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ESSENTIAL SCIENCE CONVERSATIONS: ANNOUNCING THE NEW PEER REVIEW FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCH PROJECT GRANT AND FELLOWSHIP APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED TO THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH (MAY 8, 2024)

TRANSCRIPT

Shandol Hoover: Hello, everyone, and welcome. Thank you for joining us today. I'm Shandol Hoover, APA Director of Science Special Projects and Implementation. This program is part of an APA series called Essential Science Conversations, where panelists and audience members can engage in an open dialogue about emerging topics in psychological science.

Before we get started with today's session, I want to share a few quick announcements. First, we hope you'll visit apa.org/science to learn how APA helps psych scientists and join over 50,000 other subscribers by subscribing to a free *Science Spotlight* newsletter to get firsthand insight into funding, news, events, resources, and more. Also, subscribe to *Editor's Choice*, a free newsletter where you can get articles delivered free right to your inbox.

We appreciate those of you who submitted questions for today's program when you registered. You can also ask a question as a program is taking place in real-time. There's a Q&A feature on the dashboard. Please enter your questions there. We'll be monitoring those questions throughout the program. Finally, this program is being recorded. Once it ends, everyone who registered will receive an email with a link to the recording in about two weeks.

I'm excited that today we are joined by the National Institutes of Health, who recently announced a new peer review framework for research grant proposals and fellowship applications. Today, we are excited to host Dr. Valerie Durrant, Director of the Division of AIDS, Behavioral and Population Sciences of the NIH Center for Scientific Review. Dr. Durrant will explain the process and answer your questions. We're thrilled that Dr. Durrant is joining us today. I'll turn it right over to you, Dr. Durrant.

Dr. Valerie Durrant: All right. Thank you very much. Good afternoon, and good morning. I'm sure that applies to some of you out there. First, I want to just thank you all for attending and thank the APA for giving us this opportunity to share some updates on the review of research project grants and fellowships. Let me go ahead and share my screen. I'm going to walk through several slides, and then we should have plenty of time for some questions at the end to either clarify or expand the topic a little bit.

Again, as Shandol mentioned, I am here today with the primary goal of talking to you about some changes that we are in the process of implementing that are intended to strengthen NIH peer review. I'll be talking about these, how they apply, and we'll get more in depth to research project grants and fellowships. There we go.

As many of you know, but I always like to start off with a high-level overview of NIH, the National Institutes of Health has the primary function of advancing and supporting research on and the advancement of knowledge on nature and behavior of living systems and applications of that

knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce illness and disability. We do our work through 27 institutes and centers. Those are listed on the slide.

The ones in blue are funding institutes and centers. The money actually goes through those centers. Then there are three and we are here in the bottom right, the Center for Scientific Review. We are not a funding IC. We serve as primarily a service agency to all of NIH to manage the peer review, the scientific and technical merit review of the applications that come in for all of the ICs as well as the office of the director.

As I mentioned, our mission is to ensure that NIH grant applications receive a fair, independent expert timely scientific review, free from inappropriate influences, to support the NIH's objective of making sure that we are advancing the most promising research. This is a really important responsibility that we have. Our sole focus is really on assessing scientific and technical merit, that first level of peer review so that the institutes can then consider the scientific merit along with their other considerations, their budgets, their priorities, their portfolios in making funding decisions.

We have a large scope, and I think this is surprising to some people. Based on the 2023 data, NIH received over 79,000 applications of various types. The Center for Scientific Review does the majority of the scientific review, we reviewed about 60,000 applications. We do review the majority of the NIH R01s, the gold standard, and what I think a lot of people associate NIH with.

We also do the bulk of the review of the small business applications as well as fellowship applications. We obviously need a lot of help to do this, and we relied on the help and input from over 19,000 reviewers in 1,200 meetings. I like to start with this because it just does give you the scope of what we'll be talking about today.

The main focus today is to talk about the efforts underway to change the review of research project grants, as well as fellowships. We call this a simplifying review framework. I'm going to walk through first what's changing in terms of the research project grants, and then I will come back and talk about the fellowships. First, what's the motivation? Why are we changing peer review? What about it is changing?

It really comes down to the review criteria or the way that we're considering the review criteria. We're responding to some input that we got from the community, as well as our own observations and observations from folks across NIH, where we recognize from the feedback from reviewers, from applicants, from staff, from the community, that peer review is getting very complex. Lots of sub-questions, lots of additional considerations, long lists of instructions of what should be considered.

While all of this was a little bit important and every little piece in the review is important in some ways, what it was doing was detracting from the overall goal of getting input from the scientific community, the peer reviewers on what is the quality of the science. One of the main motivations for these changes is really just simplifying so that we can keep the focus on the evaluation of scientific merit.

The second motivation was, again, from concerns from the community as well as our own observations where we were recognizing that there were cases where there was undue influence of the reputation of either individuals or institutions in the NIH peer review. We have also worked to address this in the changes. This is a concern for us because it does affect the judgment of merit, and if people that are better known are given a pass, whereas others have more scrutiny, our goal is,

again, that fair review and making sure that we are mitigating and removing implicit bias whenever possible.

What will change? This is a high-level overview slide to give you a sense of the changes, and then I will get into the next slide, which provides a little bit more detail. What is changing? First, instead of asking reviewers to address five review criteria, we have reorganized those five review criteria into three factors. The second change is that investigator and environment, which were two of the five review criteria, will now be evaluated together but also in a pass-fail kind of way. Are they sufficient or are there gaps identified? They are considered as part of that overall score and the overall evaluation, but they do not receive a score themselves.

The third change that comes with this process is related to the additional review criteria. These are things like human subjects, the consideration of vertebrate animal considerations, inclusion of women, inclusion of racial and ethnic minorities, age across the lifespan, those types of considerations. We are moving the consideration just where and at what point in the review process reviewers address those. Finally, there were a number of other considerations that reviewers were asked to speak to when relevant.

Those have been removed, or most of those have been removed from the plate of the reviewers and shifted to NIH staff to assess. Again, broader goals, trying to simplify the process really with the goal of keeping reviewers focused on their job, which is to help identify the strongest research that has the most potential for high impact. Advancing science and advancing health are the goals of that project.

As mentioned, get a little bit into what some of these three factors are. As I mentioned, there are currently five review criteria; significance, innovation, approach, investigator, and environment. Those considerations are all still relevant, we've just now grouped them into three factors. The first factor that we will be asking reviewers to assess is the importance of the research.

This incorporates considerations in the significance, what's the value of the research questions, the research aims? What is the potential to advance assuming success of the project? How will this contribute to science or other related goals? This factor, the reviewers give it a score from one to nine indicating the level of strengths or weaknesses as well as providing strengths and weaknesses in their evaluation of that.

The second factor is rigor and feasibility. Again, this factor, reviewers are asked to give it a score from one to nine indicating the level of strengths and weaknesses. It's really factoring in the considerations related to the approach. We think about the first two factors, as factor one being that should the research be done, and factor two being can the research be done. A lot of times we've posed that to the reviewers as a way to think about the first two factors. Rigor and feasibility includes everything from will the results be robust, is it feasible, can it be done in the time and as proposed. What's the likelihood of success?

Those are the first two factors. The third factor is expertise and resources. This factor does not get a score from the reviewers. It's a drop-down where they either check it's appropriate or there are gaps identified. If there are gaps identified, we ask them to articulate what those gaps are. Again, the motivation here is to pull the reviewer's attention back to the project; whether the people identified, the expertise and resources in terms of people, equipment needed, access to the resources needed within the environment are appropriate and align with the goals of the project.

We're really trying to pull away from the reputation and really get reviewers to focus in on what will they do-- does the application include the expertise and the resources necessary to do this specific project? Pulling the assessment back to the project as opposed to just general reputation and consideration. Again, this is not scored, just the expertise and resources are sufficient, or there are gaps identified.

The additional review criteria are still part of the consideration. Again, these are not scored, and that there's no change in that they have never received a score. The study timeline, human subjects' protection, inclusion of women, minorities, and children, vertebrate animals protections, biohazards, and when applicable, resubmission renewal revision comments.

One additional change related to these is we did move the consideration of the study timeline for clinical trial applications, as well as the inclusions for any applications that involve human subjects under factor two. These both are related to either feasibility or the quality of the approach in terms of the sample that is selected.

We wanted to group those two together both to again simplify the process for the reviewers, as well as minimize some of the confusion. These are considerations that are obviously related to the approach that reviewers already factor in. When they were then asked again to comment on inclusion or timeline, there was sometimes some confusion. Removing redundancy and confusion from that process, but the considerations are all the same.

As I mentioned before, there were a number of other review considerations, things that were never intended to affect the score and didn't affect the score, but reviewers were often asked to comment on and those have now been removed so that they can focus on the evaluation of scientific merit. A brief comment on budget and chemical and biological resource authentication are still part of those. Those will still be part of the consideration.

The two most common questions that we get asked about these changes right now, or one, what applications are affected? This slide includes the list of the applications. As I said, this is specific to research project grant applications, we sometimes refer to these as RPGs, you may hear that, or see that acronym on the slide. The R01, R03, R15, R21, I think are the most common, but this includes the full list. It's most of the Rs and most of the Us. Do pay attention to the specific list to make sure that you know if an activity that you're interested in falls under these changes.

The second most common question, actually, it's probably the first most common question is when will the simplified framework be implemented. This will be effective starting with our applications that are submitted for January 25th, 2025, due dates. Any Notice of Funding Opportunity announcement, all of them include the due dates for applications. Anything January 24th or prior is under the current review considerations starting with applications that have due dates, January 25th, 2025, and beyond within these activity codes will all apply.

These are applications that for the most part will be coming in next February, March, and April, for summer reviews, and October 2025 advisory councils. I've included a link to a website where you can get more detailed information about everything related to the changes and all the answers to the most commonly answered questions. This is a website that's continually being updated. As new materials or information is available there's some frequently asked questions on it that are updated as well. It's an important website for you to keep an eye on.

What's happening in the next phase? First, this is one of many public webinars as we try to get information out about the pending changes so that everyone is aware. We will be re-issuing the

Notices of Funding Opportunity that I mentioned before. The only thing that will change about these, any existing funding opportunities that are updated would be changes to Section 5, which is where we lay out the review considerations of the review information.

We will be re-releasing anything that's currently on the streets to reflect and incorporate the changes. That will be coming. We're obviously in the process of changing NIH systems, all the systems needed for review, and for the communication of results to our applicants as well as developing training resources, primarily for reviewers. All this is underway, as I mentioned, same website that I shared before. This is a great location where you can get all this information as it becomes available, and a lot is already there.

We have received a lot of public input. One of the common questions we get is, what are we doing to train it both to reach out to the community to let them know about the changes as well as how will we be training reviewers, chairs, staff? All of those materials are in development and will be available on this page when they're ready.

I'm not going to spend too much time on this slide, but I did want to go back in time and just say that these changes have been in the works for quite some time. We started getting both informal and formal input from the community. What are the concerns to a specific RFI with the proposed changes for public input over the past four years or so? There have been multiple iterations in the development of these changes that have had a lot of input from the community, from various parts of NIH.

Website again, just so that you don't miss it. Again, same website, but this gives you a little bit of an idea of what you can get there. Information about the background, what led to the changes, what the changes will be, when guidance for reviewers is available, it will be here now or will be available. There is some guidance for applicants already up there now, training, and resources, and the Frequently Asked Questions is a great place to get answers to questions. There's a number of questions and answers already there. We continually build that as more questions come in, and we're able to clarify information.

Let me turn now to the changes that are coming related to the review of fellowship applications. You will see some parallels, but a few differences are things that are specific to the fellowship program. Most of what I'm talking about today are fellowship applications that are coming in response to the National Research Service Awards. The goal of the NIH fellowship program is to optimize, identify, and train the most promising scientists of the next generation. This is the way we provide support for pre-doctoral, doctoral, post-doctoral candidates depending on the initiative to make sure that we are supporting the development of research careers moving forward.

The changes that we've made to the review of fellowship applications, again, also comes largely from concerns we've received from the scientific community over the past several years. In terms of fellowship applications, the main concern that came up repeatedly was that NIH is potentially leaving out very promising research scientists because the NRSA fellowships tend to be concentrated in a few select elite institutions or involve well-known sponsors as the mentors.

As opposed to really acknowledging the contributions or the capabilities of the candidates and the nominees, they were really being reviewed more based on where the fellowship would be, which institution was supporting the fellowship, or who that mentor was.

The data that we've done of our own fellowship program support this. We have taken a look, and I'll show you some of that data. It's pretty clear that submissions have been highly concentrated in a

few institutions. This is an awkward graphic, you almost have to do the math and flip it, but you can see that there are 15 institutions for data from 2021 that each submitted over 100 of the fellowship applications for that year, compared to 106 institutions over here that just submitted one or two.

As you can see, the handful of institutions that submit the most applications, submit almost as many as almost everybody else combined. Yes, that was a concern because we want to make sure that we have a broad pool, and that we're including the full range of potential candidates or applicants.

In addition, it's compounded by the fact that applications from schools that submit more applications tended to do better in review. Both in terms of the likelihood that the applications were discussed, as well as the proportion that received the higher impact scores. The benefits that those institutions receive from submitting lots of applications paid out in terms of how they were faring in review. I don't have the data here to show you, but we also showed that the rank of the mentor the sponsor identified had an impact on the review outcome as well.

The changes proposed that we're proposing and pursuing in terms of the fellowship applications are really to address these. One, we want to, again, going back to that goal of simplifying review and making sure we're getting good quality review, better focus reviewer attention on three key assessments. In terms of fellowship, it was really a long thoughtful process about what really matters, and what do we want to make sure reviewers are focusing on and that would be the fellowship candidates' preparedness and potential, the research training plan, and the sponsor and institutional commitment to the candidate. I'll come back to those in a second.

The second goal of the change was really to make sure that we were ensuring a broad range of candidates could apply and could be successful in the review process. We wanted to make sure, in terms of how we framed the language and the review criteria and application instructions, that we were setting up a structure that would really support a breadth of candidates and nominees and a fair review of the full range of applicants and applications.

That relates to the third goal or third objective of reducing bias and review and making sure that the factors that are influencing the outcomes are really related to the preparation and goals of the candidate, and the research plans that they're proposing without undue emphasis or consideration of the reputation of the sponsor or the institution.

What are the main review considerations, the review headings for fellowships under the new framework? It goes from five to three, so slightly different five, to a different three than what we see in the research project applications. The first consideration is the candidate preparedness and potential. The second is the quality, the assessment of the research training plan. This includes both a proposed training coursework or other activities to develop as a high-quality effective researcher as well as the research proposed as part of the fellowship to get some experience doing research as well. Then commitment to the candidate from the mentor on the institution.

As with other applications, there are several additional review criteria. Human subjects, vertebrate animals, considerations like that, as well as additional review considerations. These are unchanged in terms of the fellowship applications.

In order to make sure that we can keep the focus of the reviewers on the factors that really matter, the three factors identified as really driving the assessment of the quality of the application did

require changes to the application. In the case for the fellowships, the F applications have also changed. It's not just the review criteria, it is the application itself, that is also being restructured.

What is changing to that application? One, eliminating the requirement for grades. You're expected to submit, applicants are expected to submit the courses that they've completed, but no grades. Second, there's changes to the applicant section. These are all intended to really focus more of the attention and the information provided and the information assessed on the candidate's scientific thinking, and the considerations of the candidates themselves, really trying to get at the quality of the candidate.

The third change is changes to the sponsors, collaborators, and consultants section. The mentors for the most part, and again, the goals and these changes are really to make sure that it's focusing on the specifics related to the application as opposed to just the general reputation or position of the sponsor and another collaborator. The application asks them to focus more on the plan for the specific trainee or candidate and their fit, and what the sponsors, collaborators, consultants bring to the training plan when the application is proposed.

The letters of reference will be revised, again, with the goal of simplifying and making sure that they're tailored and more structured to get information that supports the review criteria. Trainee-specific questions that are more targeted in word-limited fields as well as other efforts to discourage boilerplate letters and make sure that the reviewers are able to evaluate the qualifications of the candidates and of the specific applications, as opposed to just general reputation.

In terms of the research training project plan, that really has not changed at all. That remains the same. Then we've also added the option, it's not a requirement but a space within the application that allows for a statement of special circumstances. If there's been any personal professional circumstances, they may explain, for example, a gap in schooling trajectory or a situation that may have impact on the candidate's productivity or considerations, so an option for those statements.

The other thing that I will add, and a lot of this came from input we received over the course of the public input time period, is we've also revised the instructions to make it pretty clear of which parts of the application should be completed by the candidate as well as by the sponsor. It should be an easier application to fill out in that regard. Again, when, it's the same timeline as the research project grants. It applies to any applications submitted with a due date on or after January 25th for fellowships that, for the most part, there may be a few exceptions, means applications that will be due April 8th, 2025. Those tend to have a distinct deadline, so we put that here.

Again, any application that will be reviewed next summer, so a year from now, and go to October 2025 advisory council. Again, I've listed out the specific activity codes and NRSA activities that are affected under this framework, which is the full complement of our fellowship applications.

On that same website, there is a page dedicated to fellowship. Here's the specific link if you want to go straight to a similar page that focuses on details of the framework, the implementation plan, lays out the review criteria and exactly how those are phrased, and other information is available on that website. Before I open up for questions, just wanted to, again, come back to that timeline. I presented it here. Here we are. This is now, at the beginning, of this bar. NIH, we throw around a lot of different dates and they can be really confusing.

Sometimes I wanted to lay this out a little bit more explicitly. We talk about January, May, or October councils. This is when funding decisions are made, so that's what frames our cycles. For

the next two cycles of applications, we're still under the current framework. These changes will be coming for applications due between February and April. For the most part, those are the standard due dates, but again, with this qualification of anything with a due date, January 25th, 2025, or beyond, for next summer review, and for consideration of the September and October 2025 councils.

For the research project grants, the framework just affects the review considerations and how the same factors are grouped together and considered in review. For Fs, the changes affect both the review framework as well as involving a new application form. All right, we can open it up for questions. I'm going to stop sharing so that I can--

Shandol: Dr. Durrant, thank you so much. we really appreciate you presenting this information, and much thanks to everyone in the audience for submitting some fabulous questions as well. A quick note that we did drop a link to the slides in chat, and also put links to both of the websites that were referenced in the slides right there in chat. We've recorded this, and we'll send a link to the recording and the slide deck in about two weeks, and then also put it on our webpage there.

Keep the questions coming in the Q&A, here's some good ones that came in. Dr. Durrant, you talked a little bit about the timeline in which applications would be impacted. A good question here, just to clarify, will there be any changes to the R01 application form related to the new framework?

Dr. Durrant: No. No changes to the application itself. If you're working on an application now and working with the instructions and laying out that application, if you hold it for another year, it's still going to be the same application. I should qualify that with there are sometimes updates to the NIH forms, but it's the same application, format's going to be the same.

Shandol: Perfect. This has come in a few different times, and so want to make sure that we get this one out there. How will this impact revised applications submitted in 2025?

Dr. Durrant: Okay. If you have an application that is reviewed under the current framework that then you plan to resubmit for a due date, January 25th or after, I'm going to answer this first for research project grants, and then for fellowships because the answer will be different.

For research project grants, the reviewers will be asked in the revised application to consider your application using the revised framework. It should not affect how you write that application. It should not affect how you prepare that application. That should all be the same. The differences that the reviewers will be asked to use that new framework, which is taking the same considerations that are there now but grouping them a little differently in order to emphasize these considerations.

Really, the way you're preparing an application shouldn't change significantly with that caveat. Obviously, you want to know what the reviewers are being asked specifically to consider and keep that in mind as you prepare your application, but the general considerations are the same.

Shandol: Great, thank you. Another terrific question that came in, would love to hear what recommendations you have for early career new investigators to increase their odds of submitting a successful proposal.

Dr. Durrant: Yes, we get this question a lot and I'll hit on a handful of both big-picture strategies as well as some specific considerations. First, again, really focusing on the early career or your first

NIH application, find a mentor or someone who has already gotten an NIH grant and been through the process that you can at least ask questions and help guide you. There's a lot of information. The instructions are complex. There's a lot of details. and having somebody who can give you some personal experience help you frame that approach is really critical. That's a great first step.

Likewise, reaching out to a program officer at NIH fairly early in the process is also in your best interest. It's best to reach out to a program once you have a pretty good idea of what you want to do. Once you have a research question and can prepare a paragraph of an abstract, "Here's the question I want to ask, here's the general approach I'm considering." it doesn't have to be a fully developed application, but once you have a pretty good idea, if you reach out to program, they can tell you about opportunities. They can tell you if there are specific funding opportunities versus the parent opportunities.

You can have a conversation with them about what is an appropriate mechanism or activity code. Is this R01? Are there other types of applications that you may want to consider? Because there are a range of different applications that NIH supports in different grant programs.

Third, read the NOFO, the notice of funding opportunity that will lay out any specific considerations relevant to the particular call, as well as the review criteria. We always say Section 5. Section 5 will tell you what the reviewers will be considering in the assessment of the scientific merit of the application. A couple more that probably apply across the board, whether it's your first or one of many applications to NIH. Present your ideas and recognize that the reviewers are the first eyes on your application, and you want to sell them your ideas. You want to tell them why this is important, how it will advance science.

Don't assume that they're going to know where you're coming from. Lay some of that out. Win them over with your idea. Convince them and the NIH that this is a project that is worth doing and will be done well. It's a good idea to get input from colleagues, especially those that may not be closely tied to your project so that you can get neutral eyes. Make sure that you're communicating your ideas clearly. It's one of the most common things that reviewers struggle with is what are they going to do. You think you're clear, but it may not be entirely clear from a neutral perspective.

Then lastly, resubmit. There are a lot of good applications out there, and you get good feedback from the review. Don't give up. Take that feedback, think through it, and get applications back in.

Shandol: Thanks so much for that fantastic advice. Got a few questions here that I want to dig into. I am looking at our Q&A tool there below. There's a lot of questions about K grants and what changes-- do any of these changes affect K grants and lots of different numbers. I wondered if you could maybe just address K grants in general and how this is impacting that.

Dr. Durrant: Sure. Easy answer. Right now, it's not. There are no changes currently underway for Ks. One step at a time. We started with the research project grants and the fellowship because of the concerns from the community and that's where we are now. Once we get those under our belt, we will certainly be considering other relevant mechanisms, but for now, Ks are not changing.

Shandol: Great. Thanks for clarifying. A question switching to reviewers. How will reviewers be taught respective fundamental importance and incremental programmatic science?

Dr. Durrant: It's a good question. First of all, we do a pretty elaborate training of reviewers. I know you've probably got several reviewers out there on the call. Thank you. You're probably familiar with it. We have a number of different ways that we work with reviewers to communicate

the goals of review and make sure that they understand the scope of the input that we want and how to best convey that and do that. We also have training that's related to recognizing bias to what are the goals of review. It is general framework as well as some specifics.

One of the questions that we do get is how do we work with reviewers to make sure that they understand our goals? For every panel, we do pre-meeting teleconferences or Zoom calls where we go over, walk through the review criteria, make sure that they understand. We also review critiques as they come in, provide a lot of feedback along the way to reviewers, and then work with them in the meeting to make sure they understand.

I think the question that you asked also talked a little bit about how we get reviewers to focus on the value of different types of science. Not all research questions are the same. It's a great question that I think really captures some of the changes to factor one and one of the reasons why factor one are this question of what is the importance of the research, some of the ideas that we want to communicate to reviewers with that factor.

One is it incorporates and integrates considerations related to both significance as well as innovation, but it doesn't necessarily require both. We want reviewers to put both on the table, what's the value and the contribution of the aims as proposed, as well as what is innovative, and there may not be innovation. There may be, there may not be, and we want reviewers to be able to assess that and recognize that an application doesn't always have to be innovative in order to be important. We give reviewers room there to assess and think through those issues, but that's important.

On the other hand, we do want to make sure that all reviewers are really assessing what is the potential advance and what's the impact that an application, the specific goals, aims? If the project is successful, what will we learn? How will it advance science? What will we be able to do that we can't do now? Those are some of the ways that we work with reviewers to understand that.

We also really want reviewers to focus on the aims as proposed. There's lots of assumptions and impressions about what type of research NIH favors. That changes, it is different. We support and are interested in a huge array of projects, types of projects, goals, and we want to make sure the reviewers are open to that full set. Really asking them to focus on as proposed, what is the likely benefit and gains that will be achieved. Hope that answers that question.

Shandol: Thank you. One more question related to reviewers, and then there's a couple of other questions I would love to get to is, how are reviewers recruited and selected, even just to begin with, as you move through this framework?

Dr. Durrant: Good question. Let me answer that in terms of what we're looking for in a reviewer. The whole goal is peer review. We are looking for peers. We want to make sure that we're bringing in people that have relevant expertise to a panel that reflect the diversity in terms of expertise, in terms of study populations, in terms of the scientific community, as well as the American, the US population, or the broad population that's being served.

We have a number of considerations, expertise, making sure that we're bringing in a breadth of different perspectives. We are putting together panels that as a whole bring in a range of different perspectives, both in terms of science as well as being situated in different parts of the academic and non-academic landscape and experience level. Looking for a range, but we do want to make sure everybody has research experience and is in a good position to really speak to and do a

scientific assessment. We are looking for people with publication records, with potential funding, with other qualifications that show that they are successful in doing research.

Shandol: Great. Thanks for that. Hopping back to resubmission, I know we've talked through what's affected and what's being resubmitted. Just to clarify, getting some questions about Fs. We've talked a lot about what happens for our resubmission.

Dr. Durrant: I forgot to mention that. Thanks for bringing that back up. With Fs, if you submit an original application in the next two rounds and do not receive funding and want to resubmit it for the April 8th or beyond due date, you will need to use the new application form and it will be reviewed under the new framework.

Shandol: Great. Thank you so much. Lots of folks are looking for examples. We'll direct you to the websites that were in the slides. We'll be sending the slides along with the recording. I had a question; I'll throw it out there. How does this new framework address the potential for AI-generated proposals? Throw it out for the conversation.

Dr. Durrant: Oh, interesting question. The framework itself really doesn't address that. I think NIH has put out statements about appropriate use of AI in terms of applications in NIH review and various activities. It's not directly related to anything about this framework.

Shandol: I will say APA on our publications page also has put out some policies related to AI-generated content and journals and publications. I think that'd be an important resource that we would direct people to as well as these tools continue to grow and change the landscape, that it's always important to look at organizational policies and transcripts and resources on where you're submitting proposals. Are there other things that came to mind, Dr. Durrant, as answering these questions that you want to throw out to the audience before we wrap up here?

Dr. Durrant: No. Just again, a reminder about the website, and it is a dynamic website. For example, if you go there now and you click under the review considerations, it's a blank box that has not yet been released. Partially it's still under development, but partially we don't want to-- it is always difficult at NIH when we have to work in this window of when we have policies that affect the current review and then policies that affect future reviews.

We don't want to create unnecessary confusion. We have not yet released details about the review criteria yet so that we don't confuse reviewers now and they don't inadvertently grab the wrong set of considerations or whatever. Those will be coming. That website is dynamic and that's where the updates and more information will be available. Again, recognize that there's a very strategic and thoughtful plan about the release of information in order to balance our goals of making sure everyone's aware but also not confusing people in the process. That is really your best resource for what is known, what's available, and it is being updated regularly.

Shandol: It sounds like advice after people log off this webinar or close down the recording, if they have more questions to go to the website, see what new information has been added. Check it often as you're preparing your grant and before you submit it, all throughout the process. Terrific. We appreciate everyone for participating today. Dr. Durrant, thank you so much for coming and telling us the news and updates directly from the NIH.

It's been really helpful to have this information at the fingertips for everyone. We have included a one minute-survey, so when we end our webinar here today, everyone should receive a one minute-

survey. We appreciate your feedback. We would love to hear what other topics you have. We also invite you to email us at science@apa.org with other recommendations.

Again, we hope that you will subscribe to *Science Spotlight*, a free newsletter. *Science Spotlight* will let you know what other events we have coming up, funding opportunities. As we continue to get more information from the NIH about this process and other opportunities, we tend to put those things in *Spotlight*. Sign up for *Spotlight* and you'll get information directly in your inbox. We hope you'll join that, and we hope everyone has a wonderful day. Thank you so much. Bye.