

Grants.gov Quick Guidelines

- Individual users **do not** have to register to use Grants.gov. Princeton is already a registered user.
- Grants.gov now uses Adobe forms. Pure Edge forms (with ICS Viewer) are no longer used. To test to see if your machine has a compatible version of Adobe Reader installed, check the [test package](#) on Grants.gov site.
- Log onto grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov/>), from Internet Explorer (it will not function properly from Mozilla/Firefox) and download the application package by its solicitation number and **save** it to your computer. If it is not saved, you will not be able to manipulate the data input. The naming convention that ORPA requires is **PI Name_Sponsoring Agency_Deadline Date**. This is used in the Application Filing Name field on the Grants.gov cover page.
- All the required fields for Grants.gov have an asterisk next to them. Grants.gov will not accept a proposal for submission if all of these fields are completed.
- **It is essential that you fill out and save the SF424 R & R, or Application Cover Sheet, before you do anything else.** If this form is not entirely completed and saved, the electronic budget forms will not allow you to enter multiple year budgets. Grants.gov will only give you one year of budget forms to be completed as the system is not aware of the project duration.
- Please review the [sample SF 424 R & R form](#) via this link. This will provide you with the correct information to be entered in the appropriate fields on the form according to University guidelines.
- As you prepare your submission, refer to the Grants.gov Application guide. It is very helpful and easy to follow: http://www.grants.gov/resources/doc/UserGuide_Applicant.doc . Ignore the first section about registering to use Grants.gov. Princeton University is already registered. Scroll down to the section entitled, "For Applicants: Completing Application Packages"
- Complete the rest of the forms in application package (see http://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant_help.jsp for specific instructions). ORPA will complete any representation and certification forms that are included in the proposal package. Please refer to the Notice of Opportunity for the proposal for any specific proposal preparation requirements as each funding opportunity can have different preparation requirements.
- Please save your work after you complete each form. To Save each form, close the form, then click "Save" on the main page. Pay close attention to the location where the document is being saved on your computer.
- Please note that there are buttons on the top of each document that you open. Many are multiple page documents. To proceed to the next page of the document, you must click the "Next" button at the top of the form.
- When working on budgets, it is easy to add additional years. **DO NOT** click the "NEXT PERIOD" button on the budget pages if you are in the LAST budget year. Just ignore it. If you do go to the "Next Budget Period" and input data into the required fields you will activate that year and may get an error report when it is time to submit the proposal.
- If there is a subaward included as a part of your budget, open the Subaward Budget Attachment

form. Send this as an email attachment to your subawardee to have them complete the form and send back to you for input into your proposal. The SF424 must be completed BEFORE you send it to your subawardee, or the form will not be populated with the correct number of budget periods, etc.

- All uploaded documents MUST be in PDF format. Please pay attention to whether the program announcement dictates naming conventions for these uploaded file names. Beware of special characters; they may not be accepted by Grants.gov. Do not make your titles too long.
- Drag and drop each completed and final form in the proposal from the left column in Grants.gov to the right column. This will hopefully prevent any confusion about form versions. You can always move the form in question back if necessary.
- When the proposal is completed, click the “Check Package for Errors” button to insure that all forms are completed correctly. Make any corrections that are required.
- When the proposal is final and considered ready to submit, drag and drop the completed proposal in your ORPA grant administrator’s file in the Drop Box which can be accessed by using your computer’s Windows Start menu. Click on the Run command, then type in files/shares/ORPA_Drop_Box **Do not** email the Adobe form of the proposal to your Contract Administrator. This will prevent your email system from crashing due to excessive content. **Do** send an email to your administrator alerting them that there is a proposal waiting to be picked up from the ORPA Drop Box.
- **Remember that Grants.gov is a very unforgiving system.** A proposal submitted to Grants.gov prior to the Agency deadline does not insure that it will be considered submitted before the deadline. The proposal must make it through both the Grants.gov portal successfully and ultimately be accepted by the funding agency’s portal to be considered successfully submitted. System problems at Grants.gov (i.e. increased traffic volume) are not forgiven (as we have grown accustomed to with other electronic systems like NSF) and the proposal can be rejected for missing the deadline. ORPA requires receipt of the completed proposal at least five business days in advance of the deadline in order to insure the proposal is successfully submitted.
- After the Grants.gov proposal is submitted, ORPA receives up to 4 emails that verify the proposal status as it travels from the Grants.gov portal through to the funding agency’s portal. These emails can take up to two business days to receive. Each proposal is assigned two tracking numbers in this process. There is a Grants.gov tracking number and a funding agency tracking number. Once a proposal is assigned a funding agency tracking number, you can rest assured that the proposal has reached its destination. ORPA will share this information with the PI and the Grants Manager to keep all aware of the proposal status as it moves through the Grants.gov system.
- These tracking numbers, along with the dates and times proposals were submitted and accepted will be cataloged in an excel spreadsheet that can be found in the ORPA Drop Box for your reference. This spreadsheet will be updated as the information is received at ORPA. Please feel free to check the proposal's routing status by referring to this spreadsheet.

NIH/Grants.gov Additional Proposal Information

- If submitting an NIH proposal, individual users must register with the NIH eRA Commons. The PI should consult with his/her Department Administrator well before the proposal submission due date. The Department Administrator will register the PI. Registration only needs to be done once unless the PI has previously registered and left the account inactive. In that case, s/he may need to be re-registered. eRA passwords expire every three months.
- The “Application Filing Name” on the main grants.gov page is to be used internally only. It is not a field that NIH uses. ORPA requires that the naming convention be **PI Name_Sponsoring Agency_Deadline Date**.
- Some fields are easy to miss and although not required by all agencies are important to include for NIH. These are:
 - Be sure to include the lead PI’s NIH eRA Commons user name in the “Credential” field on the Senior/Key personnel page for the PI. It is needed for all with PI status on the proposal.
 - Be sure to include the degree for the PI on the 398 Cover Page Supplement, Section 1.
 - On Section H of the budget page, be sure to include the Cognizant Federal Agency information which can be found on the ORPA Rate Sheet.
- NIH proposal submissions must be submitted five business days in advance to comply with Princeton policy.
- Once submitted through Grants.gov and routed to eRA Commons, an email is sent from eRA Commons to the PI and to ORPA delineating whether the proposal has any errors or warnings. Log on to eRA Commons (<https://commons.era.nih.gov/commons/>) to view the status of the submitted proposal. Errors must be corrected. Warnings can be corrected at the PI’s discretion, but will not stop a proposal from moving forward through the system. Uncorrected errors will prevent the proposal from being reviewed.
- If any errors/warnings are corrected, the entire proposal must be resubmitted through Grants.gov. The re-submission requires that the Changed/Corrected box be checked on the SF424 (R & R) form (Item 1) and the Federal Identifier must be included (Item 4). The Federal Identifier is the Grants.gov tracking number for new submissions or the NIH award number for all others. Currently the NIH allows 5 weekdays to correct any errors/warnings, but this time limit will shorten as the system comes on-line.
- When a proposal has no errors, an email is sent to the PI and to ORPA stating the assembled proposal is ready for viewing. Log on to eRA Commons (<https://commons.era.nih.gov/commons/>) to view the assembled application. Please remember to check the entire proposal including all attachments. If the application is acceptable, no further action is necessary. After two full days (Monday-Friday, **includes holidays**), if not explicitly rejected by ORPA, the application will automatically move forward to the Division of Receipt and Referral for processing. For example, if you submit your application on Monday then you have all day Tuesday and Wednesday to view the application. The application will move forward at 12:01 a.m. ET on Thursday morning.

- Only ORPA has the ability to “reject” the application within the two weekdays viewing window:
 - to address warnings or
 - if the assembled application in eRA Commons does not correctly reflect the submitted application package due to system issues with eRA Commons or Grants.gov (i.e. some part of the application was lost during the submission process or did not transfer correctly).