NIH Peer Review System

- Cornerstone of the NIH Extramural Mission
- Standard of Excellence Worldwide
- Collaboration between NIH Extramural Staff and Scientific Community
Enhancing NIH Peer Review

- Facilitate changing nature of science
- Identify and encourage new and early stage investigators
- Ease burden on research enterprise
- Streamline time to award
- Fund the best science, by the best scientists, with the least amount of administrative burden
Enhancing Peer Review
Overview and Timeline

January 2009
- Phase out of A2 applications
- Identification of Early Stage Investigator (ESI) applications

May/June 2009 Reviews
- Enhanced review criteria
- New scoring system
- Criterion scoring
- Structured critiques
- Clustering of New Inv. Applications
- Score order review

January 25, 2010 Submissions
- Restructured Applications & Instructions
- Shorter Page Limits

NOT-OD-08-121
NOT-OD-09-003
NOT-OD-09-024
NOT-OD-09-025
NOT-OD-09-149
Major Changes to Applications

Major changes for due dates on or after January 25, 2010

– Restructured application forms

– New instructions including shorter page limits

For ALL competing applications: New, Renewal, Resubmission, and Revision
Timeline for Changes

Step 1:
Read about the application changes now

Begin working on Research Strategy, but wait to download the forms when they become available in December

Step 2:
Applicants MUST return to the reissued Parent Announcements or updated FOAs & download new forms and instructions

Choose the correct Electronic and Paper forms:
- SF 424 (R&R): ADOBE_FORMS_B
- PHS 398: Revision date “June 2009”

Step 3:
Use new forms for applications due on or after January 25, 2010
Restructured Application Forms
Goals of Restructured Applications

- Align the structure and content of the forms with review criteria
  - To focus the applicants and reviewers on the same elements
  - To help ensure a more efficient and transparent review process
Overview of the Changes

- Application forms will be revised in three sections:
  - Research Plan
  - Biographical Sketch
  - Resource and Facilities
New Research Plan Components

Introduction
Specific Aims

**Background and Significance**

**Preliminary Studies/Progress Report**

**Research Design and Methods**

Inclusion Enrollment Report
Progress Report Publication List

Human Subjects Sections….
  - protections, women/minorities, enrollment, children

Other Research Plan Sections….
  - animals, select agents, MPI, consortium, support, resource sharing

Appendix
# New Research Strategy Section

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Application</th>
<th>New Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Background and Significance</strong></td>
<td><strong>Research Strategy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Design and Methods</strong></td>
<td>b. Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preliminary Studies/Progress Report</strong></td>
<td>c. Approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Preliminary Studies for New Applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Progress Report for Renewal/Revision</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
New Research Strategy Preparation

- A single attachment for the Research Strategy (previously 3 files) increases applicant control over the look and feel of the application.
  - Simpler preparation for the applicant
  - Easier reading for reviewers
  - Electronic validation of page limits for Research Strategy
Revisions to Biographical Sketch

- Personal Statement added:
  - Briefly describe why your experience and qualifications make you particularly well-suited for your role in the project

- Publications revised:
  - Limit the list of publications or manuscripts to no more than 15
  - Make selections based on recency, importance to the field, and/or relevance to the application
Revisions to Address Environment

- **Instructions added to Resources:**
  - Provide a description of how the scientific environment will contribute to the probability of success of the project
  - For ESIs describe the institutional investment in the success of the investigator

- **Instructions added to Research Plan**
  - In Select Agents Research section, describe the biocontainment resources available at all performance sites
New Instructions Including Shorter Page Limits
Goals of Shortened Page Limits

- Reduce the administrative burden
- Focus on the essentials of the science
- Avoid information overload
## Page Limit Revisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Page Limit (Section 2-5 of the Research Plan)</th>
<th>New Page Limit (Research Strategy)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;25</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;25</td>
<td>Follow FOA Instructions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Follow FOA page limit requirements if different from the application instructions.
## Table of Page Limits (Part I)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section of Application with Page Limits</th>
<th>Page Limits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction to Revision Application</strong>&lt;br&gt;For all Activity Codes</td>
<td>1 page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction to Resubmission Application</strong>&lt;br&gt;For all Activity Codes, EXCEPT Training (T, D), K12, and R25</td>
<td>1 page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction to Resubmission Application</strong>&lt;br&gt;For institutional Training (T), International Training (D43, D71), Institutional Career Awards (K12), and Research Education Applications (R25)</td>
<td>3 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction to Revision or Resubmission Applications</strong>&lt;br&gt;For each project and core of multi-component applications</td>
<td>1 page</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table of Page Limits (Part II)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section of Application with Page Limits</th>
<th>Page Limits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specific Aims</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For all Activity Codes that use an application form with the Specific Aims</td>
<td>1 page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>section.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Strategy</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Activity Codes R03, R13/U13, R21, R36, R41, R43, Fellowships (F), SC2,</td>
<td>6 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Strategy</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Activity Codes R01, single project U01, R10, R15, R18, U18, R21/R33,</td>
<td>12 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R24, R33, R34, U34, R42, R44, DP3, G08, G11, G13, UH2, UH3, SC1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Strategy</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For each project and core of multi-component applications, such as Program</td>
<td>Generally 6 or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project/Center (P)</td>
<td>12 pages**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Each project or core will follow the page limit of the equivalent activity code.**
# Table of Page Limits (Part III)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section of Application with Page Limits</th>
<th>Page Limits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Strategy</strong>&lt;br&gt;For all other Activity Codes</td>
<td>Follow FOA instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Combined: Research Strategy and first four items of Candidate Information</strong>&lt;br&gt;For Individual Career Development Award (K) Applications</td>
<td>12 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Items 2-5 of Research Training Program Plan</strong>&lt;br&gt;For Institutional Career Development and Research Training Applications, including K12, T, D43, and D71</td>
<td>25 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Education Program Plan</strong>&lt;br&gt;For Research Education Grant Applications (R25)</td>
<td>25 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Biographical Sketch</strong>&lt;br&gt;For all Activity Codes except DP1 and DP2</td>
<td>4 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Biographical Sketch</strong>&lt;br&gt;For DP1 and DP2</td>
<td>2 pages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What Does the Applicant Need to Do?
Steps for Success – Part 1

- Read about the upcoming requirement changes now so that you can begin writing your Research Strategy

- Information available on the Enhancing Peer Review website:
  - Policy Announcement: NOT-OD-09-149
  - New FAQs
  - Training & Communications Resources

http://enhancing-peer-review.nih.gov/
Steps for Success – Part 2

- In December, go back to the updated FOA or reissued Parent Announcement

- For both electronic and paper, choose the **correct** application package and instructions to download:
  - SF 424 (R&R): ADOBE_FORMS_B
  - PHS 398: Revision date “June 2009”

Applications submitted using incorrect forms will be delayed and may not be reviewed!
Steps for Success – Part 3

- Read the new application instructions carefully

- For due dates on or after January 25, 2010, submit your electronic and paper applications using the new application forms
For additional information:

Enhancing Peer Review at NIH Web Site

http://enhancing-peer-review.nih.gov
Application Support

- **NIH Grants Information Help Desk**: For questions about the content of new forms and instructions.
  - E-mail: grantsinfo@od.nih.gov or
  - Phone: 301-435-0714

- **Grants.gov Contact Center**: For questions on form functionality or submission to Grants.gov.
  - E-mail: support@grants.gov
  - Phone: 1-800-518-4726

- **NIH eRA Help Desk**: For post-submission questions or technical issues that threaten NIH’s timely receipt of your application.
  - Web support: http://ithelpdesk.nih.gov/eRA/
  - Phone: 1-866-504-9552 or 301-402-7469