Dear (**Merge field:** *Investigator First Name_Last Name*):

Your summary statement was recently posted in the eRA Commons for your NIH grant application (**Merge field:** *Full_Project_Number*) entitled, "(**Merge field:** *Application Title)*".

After reading through the summary statement, you are strongly encouraged to discuss the critiques and your options for addressing the comments with the Program Officer (PO) assigned to your application. The PO may be able to provide guidance on the following issues:

- The likelihood of NIH funding your application
- Further discussion of the reviewers' comments (the PO may have been present during the review)
- What to address in your resubmission application, if this is your first submission
- How to develop a new application, if your resubmission was not successful

The summary statement contains critical information that may prove extremely useful if you decide to prepare a resubmission application.

There are additional resources at NIH that should prove useful as you consider the best strategy for obtaining an NIH grant application. A few of these resources are outlined below.

For most, success comes from persistence and practice

Most investigators, both established and new investigators, must submit multiple applications before they achieve success in obtaining support for their research. For every successful R01 award, the typical R01-funded principal investigator submits 2.4 R01 applications over a five-year period. This estimate includes both new investigators and investigators who are experienced with the NIH grants process. New investigators who were successful in obtaining their first R01 in FY 2015 submitted an average of 3.1 R01 applications in the past five years. Feedback obtained from peer reviewers, and the experience gained from the peer review process are often cited as important experiences for learning to prepare a successful grant application.

An application that is not funded upon the original submission has a much better chance of being funded upon resubmission. In 2015, the success rate for original R01 applications was 13.1%, whereas the success rate for resubmission applications was 33.5%. This information and much more is available in the NIH Success Rate tables on the RePORTer web site.

Finding the best application strategy for you

Each Institute and Center (IC) balances many factors as its selects applications to consider for funding. Understanding these factors can help you prepare your application. One important factor that every IC considers in making its funding decisions is the New Investigator and/or Early Stage Investigator status of R01 applicants. New and Early Stage Investigators receive special consideration during both stages of the peer review process when they have submitted an R01 application. The New and Early Stage Investigator designations are not considered in the review of any grant activities other than the R01.

Information on the current IC funding thresholds for New versus Established Investigators can be found on the individual IC web sites. Information about the scientific priorities of each or the ICs can be found in their strategic plans. Historical information about the number of R21, R01 and other activities funded by each IC is also available in the NIH success rate tables.

Your program officer is available to help you understand the complexities of the NIH grants system. The contact information for the PO is at the top of the face page of the summary statement. Most POs prefer that you contact them by email and schedule a time for a phone call, giving him/her time to read your summary statement. Each NIH PO receives inquiries from many applicants, and may not be able to respond to yours immediately. If a reasonable amount of time has passed without a response, first check your commons account in case the assigned PO has changed since the summary statement was released. Then, check the website for the NIH IC where your application is assigned, and contact another PO in the same organizational unit (Branch, Division or Center).

But remember, contacting the PO to "sell" your application or to express differences in scientific opinion related to the reviewers' comments will not affect the likelihood of funding.

Other resources for applicants

The NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research, Mike Lauer, posts new information about NIH grants, including information about peer review, success rates, perspectives on NIH-wide grants policies and much more on his blog, Open Mike, each week. The information is intended to help researchers and other members of the grants community better understand the NIH grants system. You can subscribe to Open Mike to receive the posts in real time or in digest form. In addition, many IC Directors also post newsletters or blogs on their IC web site to inform the scientific community about the activities and priorities of the IC.

We hope these resources will be useful to you in preparing a resubmission or new application to submit to the NIH.

Please take the NIH survey for New Investigators

We would like to learn more about you and the types of resources you plan to utilize in preparing your next NIH grant application. We invite you to complete OER's survey of new investigators available at:

*(***Merge field:*** *Hyperlink to survey)*

The survey is confidential and should take, at most, 10 minutes to complete. The information you provide will be examined in aggregate with the responses of other New Investigators to help NIH understand how to better serve you and other New Investigators as you pursue research funding during this important career stage.

Best wishes to you in your future research endeavors.

Sincerely,

Luci Roberts, Ph.D.
Director of Planning and Evaluation
Office of Extramural Research