15 Top Errors: All errors MUST be corrected for successful on-time submission.

1. The *<Attachment Name>* attachment is not in **PDF format**, or the filename is invalid. All attachments must be provided to the agency in PDF format, filenames must be included with no special characters (including brackets), and a .pdf extension must be used. Filenames will be accepted if they include spaces, hyphens, or underlines. (Use no password protection or security)

2. Senior/Key Person *<Person Name>*, listed on the 424 RR Detailed Budget Page for budget year *<e.g., 1, 2>*, must include effort of a value **greater than zero** in calendar months, academic months, or summer months. Note: use either calendar months or a combination of academic and summer months. For information about calculating person months, see http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/policy/person_months_faqs.htm.

3. The eRA Commons Username must be submitted for the PD/PI in the PD/PI Credential field on the Senior/Key Person page.

4. The organization name for Key Person *<Person Name>* must be provided on the Senior/Key Person page.

5. Federal Identifier format (SF 424 RR Cover page) is not valid. Please include only the IC and serial number of the prior grant number (e.g., CA123456).

6. Senior/Key Person *<Person Name>*, listed on the 424 RR Detailed Budget Page for budget year *<e.g., 1, 2>*, must include effort of a value **greater than zero** in calendar months, academic months, or summer months. Note: use either calendar months or a combination of academic and summer months. For information about calculating person months, see http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/policy/person_months_faqs.htm.

7. The eRA Commons account indicated for the PD/PI in the Credential field on the Senior/Key Person page is not affiliated with the applicant organization. Check with your eRA Commons Account Administrator to make sure you have been affiliated with the applicant organization. See http://era.nih.gov/ElectronicReceipt/faq_prepare.htm#2

8. Either Exemption Number or Assurance Number must be provided if Human Subjects is "Yes" (Other Project Information, item 1).

9. The eRA Commons Username *<Username>*, specified on the Senior/Key Person page for PD/PI *<Person Name>*, is not a recognized eRA Commons account.

10. When Vertebrate Animals is "Yes", you must provide one of the following: (1) animal welfare assurance number + IACUC approval date, (2) animal welfare assurance number + an indication that IACUC approval is pending OR (3) the word 'None' (Other Project Information, item 2)

11. PD/PI *<Person Name>*, listed on the 424 RR Detailed Budget Page for budget year *<e.g., 1, 2>*, must include effort of a value greater than zero in calendar months, academic months, or summer months. Note: use either calendar months or a combination of academic and summer months. For information about calculating person months, see http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/policy/person_months_faqs.htm.

12. For Phase II SBIR/STTR submissions, the Federal Identifier must be included. Please include the IC and serial number of the prior grant number in the Federal Identifier field on the SF 424 RR Cover page (e.g., CA123456).

13. For resubmissions (amended applications) and renewals (competing continuations), the Federal Identifier must be included. Please include only the IC and serial number of the prior grant number in the Federal Identifier field on the SF 424 RR Cover page (e.g., CA123456).

14. The Biosketch for Senior/Key Person *<Person Name>* on the Senior/Key Person page is longer than four pages.

15. The Multiple PI Leadership Plan attachment on the PHS 398 Research Plan must be included if multiple PD/PIs have been included on the Senior/Key Person page.

5 Top Warnings:

(Note: Warnings do not require corrections, and will not prevent the application from getting through for a successful on-time submission, but you should be aware of them to avoid getting the same warning on any subsequent submissions….)

1.   The Research Plan is limited to 15 pages. This may span 18 pages due to page breaks. If the total space occupied by text does not exceed 15 pages then no action is needed. **(This applies to Phase I applications; 25 pages for Phase II and Fast Track)**

2.   No degrees have been submitted for the PD/PI. If you want the degrees to be displayed on the face page of the application image, you should include them on the PHS 398 Cover Page Supplement.

3.   The role of 'Co-PD/PI', indicated for Senior/Key Person *<Person Name>* on the Senior/Key Person page, is not used by NIH. For multiple Principal Investigators, use the PD/PI role. Otherwise, select another role.

4.   The human subject assurance number entered in Other Project Information, item 1a does not match what is in the eRA Commons profile for your organization. There are rare cases where this is permissible. Please make sure that the correct number is entered on the Other Project Information page. If not, correct and resubmit.

5.   The PD/PI degree: *<Degree Name>*, listed on the PHS 398 Cover Page, is not one of the degrees listed for the eRA Commons account: *<List of Degrees on Commons Account>*. The application image will display the degrees as submitted. If the degrees listed in the eRA Commons are not current, please update them in the eRA Commons. Instructions on updating profile information are available at https://commons.era.nih.gov/commons-help/216.htm.

Avoiding Common Errors

Invalid or Missing eRA Commons Username
Missing Organization Name for Senior/Key Person
PDF Issues
Senior/Key Person Effort on SF424 R&R Budget Form Must be More Than Zero
Federal Identifier Format

How To Submit A Corrected Application

Avoiding Common Warnings*

Role of Co-PD/PI not used by NIH
No degrees submitted for PD/PI

* Remember that warnings may be fixed at the applicant's discretion but do not require action for the grant application to move on.

III. Cover Letter: A Valuable Tool

Applicants are encouraged to include a cover letter with the application. The cover letter is only for internal use and will not be shared with peer reviewers. CSR has the final say, but this does provide you an opportunity to target your application to IC(s) and a SRG.

The letter should contain any of the following information that applies to the application:

1.   Application title.

2.   Funding Opportunity (PA or RFA) title of the NIH initiative.

3.   Request of an assignment (referral) to a particular awarding component(s) or Scientific Review Group (SRG). The PHS makes the final determination.

4.   List of individuals (e.g., competitors) who should not review your application and why.

5.   Disciplines involved, if multidisciplinary.

6.   For late applications (see Late Application policy in Section 2.14) include an explanation of the delay as part of the cover letter attachment.

7.   When submitting a Changed/Corrected Application after the submission date, a cover letter is required explaining the reason for the Changed/Corrected Application. If you already submitted a cover letter with a previous submission and are now submitting a Changed/Corrected Application, you must include all previous cover letter text in the revised cover letter attachment. The system does not retain any previously submitted cover letters until after an application is verified; therefore, you must repeat all information previously submitted in the cover letter as well as any additional information.

8.   Explanation of any subaward budget components that are not active for all periods of the proposed grant.

Suggested Cover Letter Format

The Division of Receipt and Referral (DRR), Center for Scientific Review (CSR) is responsible for assigning applications to ICs and to scientific review groups (SRGs). DRR will be utilizing knowledge management approaches as an adjunct to the work of referral experts as part of an overall plan to shorten the time from submission to review. Analysis has shown that requests made by investigators are a valuable source of information in this process. In order to facilitate the use of these requests in conjunction with knowledge management analysis of the content of the application, applicants are requested to use the following format when assignment requests are contained in a cover letter.

- List one request per line.

- Place institute/center (IC) and SRG review requests (if both are made) on separate lines.

- Place positive and negative requests (if both are made) on separate lines.

- Include name of IC or SRG, followed by a dash and the acronym. Do not use parentheses.

- Provide explanations for each request in a separate paragraph.

Examples:

Please assign this application to the following:

Institutes/Centers

National Cancer Institute - NCI

National Institute for Dental and Craniofacial Research – NIDCR

Scientific Review Groups

Molecular Oncogenesis Study Section – MONC

Cancer Etiology Study Section – CE

Please do not assign this application to the following:

Scientific Review Groups

Cancer Genetics Study Section – CG