Special Registration Instructions for Unaffiliated/Independent Applicants

Individual applicants not affiliated with an organization or who want to submit a grant application independently must complete all the required registrations as though they are an organization. There is NO cost associated with ANY of these registrations.

When all is said and done, you will have multiple accounts (sometimes more than one for the same system) and serve many roles.

In addition to our standard registration guidance, here are some tips to help you successfully navigate the registration process.

You must obtain your unique identifier prior to starting any other registration.

- DUNS number issued by Dun & Bradstreet prior to April 4, 2022
- Unique entity identifier (UEI) issued by the System for Award Management (SAM) on/after April 4, 2022

Dun & Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS)

**Purpose:** Unique, nine-digit number issued by Dun & Bradstreet, used by the federal government to officially identify your organization. The federal government will phase out the use of DUNS numbers and move to a unique entity identifier (UEI) created in SAM.gov as the official identifier by April 4, 2022.

**What you need to know:**

- Once on the Dun & Bradstreet site, follow the instructions for “doing business with the government”.
- Use the guidance provided for Sole Proprietorships
  - Select “Owner” as your “Title at this Business”
  - Sole Proprietorships must use the owner’s full legal name (e.g., enter John H Smith Junior as “Smith Jr, John H.”)

System for Award Management (SAM)

**Purpose:** Required to do business with the U. S. government. Your organization (referred to as an “entity”) must have a valid and active SAM registration at time of application and award. SAM confirms supplied information with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

**What you need to know:**

- Effective April 4, 2022, the federal government will use a 12-character unique entity identifier (UEI) created in SAM.gov as the official entity identifier (replacing DUNS). During a transition period, entities will have both DUNS and UEI identifiers.
  - Although a DUNS is required to register prior to April 4, UEIs are assigned for all new registrations.
  - As of January 25, 2022, due dates, NIH requires the UEI identifier on all grant applications (FORMS-G).
- The government uses lots of identifiers. As part of the SAM registration process, you will be assigned a Commercial & Government Entity Code (CAGE) code. It is simply a 5-character ID used to identify vendors. You will see the CAGE code mentioned in documentation, but we will not request it as part of your application so don’t worry too much about it.
- You will be asked to identify an Entity Administrator – you can provide your own information.

Grants.gov

**Purpose:** To register your organization and the individuals authorized to do business on behalf of your organization to submit grant applications to Federal agencies.

**What you need to know:**

- Grants.gov is the federal-wide portal used to find and apply for federal grant funding. All NIH competing grant applications must be submitted through Grants.gov.
- You must have registered in DUNS (until April 4, 2022) and SAM prior to starting your Grants.gov registration.
eRA Commons

**Purpose:** To register your organization and key individuals in NIH’s system used to exchange information between applicants, recipients, and NIH staff.

**What you need to know:**

- You must obtain your organization identifier (DUNS number prior to April 4; SAM-issued UEI on/after April 4) before you can [Register in eRA Commons](#).
- Go to the registration form, accessed by clicking the “Register Organization” link on the eRA Commons home screen.

- **Step 1** is to select the purpose of your request. Select the checkbox for **NIH Grants/Contracts**. You then need to check the second checkbox that appears, acknowledging the legal implications of applications. Click **Next** to go to Step 2.

- **Step 2:** Verify Identification by selecting either the DUNS number or the Unique Entity Identifier radio button. This depends on which registration you completed, either with Duns & Bradstreet or System for Award Management (SAM). We recommend the Unique Entity Identifier from SAM as DUNS is being retired. Once your identity is verified, click the **Next** button.

- **Step 3:** Review the details of your contact information as provided in your institution registration with either DUNS or SAM. To move on to Step 4, add your email address to the **Closeout Email** field and the **Notice of Award (NoA) Email** field. Once completed, click **Next** to move to Step 4.

- **Step 4:** Create your signing official (SO) account. Complete the required fields for your SO account and click **Next**.
• Step 5: Review and Submit your registration request. Review all the information provided and click Submit. A series of emails will follow the submission of your request to guide you through the final steps of registering with eRA Commons.

• Once your registration is complete and your SO account is created, you can create a separate Principal Investigator account for yourself with the PI role. You will need both your SO and your PI accounts to complete the application process. The specific roles on each account indicate the actions you can take in eRA Commons. The SO account allows you to sign legal documents and administer your application/grant while your PI account is included in your application and identifies you as having scientific oversight for the proposed application. Both the SO and the PI can view review outcome information in eRA Commons.