

NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE

Pre-Application Meeting

Cancer Nanotechnology Platform Partnerships (CNPP)

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NIH/NCI GRANT APPLICATION REVIEW

Peer Review conducts the review process after the applications are submitted

- **TWO-STAGE REVIEW PROCESS**
- **FIRST STAGE:**
Scientific and Technical Merit
e.g., Special Emphasis Panel (SEP)
- **SECOND STAGE:**
National Cancer Advisory Board (3X per year)

SPECIAL EMPHASIS PANEL (SEP)

DOES:

- Evaluate overall significance, and scientific and technical merit of each application independently
- Provide numerical score and written critiques

DOES NOT:

- Consider issues related to funding, paylines, programmatic considerations, etc.
- Compare the relative merits of applications to others under review

Questions about the preparation of applications
should be directed to the Program staff,
not to the Scientific Review Officer

Letter of Intent

Prospective applicants are asked to submit a letter of intent that includes the following information:

- Descriptive title of proposed research
- Name, address, and telephone number of the PI
- Names of other key personnel
- Participating institutions
- Number and title of this funding opportunity

Although a letter of intent is not required, the information that it contains allows IC staff to estimate the potential review workload and plan the review.

The letter of intent should be sent to the Program staff.

The guide for managing the peer review will be the RFA.

Review the RFA carefully and comply with its requirements:
page limitations on various parts of the application,
font size,
length of CVs, etc.

If human subjects or animals are involved,
the application must fully discuss the
relevant provisions of the policies for each

We will use the new 1-9 scoring system for these applications, with assigned reviewers providing a score for each review criterion as well as overall impact.

Do not plan to send supplemental information.

The SRO will determine if and when supplemental information may be sent in about 4 weeks before the review meeting occurs.

If so, you will be notified by email and given a brief period to respond.

Do not ask if you can send in supplemental information.

If it is feasible within the constraints of the review process, then every applicant will be given that opportunity.

Plan for the unexpected.

Because of the competitive nature of an RFA, it is highly unlikely that receipt deadlines will be extended.

To be fair, all applicants should be given the same opportunity.

If you are planning to have an advisory committee, do **NOT** list the names of specific individuals.

Describe how that committee will function and the kinds of expertise that you will recruit.

Individuals named in applications in advisory capacities will be unable to participate as peer reviewers.

Reviewer selections will be made to match the science that appears in the cohort of applications that are submitted.

The committee will be an ad hoc review panel.

Applications that are Not Discussed

NCI has no fixed percentage of applications that must be “Not Discussed” during peer review meetings.

Using the information in RFA concerning the total dollars allocated for the initiative and the anticipated number of awards, the SRO will develop a possible target for a number of “Not Discussed” applications.

The rule of thumb is that we will provide full review for at least twice as many applications as are anticipated to be funded.

Reviewer availability and the size and number of applications is also a part of this process.

All reviews are considered to be unique, and steps will be taken to ensure that there is a fair and quality review process.

After the application mailout

About a week after the applications are sent to the review panel, there will be an orientation teleconference that includes as many of the reviewers as possible, Program staff and the SRO.

During that orientation, Institute staff go into detail about the RFA and how the reviewers are to approach their assigned tasks.

After Program and SRO presentations, reviewers are given the opportunity to ask questions about the process.

The Triage Process:

If there is to be a triage process in which applications are identified that will be “Not Discussed,” that process will usually be a teleconference that occurs about a week before the full meeting of the review committee.

Using preliminary scores that are provided to the SRO by the reviewers, a best-to-worst list of the applications is presented to the committee, and they determine which applications are not discussed.

Applications which are not discussed will receive a full summary statement minus the resume.

After careful study and analysis, it has been our experience that applications in the bottom tier of preliminary scores are never able to move into the competitive range of the score list.

What has been described is a general outline of how we proceed in this process.

But, since each review is unique, we basically “make it up as we go along,” keeping all of our options open.

Our Program colleagues are fully informed about our proposed approaches at every step of the way.

We can succeed only when there is full and open communication.