60-day FRN Public Comment Log
Title:
(Federal Register Notice Vol. 91 No. 43, Pg. 10812-10813)

Date of Comment:	05/01/2026
Date Received:	05/01/2026
Category: (Simple or Multiple Comments)	Simple
Comment Type: (Fax, Letter, Email, Post Card, Other)	Email with attached letter
Author's First Name:	Molly
Author's Last Name:	Madzelan
Author's Affiliation: (if available)	Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences (FABBS)
Sponsoring Organization: (if available)	
Comment received: (if lengthy please provide screenshot below)	See screenshot
Date responded to comment:	05/08/2026
Program response provided: (if lengthy please provide screenshot below)	Dear FABBS, Thank you for your interest in the CSR Early Career Reviewer (ECR) Program and for your input regarding changes to the ECR application. We are glad to hear that the MSI question on the application was useful to your organization and that it highlighted the importance of recognizing the value of MSIs. CSR will further discuss, internally, the status of this question on the application, taking into consideration your feedback. Final changes, if any, to the ECR application can be viewed (early July 2026) on the CSR ECR application website or by reaching out to CSRearlyCareerReviewer@mail.nih.gov.

Public Comment from the Federation of Associations in Behavioral & Brain Sciences (FABBS)

Re: FR Doc. 2026-04393 ("Proposed Collection; 60-Day Comment Request; Early Career Reviewer Program Online Application and Vetting System-Center for Scientific Review (CSR)")

Submitted via email to Hope M. Cummings at hope.cummings@nih.gov

Date: May 1, 2026

The Federation of Associations in Behavioral & Brain Sciences (FABBS) represents 35 of the nation's leading scientific societies in the psychological, cognitive, and behavioral sciences. Our mission is to advance the sciences of mind, brain, and behavior; promote evidence-based policymaking; and support the integrity and impact of the federal scientific enterprise. With support from federal agencies – including the National Institutes of Health (NIH) – FABBS scientists study critical issues such as chronic health conditions, workforce development, and educational outcomes.

While we appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed change to the Early Career Reviewer Program Application and Vetting System (ECRPAVS), it is difficult to do so given the lack of information provided in the Federal Register notice. The notice only states that CSR will remove "an employment characteristic question" from the ECRPAVS without identifying the specific question. Additionally, there is no justification provided for removing the question, aside from it being "no longer needed to help assess interest in the program."

By reaching out to NIH for more information, FABBS learned that the removed question is "Is your institution a Minority Serving Institution (MSI)?" Both Congress and NIH have long recognized the value of MSIs and the need to train and support their researchers, meriting a rationale for removing this question.

60-day FRN Public Comment Log
Title:
(Federal Register Notice Vol. 91 No. 43, Pg. 10812-10813)

Date of Comment:	05/04/2026
Date Received:	05/04/2026
Category: (Simple or Multiple Comments)	Simple
Comment Type: (Fax, Letter, Email, Post Card, Other)	Email with attached letter
Author's First Name:	Adrienne
Author's Last Name:	Stith
Author's Affiliation: (if available)	American Psychological Association (APA)
Sponsoring Organization: (if available)	
Comment received: (if lengthy please provide screenshot below)	See screenshot
Date responded to comment:	05/08/2026
Program response provided: (if lengthy please provide screenshot below)	Dear APA, Thank you for your interest in the CSR Early Career Reviewer (ECR) Program and for your input regarding changes to the ECR application. We are glad to hear that the MSI question on the application was useful to your organization and increased your organization's confidence in the integrity of the NIH peer review system. CSR will further discuss, internally, the status of this question on the application, taking into consideration your feedback. Final changes, if any, to the ECR application can be viewed (early July 2026) on the CSR ECR application website or by reaching out to CSRearlyCareerReviewer@mail.nih.gov.

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

May 4, 2026

Dr. Hope Cummings
Project Clearance Liaison
Center for Scientific Review
National Institutes of Health
Room 907-M
6701 Rockledge Drive
Bethesda, Maryland, 20892

Re: Public Comment: Early Career Reviewer Program Online Application and Vetting System—Center for Scientific Review (CSR) OMB Control No. 0925-0695
National Institutes of Health
Notice

Submitted Electronically via Email: hope.cummings@nih.gov

Dear Dr. Cummings:

The American Psychological Association (APA) appreciates the opportunity to provide input regarding the Early Career Reviewer (ECR) Program Online Application and Vetting System. The APA is the nation's largest scientific and professional nonprofit organization representing the discipline and profession of psychology, as well as 190,000 members and affiliates who are clinicians, researchers, educators, consultants, and students in psychological science.

The CSR Early Career Reviewer (ECR) program was developed to identify and train qualified scientists who are early in their scientific careers and who have not had prior CSR review experience. It was created in response to growing concerns about the sustainability of NIH peer review and the need to prepare the next generation of independent investigators for competitive grant funding. The program provides early-career scientists with access to the peer review experience so that they become more competitive as applicants while enriching the existing pool of NIH reviewers.

Psychologists are essential to the scientific integrity of the NIH mission. With behavioral and social science research accounting for a substantial segment of the NIH portfolio, the agency actively recruits psychological scientists to ensure that grant applications undergo rigorous peer review by experts with the specialized methodological and clinical training necessary to evaluate complex human health outcomes.

To maintain the integrity of this expert pool, APA remains committed to the inclusion of Minority Serving Institution (MSI) identifiers within the employment section. This is not only for data collection; it is a vital mechanism for ensuring that the unique scholarly contributions and cultural expertise of faculty at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), and other MSIs are intentionally integrated into the federal vetting process. By identifying these affiliations, we can better ensure that the evaluation of psychological research

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reflects a full spectrum of technical excellence. APA supports this transparency to facilitate targeted recruitment and to honor the professional standing of MSI-based researchers, all while strictly upholding the standard of reviewer anonymity during the active evaluation process.

To ensure every application receives a fair review, federal agencies should adopt standards similar to those established by the APA, such as the APA Journal Article Reporting Standards (JARS). This would ensure that a broad range of perspectives are represented, foster transparency throughout the review process, and allow scientific merit to be judged objectively while maintaining the highest professional standards. By adopting these standards, federal agencies can also promote inclusivity in the application review processes.

By recruiting early-career scientists before they are regularly invited to serve on study sections, CSR increases participation from individuals from smaller universities and emerging research programs. By maintaining the MSI question, the NIH signals that institutional diversity is a valued characteristic. Integrating these perspectives ensures that the review process remains rigorous, objective, and capable of identifying the next generation of scientific breakthroughs.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the importance of ensuring varied perspectives of early-career reviewers are considered and the importance of maintaining an inclusive vetting process. We urge you to consider that conventional academic metrics can overlook contributions from marginalized perspectives. The inclusion of diverse professional and educational backgrounds is essential for a high-quality, bias-free review process and fundamental to ensuring that federal investments in psychological science reflect the diverse needs and perspectives of the communities we serve.

Should you have any questions, please contact Krysta Jones, Director, Congressional and Federal Relations, at knjones@apa.org.

Sincerely,

Adrienne Stith, PhD
Executive Lead Psychologist, Science
American Psychological Association

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