



Office of Research Administration, Hunter College of CUNY,  
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November 8, 2007

TO: Deans, Department Chairs, Current Principal Investigators, and  
Potential Applicants for Federal Grants and Contracts

FROM: Robert J. Buckley

RE: Electronic Grant Proposal Submissions – *Grants.gov*

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As you know, many funding agencies have now moved to online submission of grant proposals. This memorandum focuses primarily on *Grants.gov* which has become the portal for most federal funding agencies. Most aspects of this memo, however, are applicable to other electronic proposals.

The intent of *Grants.gov* is to provide a unified electronic 'storefront' for interactions between grant applicants and funding agencies. **Hunter College is already registered in *Grants.gov*.** There is nothing that a principal investigator (PI) must do in terms of institutional registration.

Submission of a grant application package through *Grants.gov* involves a process different from previously accepted standards for electronic submissions. The majority of the application is completed offline, currently using the required software, *PureEdge Viewer*, which is available from *Grants.gov*. (Other software is likely to be used starting sometime next year.) Unlike other online submissions, the *PureEdge Viewer* software downloads onto a desktop computer an application package which contains all the required forms for that particular proposal. **The application package must be completed on the desktop from which the authorized institutional official will provide institutional endorsement.** Please also be advised that the files/forms are different from the forms previously used when proposals were submitted in hard copy format.

In order to facilitate the submission of grant applications and to avoid scheduling conflicts on deadline days when more than one proposal is due, the Office of Research Administration is requesting the following:

- NotifyCarolynn Julien or Annmarie Rivera in the Office of Research Administration, **at least two weeks before the application deadline**, to make an appointment to review the grant guidelines, determine the grant requirements, deadlines, submission plan, etc., and also obtain a proposal routing form to secure endorsement from your Department Chair and Dean. **Please be aware that there may be several proposals from Hunter College being prepared for a given deadline. Therefore, scheduling in advance is a must.**
- Complete the required components of the application and save them as separate documents/files. **Be attentive to detail, such as page limitations.** These files must be converted to PDF files. If a PI is unable to convert the documents, the Office of Research Administration will do this.

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- Send these files separately to your Hunter Research Administration contact via e-mail, or copy these files to a CD-Rom or flash drive and bring them to the Office of Research Administration. If sending via e-mail, please check the e-mail file size limitations on your server. **Keep electronic back-up copies of everything!**
- The Office of Research Administration will upload and submit the application package. Remember that *Grants.gov* and the funding agency must verify receipt of the proposal. It may take as long as 48 hours (at times of heavy national proposal submission, perhaps longer) to confirm the submission. Remember that submission can only be made by the Office of Research Administration. **The PI must be available during this process. If the PI is not going to be at the College, we must know how to contact the PI, so that we can deal with the error and warning messages that may arise in the hours and days following proposal submission.**
- Submission should ideally take place at least five days before the actual deadline to allow for addressing errors and warnings that may require the proposal to be resubmitted and to avoid other potential delays that could be caused by servers between Hunter and *Grants.gov*. The process uses a government-wide portal. An electronic application is first verified by *Grants.gov* and then sent electronically to the designated funding agency, where it is passed through the agency's electronic screening. There is a very limited window of no more than two weekdays to address any errors. *N.B.:* at this time, most holidays falling on weekdays are counted as weekdays. In short, greater lead time than has been allowed by many researchers in the past is essential to complete the proposal submission process. **Remember that the proposal only meets the agency's deadline when it has been verified and received by the funding agency.**

We sincerely appreciate principal investigators and project staff who both try to be helpful and to be as small a burden as they can be on our office. We have had several cases of projects having to be re-done because the PI made the erroneous assumption that he/she would expedite the process by starting the process at his/her own desktop. Everything had to be re-done.

*Grants.gov* continues to evolve and comes with numerous quirks of which the PI might not be aware and with which we have some experience. A major disadvantage of *Grants.gov* is the grant application is not on a server such as NSF *Fastlane* which allows multiple researchers to work on the proposal simultaneously. The actual grant application with all its forms can only be located on only one desktop. Therefore, only your Research Administration contact can work on the application as it is finalized for submission. **The final proposal must be submitted by the Office of Research Administration.**

**In summary, our advice is to submit early. It is acceptable if you download the application package, but please use it only as a guide. Do not fill in the application package or add attachments, as it is not transferable to the Research Administration desktop.** Please send us your attachments and we would be more than happy to work with you to ensure that the application is submitted successfully.