2.7 “Resubmission” (Revised) Applications

NIH allows the submission of up to two revised applications (now known as “Resubmission” applications) and no longer restricts those submissions to a two-year timeframe. See NIH Policy on Resubmission Applications in Part III.

NIH has established new policies for application resubmissions of certain categories. See Resubmission of Unpaid RFA Applications and Resubmission of Applications with a Changed Grant Activity Mechanism in Part III.

Before a resubmission application can be submitted, the Program Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) must have received the Summary Statement from the previous review.

Acceptance of a resubmission application will not automatically withdraw the prior version. As of February 2008, eRA keeps all versions (e.g., 01, A1, A2) of a grant application active and provides an internal MAA (“Multiple Active Applications” flag for each application in an active cluster. The cluster allows applicants to identify quickly all versions of one application. If any version in a cluster is awarded, application will notice that all other applications within the cluster will be automatically withdrawn without any additional action by applicants or staff.

Introduction to Resubmission Application. The resubmission must include a brief Introduction (1-3 pages depending on the mechanism) that summarizes the substantial additions, deletions, and changes. The Introduction must also include responses to the criticisms and issues raised in the Summary Statement. Use Item 2.1, Introduction to Application, of the PHS 398 Research Plan component to provide this information. Page limits for the Introduction vary for specialized mechanisms (e.g., R03 and R21 applications). Applicants must follow the page limits that are outlined in the specific announcement.

Research Plan of Resubmission Application. A resubmission application must include substantial changes. Identify the changes in each section of the Research Plan clearly by bracketing, indenting, or changing typography, unless the changes are so extensive as to include most of the text. This exception should be explained in the Introduction. Do not underline or shade changes. The Preliminary Studies/Progress Report section should incorporate any work done since the prior version was submitted.

Application processing may be delayed or the application may be returned if it does not comply with all of these requirements.

Investigators who have submitted three versions of an application and have not been successful often ask NIH staff how different the next application submitted needs to be, as it will be considered a new application. It is recognized that investigators are trained in a particular field of science and are not likely
to make drastic changes in their research interests. However, a new application following three reviews is expected to be substantially different in content and scope with more significant differences than are normally encountered in a resubmission application. Simply rewording the title and Specific Aims or incorporating minor changes in response to comments in the previous Summary Statement does not constitute a substantial change in scope or content. Changes to the Research Plan should produce a significant change in direction and approach for the research project. Thus, a new application would include substantial changes in all sections of the Research Plan, particularly the Specific Aims and the Research Design and Methods sections.

In the referral process, NIH staff look at all aspects of the application, not just the title and Project Summary/Abstract. Requesting review by a different review committee does not affect the implementation of this policy. When necessary, previous applications are analyzed for similarities to the present one. Thus, identical applications or those with only minor changes will not be accepted for review.

2.8 “Revision” (Competing Supplemental) Application

A competing supplemental application (now known as a “Revision” application) may be submitted to request support for a significant expansion of a project’s scope or research protocol. Applications for revisions are not appropriate when the sole purpose is to restore awards to the full SRG-recommended level if they were administratively reduced by the funding agency. A revision application should not be submitted until after the original application has been awarded and may not extend beyond the term of the current award period.

Provide a one-page “Introduction” that describes the nature of the supplement and how it will influence the specific aims, research design, and methods of the current grant. Use Item 2.1, Introduction to Application, of the PHS 398 Research Plan component to provide this information. Any budgetary changes for the remainder of the project period of the current grant should be discussed in section K, Budget Justification, of the Research & Related Budget component. The body of the application should contain sufficient information from the original grant application to allow evaluation of the proposed supplement in relation to the goals of the original application.

If the revision application relates to a specific line of investigation presented in the original application that was not recommended for approval by the SRG, then the applicant must respond to the criticisms in the prior Summary Statement, and substantial revisions must be clearly evident and summarized in the “Introduction.”

Administrative “Revisions” (a.k.a. Supplements)

An administrative supplement provides additional funding to meet increased costs that are within the scope of your approved application, but that were unforeseen when the new or competing renewal (formerly “competing continuation”) application was submitted. If you are contemplating supplemental funding, you must consult in advance with your designated Grants Management Officer and Program Official. It is important for you to submit a request before your grant expires. To be considered for an administrative supplement, you must submit a request in writing to the IC (not to CSR), signed by the authorized Business Official, describing the need for additional funding and the categorical costs. In your letter, also be sure to point out what you will NOT be able to accomplish if such a request is denied. At this time, administrative revisions/supplements will not be submitted through Grants.gov.

2.9 Similar, Essentially Identical, or Identical Applications

Submissions of identical applications to one or more components of the PHS are not allowed.