



How Do I Become A Reviewer?

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Becoming an NIH Reviewer

NIH Peer Review

- **Cornerstone of the NIH extramural mission**
- **Standard of excellence worldwide**
- **Collaboration between NIH extramural staff and scientific community**





Becoming an NIH Reviewer

Why Participate?

- **Make an important contribution to science**
- **Learn about**
 - **New developments in your field**
 - **The funding process**
 - **New policy**
 - **New funding opportunities**
- **Meet colleagues in your field**
- **Meet NIH officials**





Becoming an NIH Reviewer

NIH Peer Review System

- **Two-tiered:**
 - **Initial peer review - Scientific Review Groups (SRGs)**
 - **I/C Advisory Council or Board (Council)**

- **Per year:**
 - ***Nearly 80,000 applications***
 - ***Over 18,000 reviewers***





Becoming an NIH Reviewer

Overview

Application received
Assignments made



Initial peer review

Funding considerations

Scientific Review Group
(Study section, SRG)

Institutes or Centers (ICs)
(Duals possible)

Scientific Review Officer

Program Officer



Second level of review

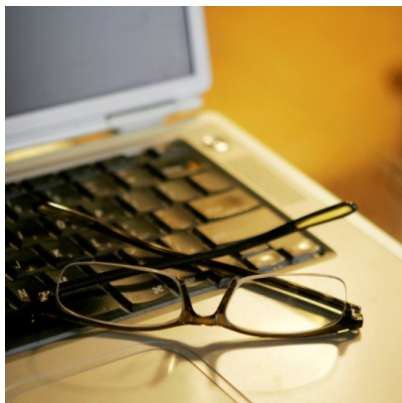
Council



Funding decisions

IC Director →

Award!





Becoming an NIH Reviewer

Scientific Review Officer (SRO)

- **Designated Federal Official**
- **Extramural scientist**
- **Identifies and recruits reviewers**
- **Manages conflicts of interest**
- **Oversees arrangements for review meetings**
- **Presides at review committee meetings**
- **Prepares and releases summary statements**





Becoming an NIH Reviewer

Scientific Review Group (SRG)

“Study Section” Members:

- **Scientific and technical expertise**
- **Stature in field**
- **Mature judgment**
- **Impartiality**
- **Experience in review**
- **Collegiality**
- **Availability**
- **Responsibility**





Becoming an NIH Reviewer

Types of SRGs

- **“Chartered”**
 - **Multiyear terms**
 - **Formal appointment and approval process**
- **Special Emphasis Panel (SEP)**
 - *Ad hoc* membership
 - Often meet only once
 - Usually vetted by SRO only
- **All must comply with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)**

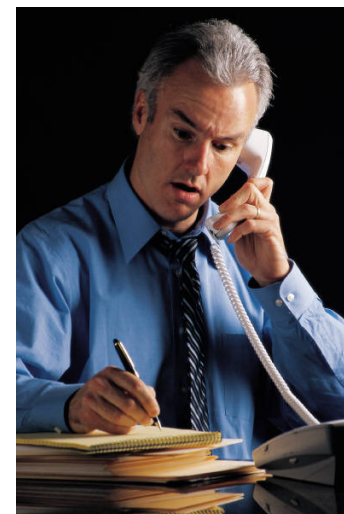




Becoming an NIH Reviewer

Before the SRG Meeting

- **SRG Workload**
 - Average = 80 “R01 equivalents”
 - Wide variation depending on circumstances
- **Typical reviewer workload**
 - ~ 6 – 8 as “reviewer” - Critiques and scores
 - ~ 2 – 3 as “discussant” – Scores only





Becoming an NIH Reviewer

Before the SRG Meeting

- **4-6 weeks in advance**
 - **Read and understand**
 - **Assigned applications and any others**
 - **Reviewer guidelines and other instructions**
 - **Any special announcements (RFAs, PAs, PARs)**
 - **Previous summary statements for resubmissions**
 - **Register in the eRA Commons and the Secure Payee Enrollment System (SPRS)**
 - **Make travel arrangements with government travel agent**
 - **Usually arrive the evening before**
 - **Often 1 – 2 day meetings**





Becoming an NIH Reviewer

Before the SRG Meeting

- **1 week in advance**
 - **Submit to the Internet Assisted Review (IAR) site**
 - **Conflict of interest and confidentiality voucher**
 - **Written critiques according to specified format**
 - **Scores for individual review criteria**
 - **Preliminary overall impact/priority scores**
 - **Review critiques and scores entered by other reviewers**
 - **Be prepared to present and discuss applications**





Becoming an NIH Reviewer

Before the SRG Meeting

✓ **Action items:**

- **Discuss expectations when invited to serve**
 - **Schedule for deadlines and meeting**
 - **Anticipated workload**
 - **Special needs – schedule, accommodations**
- **Be realistic about your other commitments**
- **Offer to serve in the future if unavailable now**





Becoming an NIH Reviewer

At the SRG Meeting

- **Call to Order - Chairperson**
- **Policy and instructions - SRO**
- **Discuss each application, where feasible:**
 - **In score order**
 - **Cluster New Investigator applications**
 - **Cluster clinical applications**
- **Scoring**
- **Discuss other considerations**
 - **Budget**
 - **Resource Sharing Plans**
 - **Foreign institutions**





Becoming an NIH Reviewer

At the SRG Meeting

Discussion format

- **Members with conflicts excused**
- **Initial levels of enthusiasm stated (assigned reviewers and discussants)**
- **Primary reviewer - explains project, strengths, weaknesses**
- **Other assigned reviewers and discussants follow**
- **Open discussion (full panel)**
- **Levels of enthusiasm (assigned reviewers) re-stated**
- **Individual SRG members vote**
- **Other review considerations discussed (budget)**





Becoming an NIH Reviewer

At the SRG Meeting

✓ Action items:

- Be prepared**
- Be on time**
- Be concise in your comments**
- Be ready when it's your turn**
- Be courteous**
- Don't leave early!**





Becoming an NIH Reviewer

SROs Find Reviewers By...

- **Networking:**
 - **Scientific community, other reviewers**
 - **NIH Program Staff and other SROs**
 - **Professional societies**
 - **Attending scientific conferences**
 - **Viewing posters at meetings**
 - **Talking to people**





Becoming an NIH Reviewer

SROs Find Reviewers By...

- **Reading the scientific literature**
- **Surfing the internet**
- **Reading applications in their SRGs**
- **Reading cover letters on applications**
 - **Suggestions from PI on types of expertise needed, but *not names!***
 - **Conflicts of interest**





Becoming an NIH Reviewer

SROs Look For:

- **Scientific and technical expertise**
- **Independence as an investigator**
- **Track record**
 - **Position**
 - **Research funding**
 - **Not always NIH funding**
 - **Not always an R01**
 - **Publications**
 - **Book chapters**
 - **Invited presentations**
- **Respect among peers**





Additional Considerations

- **Balanced representation**
 - **Gender**
 - **Geography**
 - **Diversity**
 - **Seniority**
- **Managed conflicts of interest**
- **Career stage**
- **Frequency of service**
- **Debarment status**





Becoming an NIH Reviewer

Finding Reviewers

✓ **Action items:**

- **Introduce yourself to SROs in your field**
- **Send your CV to SROs in your field**
- **Ask a colleague or mentor to recommend you**
- **Ask a colleague or mentor to introduce you**
- ***But don't bug them!***





Becoming an NIH Reviewer

Finding SROs in Your Field

- Reviews of your own applications
 - Summary statement
 - eRA Commons
- Reviews of your mentors' applications
- NIH exhibits/presentations at scientific meetings
- Your professional societies
- NIH website (<http://era.nih.gov/roster/index.cfm>)
- Center for Scientific Review website (<http://www.csr.nih.gov/committees/rosterindex.asp>)
- Institute/Center websites (<http://www.nih.gov/icd/index.html>)





Becoming an NIH Reviewer

Contact Information

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