

NIH Career Development Award Proposals (K-series) Transition to Grants.gov – a summary of changes

Grants.gov for CDA Proposals

All K-series applications (except K12) are now submitted via Grants.gov.

Besides being submitted online, what has changed for the K applications and how can administrators prepare?

There are subtle changes in the application packages. One example is a question about citizenship. The forms are also presented in a different order than the old paper applications and in a different order than the SF424 we use for R-series grants. Most of the changes are not drastic. The largest changes are in the way the budget is presented, the way in which reference letters are submitted and the inclusion of a Research Support section on the biosketch for the candidate (PI).

The following points are directly from Notice [NOT-OD-09-029](#):

1. Submission of Budget Information: Historically “K” applications have required limited budget information to be included with the application at the time of submission. The transition to electronic submission changes that process. Applicants will be required to include the SF424(R&R) Detailed Budget Component with the initial application submission. However, the actual data requested in the component will be limited to the Senior/Key Person costs for only the candidate (base salary, person months, requested salary and fringe benefits); and then in F.1 Other Direct Costs/Materials and Supplies, the total amount requested for Research Development Support costs will be entered. As with all applications using this budget component, a budget justification is required. For “K” applications, this justification should be used to provide a detailed description for the specific Research Development Support costs such as equipment, supplies and additional personnel that will be used to help achieve the career development and research objectives of the award. Facilities & Administrative costs for Ks continue to be provided at a rate of 8% of modified total direct costs. **Applicants should review the supplemental “K” instructions found in Part I.7.4 of the [SF424\(R&R\) Application Guide for Adobe Applications](#).**

2. Reference Letters: Reference letters required for mentored “K” programs must be submitted directly by the referee through the eRA Commons and not as part of the electronic application that goes through Grants.gov. Reference letters are still an integral part of the application and they will be joined with the electronic application within the eRA system once an application completes the submission process. Applications that are missing the required letters may be delayed in the review process or not accepted at all. Information about these

critical letters is in each applicable FOA, and complete instructions for candidates and referees are found in Part I, Section 7.3 of the of the [SF424\(R&R\) Application Guide for Adobe Applications](#).

3. Changes to Candidate's Biosketch: The candidate's biosketch has been revised to include the same "Research Support" section used in the biosketch for all researchers. Candidates are required to include descriptions of ongoing and completed research projects that are relevant to the research proposed in the application. In addition, when a candidate submits an application from an organization at which he/she is projected to hold a position, position titles and employment information from both the current and the projected positions must be included.

Administrators are encouraged to look at the new application package and the revised [SF424\(R&R\) Application Guide for Adobe Applications](#) (beginning at Part I, Section 7) ahead of time. Anxiety about the new forms will likely be completely alleviated once the application package and instructions have been reviewed.

More Information about Reference Letters:

The process for reference letters (# 2 above) is very simple. **Administrators should complete the form** at: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/424/Referee_Instructions_Mentored_Career_Award_s.doc and send it directly to the referees or send it to the candidate so he or she can send to the referees.

Administrators should view the NIH Commons site where reference letters are uploaded <https://commons.era.nih.gov/commons/reference/submitRefereeInformation.jsp> and read the guidance in Part I, Section 7.3 of the of the [SF424\(R&R\) Application Guide for Adobe Applications](#) so they have a complete understanding of what referees will need to do to submit the letters. Referees (those submitting letters of reference) do not need to have an eRA Commons User Names, but they will need the information from the form referenced above (including the *Candidate's* Commons User Name) in order to upload their documents.

Keep in mind that because the K-series applications are now electronic through Grants.gov, hard-copy applications must be routed to URA for review 4.5 business days before the due date at the latest, and final ready-to-submit electronic applications are due in URA the day before the electronic deadline, by Noon. Applications received after URA's electronic submission deadline will be placed at the end of the submission queue at URA with no guarantee that it will be submitted prior to the deadline, or if submitted that it will pass through the [Grants.gov](#) and the agency validation process error-free. Our recent experience has shown that the new Adobe forms have a much larger file size and thus take longer to submit. **Please plan ahead!**

