

Getting Started: Preparing Your Single-project Application Using ASSIST

Step-by-Step



Before you begin: Know where to go for help

- The eRA Service Desk is available to help you if you have any problems using ASSIST
 - <https://grants.nih.gov/support/index.html>



Step 1: Find a Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)

- Find a FOA of interest in the NIH Guide for Grants & Contracts and record the FOA number (e.g., PA-16-160)
 - <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/index.html>
- The 'Apply Online Using ASSIST' button just above the FOA Table of Contents takes you to ASSIST



Step 2: Make a submission plan

- Decide who will be responsible for data entry in ASSIST and gather their eRA Commons usernames



Step 3: Login to ASSIST & Initiate Your Application

- Login to ASSIST at <https://public.era.nih.gov/assist> using your eRA Commons username and password
- Use the **Initiate Application** feature and your FOA number to get started on your application
 - Or, access applications already in progress using the **Search** feature



Step 4: Provide application access to your team

- Automatic Edit access is given to:
 - All SOs (Signing Official) and AOs (Administrative Officials) at the applicant organization
 - The PD/PIs designated on the application (once eRA Commons username is entered in Credential field)
 - The user that initiated the application
- Access can be given (or revoked) to additional users using the **Manage Access** action



Step 5: Enter Application Data

- Use the tabs across the top of the screen to move between forms
- Complete the R&R Cover tab first
- Multiple users can simultaneously work on your application, but only one user at a time can Edit an individual form
- Use the **Validate Application** action to check your entered data against NIH business rules



Step 6: Finalize your application and prepare for submission

- Use the **Preview Application** action to generate a draft application image in the agency format
- Check the application image for any assembly issues
- Use the **Update Submission Status** action to change your application from **Work In Progress** status to **Ready for Submission** status
 - If additional edits are needed, the application must be returned to **Work In Progress** status



Step 7: Submit your application

- Use the **Submit** button on the Summary tab to submit to the agency through Grants.gov
 - Only active for users logged into ASSIST with an eRA Commons account with the SO role
- Provide your valid **Grants.gov Authorized Organizational Representative** username and password when prompted



Step 8: Track your application status and view your assembled application image

- Use the **View Submission Status Details** link to track your application status
 - If your application successfully processed through to eRA Commons, the Agency Tracking # (e.g., AN1234567) will be hyperlinked to the eRA Commons detailed status screen
 - Carefully check your assembled application image (e-Application) and associated documents in the Other Relevant Documents section of the screen

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Navigating the ASSIST Screen

The screenshot shows the ASSIST interface with several callout boxes:

- Available actions vary based on application context and user access:** Points to the 'Actions' menu on the left side of the screen.
- Some actions are only available from the Summary tab (e.g., Preview Application):** Points to the 'Summary' tab in the 'Application Information' section.
- Use '?' icons to access online help:** Points to a question mark icon in the top right corner.
- Find handy tips and system messages at the top of the screen:** Points to a tip message at the top of the 'Application Information' section.
- Use tabs to navigate between forms:** Points to the tabs for 'Summary', 'R&R Covers', 'Cover Page Supplement', 'Other Project Information', 'Sites', 'Sr/Key Person Profile', and 'Modular Budget'.
- After submission, the Submit button is replaced with a View Submission Status Details link to track your submission.** Points to the 'Submit Application' button.

ASSIST Action Notes

<p>Manage Access</p> <p>Provides interface to control who has access to your application and what they can do within the system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Access can be controlled across multiple variables: view/edit and budget/non-budget data ○ Limited to users with the SO role or ASSIST_ACCESS_MAINTAINER_ROLE role on their eRA Commons account, unless delegated ○ SOs (Signing Officials) can delegate Access Maintainer and Status Maintainer authority to other users
<p>Add Optional Form</p> <p>Allows you to add additional forms to your application (e.g., Modular Budget, R&R Budget, Subaward Budget, PHS Inclusion Enrollment Report, PHS Assignment Request Form) when your application circumstances warrant them</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Available forms vary by Funding Opportunity Announcement
<p>Preview Application</p> <p>Provides a preview of your application in the format used by the agency for review and funding consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cover Letter, PHS Assignment Request Form and Appendices are not part of the application image (maintained separately)
<p>Validate Application</p> <p>Checks your application data against agency business rules prior to submission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Form fields marked with an '*' must be completed before the system can validate that form
<p>View Status History</p> <p>Provides history of submission status updates related to ASSIST actions</p>
<p>Update Submission Status</p> <p>Allows you to change your submission status to <i>Work In Progress</i>, <i>Ready for Submission</i> or <i>Abandoned</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Your application must be error-free for the status to change from Work In Progress to Ready for Submission ○ Ability to set an application to Work in Progress is restricted to users with SO or AO roles on their eRA Commons accounts, users granted Status Maintainer authority through the Manage Access action, and the initiator of the application
<p>Submit</p> <p>Submits your application to the agency through Grants.gov</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Application must be in Ready for Submission status ○ Available to users with the SO (Signing Official) role on their eRA Commons account ○ Requires active Grants.gov Authorized Organizational Representative credentials
<p>Copy Application</p> <p>Copies application data to a new application</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If copying to a different FOA, a 'best effort' match is done
<p>Delete Application</p> <p>Permanently deletes an application from ASSIST – use cautiously, once it's gone – it's gone!</p>