grants.gov for development/testing
 - New optional form to be added to Overall components of multi-project FOAs
 - Technically (coding and database) scheduled to be supported with January 2015 release
 - Roll out for customer use is to be determined and will be communicated when details are available
- New inclusion form, as a result of combining 2 existing inclusion data forms
 - Want one form for planned data and actual data
- Timing under discussion; looking at changes that can be combined New review request form – IC request, study section requests
 - This form will require OMB clearance, so will be part of the FORMSD packages
- **Discussion:** How do you use user guides? ASSIST user guide approach for single vs multi project applications.
 - ASSIST has been intuitive enough, there has not been much need to access user guides.
 - Online Help is easily accessed via question marks
 - When integrating SPA content into ASSIST, simply point out differences between multi-project and single project
 - Keep one online help system

Presenter: Jessie Floura

4. Federation Login

- Status of Phase 1/Phase 2
 - Phase 1 pilot to start in October
 - Will support limited roles:

PostDoc	Scientist	Trainee
Graduate Student	Project Personnel	Under-Graduate
 - Pilot using these roles because all they have access to is personal information
 - What if a person's role is not on the list? Account will get mapped, but won't have any functionality (navigation bar will be blank) - eRA team working to resolve this issue for October release so that user will have same functionality available for the roles identified above, i.e., PostDoc, Scientist, etc.
 - Federated Login is two-step process
 - Institution must register with [InCommon](#)
 - Institution must then be sponsored by NIH – CIT then does configuration
 - 72 institutions currently registered and sponsored by NIH
 - Process:
 - Participants will come to eRA Commons login page, select their institution from a drop down menu
 - Still will flip to institution specific login page
 - They map institution credentials to eRA Commons Id/password
 - They access eRA Commons
 - Mapping process presents a couple of session confirmation screens
 - Once account is mapped, it cannot be unmapped without the assistance of the help desk – Important to map correct accounts
 - A change of email does not un-map an account
 - For affiliated institutions, please test accounts in UAT, make sure process works
 - **Discussion:** How to handle PIs with multiple institutional affiliations? Questions regarding Federated login for administrators.
 - This is a challenge, if a PI is at 2 institutions, which account to use? Will they see information from both institutions? Should they?
 - Should be OK, they see only their stuff
 - If this is unacceptable to one of the institutions, the helpdesk will need to un-affiliate the account to secure information
 - It is possible to have the 1 to Many scenario, one eRA Commons account to many institution accounts

- Administrative accounts present an even more significant challenge
 - Ability to submit reports, legal responsibility
 - Needs deeper discussion
 - Steering committee/Working group?
 - Legal input/advice
- Phase II – PI access
 - If ok with PI using either credentials, then looking to April 2015
- Action Item (Scarlett) Provide information on how to ‘play’ with federated login in the user acceptance test environment.
- Action Item (Scarlett) Provide list of currently registered and sponsored by NIH.
- Action Item (Teresa) Work internally on options to provide federated login capabilities for administrative roles (SO, AO, AA, etc.).

Presenter: Teresa Reed

5. Funding Opportunity Announcements. How do you use them at your organization? What advice do you give your PIs?

Facilitator: Sheri Cummins

- Confusion over a new fellowship requirement for Additional Educational Information as part of “Other Attachment” raised concerns over how we communicate FOA-specific application requirements.
 - Instructions were in the FOA, Section IV
 - Links to clarification notice in Related Notices section of FOA
 - Significant number of applications missed the requirement, did not read carefully the FOA
- How can we improve or address this issue?
- Part of the issue is the multiple places to get instructions
 - Application Guide & Supplemental Instructions
 - FOA
 - Guide Notices
- We have communicated the need/requirement to read all instructions
 - Presentations
 - Workshops
 - FOA text
 - Web splash screen when click Apply for Grant Electronically button
 - Instruction page when downloading the package in Grants.gov
 - Web pages
- FOA instructions supercede Application Guide instructions contact Grants Info
 - If instructions do not work with application formats in
- Ultimately responsibility rests with applicant
- Suggestion: Instructions are text heavy, easy to gloss over – consider formatting options that help set critical information apart from other text (e.g., tables)
- Tables are problematic as we move to more responsive display design (information adjusts to different screen sizes), but we’ll look into format options for special instructions

6. General Discussion: We have accomplished a lot on our quest to a fully electronic grants lifecycle. What are your thoughts on what other improvements might help create efficiencies so that as we continue to modernize our systems we can keep opportunities in mind?

Facilitator: Sheri Cummins

- Improving role assignments
 - No changes planned as of yet
 - With Federated Login, this will need to be revisited
- JIT Enhancements: More PRAM like?
 - Just-in-Time Additional Materials (JAM?)
 - Like PRAM with eNotifications and document upload link
 - Response from CWG very positive
- Others?

- Question: Does CWG need a facilitated “JAD like” meeting to improve CWG meeting effectiveness?
 - Answer: Nope, our format is still working
 - Having the agenda provided ahead time is helpful
 - It can be shared with colleagues and feedback provided
- Ideas on how to make ASSIST better?
 - Looking to continue to improve, make changes
 - ASSIST support for multi and single project applications - want the systems to be similar and simple