

UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth · Office of Grant & Contract Mgmt
Helpful Hints to Avoid Common Mistakes while Completing
the SF424 for Submission to the NIH

SF424 (R&R) Cover (for more detailed instructions, see UNTHSC-Specific Information for SF424 Cover Component)

1. Applicant Information (#5) is referring to the institution, not the PI.
2. Person to be contacted on matters involving this application: (#5) is referring to the Institutional Business Official, LeAnn S. Forsberg.
3. The EIN (#6) is 1756064033A1
4. Use the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (#10) number and title of the program under which assistance is requested. This information is pre-populated by Grants.gov. **This field may be blank if you are applying to an opportunity that references multiple CFDA numbers. When this field is blank, leave it blank; the field will not allow any data entry.** The appropriate CFDA number will be automatically assigned by the agency once the application is assigned to the appropriate awarding component.
5. DUNS for applicant organization must match DUNS recorded in the Commons for that organization. Our DUNS number is 110091808.
6. Start Date. Check the program announcement to see if there is an earliest possible start date prescribed. For typical cycle deadlines the earliest possible start dates can be found by following the link below:
http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/424/SF424_RR_Guide_General_Ver2.pdf

SF 424 (R&R) Other Project Information

1. **Human Subjects.** If human subjects (#1) are involved you must put our Federal Wide Assurance # **00005755**.
2. **Vertebrate Animals.** If vertebrate animals (#2) are involved you must put our Animal Welfare Assurance # **A3711-01**.
3. **Project Narrative.** For NIH and other PHS agencies applications, the Project Narrative (#7) attachment will reflect the second component of the Project Summary. The second component of the Project Summary/Abstract (i.e., “Description”) is Relevance. Using no more than two or three sentences, describe the relevance of this research to public health. In this section, be succinct and use plain language that can be understood by a general, lay audience.

SF424 (R&R) Senior / Key Person Profile(s)

1. **Missing Commons User ID.** Did you leave out the Commons PI User ID in the credential field? It is one of the most common errors made by applicants. The field is not marked as required on the application form, but is required by NIH as indicated in the application instructions in the SF424 (R&R) Application Guide. The assigned Commons User ID (the unique name used to log into the system) for anyone assigned the PD/PI role must be entered in the field called “Credential, e.g.



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agency login.” This field is located in the first section called “Profile – Project Director/Principal Investigator” underneath the phone field.

- 2. Project Role** Select a project role from the list. Select “Other” if an appropriate project role is not listed.

If you are submitting an application reflecting Multiple PDs/Pis, all such individuals **must** be assigned the PD/PI role, even those at organizations other than the applicant organization. **The role of “Co-PD/PI” is not currently used by NIH and other PHS agencies.** Do not assign any individual this role. If applicants wish to use the role of “Co-Investigator” or some other similar role, select “Other” for the Project Role field and then insert the appropriate role descriptor in the Other Project Role Category field.

If including individuals classified as “Other Significant Contributors (OSCs),” use the “Other” category and indicate “Other Significant Contributor” as the role in the “Other Project Role Category.” OSCs should be listed last after all other Senior/Key Persons have been listed.

SF424 (R&R) Budget and PHS398 Modular Budget

- 1. Start date for first budget year must be same as start date for proposed project start date.** Remember to check start and end dates. For new applications and revisions/amendments to new applications, the start date for the first budget year on the 424 RR Budget page must be the same as the proposed project start date listed on the SF424 (R&R) Cover page.
On the SF 424 (R&R) Budget only, once you enter a start date in the Year 1 start date field, **YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CHANGE IT.** Please be certain of your start date before completing this field.
- 2. Total Cost Must Equal Direct and Indirect Costs.** Ensure that the direct costs and the indirect costs (G + H) on Section F-K must **EQUAL** the Total Direct and Indirect Costs (G + H) on the Cumulative Budget page. Only whole numbers should be used on the budget page, no decimals. Round calculations **DOWN** to the nearest dollar.
- 3. Missing PD/PI Personnel entry on Detailed Budget Page.** There must be a Personnel entry listed for the PD/PI on the Detailed Budget Page for budget year 1. [#1 of the Research & Related Budget – Section A & B (budget year 1)]. The name given for the PD/PI for the budget year must match the name given for the PD/PI on the Senior/Key Person form.
- 4. Indirect Costs.** Indirect Cost Type should be Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC). Our Federally Negotiated On-Site rate is 44% of MTDC. Our Federally Negotiated Off-site rate is 24% of MTDC. (Please see the fact sheet for further information on MTDC). Training and career development awards often have indirect costs capped at 8%, consult your PA for clarification.



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PDF Issues: Guidelines

To avoid PDF problems, keep these guidelines in mind:

1. NIH only accepts attachments in PureEdge or PDF format. **Do not** submit attachments in other formats such as Microsoft Word, Word Perfect, etc. Other formats may be allowed through Grants.gov but are not accepted by NIH.
2. It is recommended that applicants avoid scanning text documents to produce the required PDFs whenever possible. Instead, NIH recommends producing the documents electronically using text or word-processing software and then converting documents to PDF. Scanning paper documents, without the proper Optical Character Recognition (OCR) process, will hamper automated processing of your application for NIH analysis and reporting.
3. A 0 byte attachment is an invalid PDF.
4. Only use standard characters in file names:
A through Z, a through z, and 0 through 9, Hyphen (-), underscore (_).
5. Disable all security features in the PDF document.
Protected documents prevent NIH from opening and processing the document. Security settings vary by PDF tool, but please ensure security settings are not marked. The applicant needs to look at the Document Security tab under Document Properties (directly from the tab) and set the security parameters to ensure open access so NIH can process the content. For instance, do not password protect the document and do not mark Content Extraction or Copying; Document Assembly, etc as “Not Allowed.”
6. If you are having trouble fixing the PDF settings, simply cut and paste from the PDF document into a Microsoft Word document and then reconvert (in some cases it may be better to use another PDF converter).
7. One of the PDF tools that have been working without issue for most applicants is CutePDF.
8. **Do not include any information in the header or footer area of the attachments. A header will be system-generated that references the name of the PD/PI. Page numbers for the footer will be system-generated in the complete application, with all pages sequentially numbered.** Applicants are encouraged to use Section Headings within the document.

Note: NIH had previously suggested that applicants not use active links in PDFs. NIH has since addressed the issue and applicants **can now include** active links in PDFs.

Formatting Guidelines:

1. **Font.** Use an Arial, Helvetica, Palatino Linotype, or Georgia typeface, a black font color, and a font size of 11 points or larger. (A Symbol font may be used to insert Greek letters or special characters; the font size requirement still applies.) Type density, including characters and spaces, must be no more than 15 characters per inch. Type may be no more that six lines per inch.



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2. **Page Margins.** Use *standard paper size (8 ½" x 11)*. Use at least one-half inch margins (top, bottom, left, and right) for all pages. No information should appear in the margins, including the PI's name and page numbers.
3. **Page Formatting.** Since a number of reviewers will be reviewing applications as an electronic document and not a paper version, applicants are strongly encouraged to use only a standard, single-column format for the text. Avoid using a two-column format since it can cause difficulties when reviewing the document electronically.
Do not include any information in a header or footer of the attachments. A header will be system-generated that references the name of the PD/PI. Page numbers for the footer will be system-generated in the complete application, with all pages sequentially numbered.
4. **Figures, Graphs, Diagrams, Charts, Tables, Figure Legends, and Footnotes.** You may use a smaller type size but it must be in a black font color, readily legible, and follow the font typeface requirement. Color can be used in figures; however, all text must be in a black font color, clear and legible.
5. **Always check PA for page limitations!**

Multiple PDs/PIs:

NIH is now accepting applications reflecting Multiple PDs/PIs for all grant mechanisms using the SF424 (R&R) application. When submitting an application involving Multiple PDs/PIs, the Contact PI should be listed as the PD/PI in the SF424 R&R Cover Component (see [Section 4.2.15](#)). That information automatically prepopulates the first Senior/Key Person Profile record in this component. For the additional PDs/PIs, complete all the requested information. **Each PD/PI must be assigned the PD/PI role, even those at subaward/consortium sites when applicable. (Do not use the "Co-PI" role.)**

Each PD/PI must also be registered in the eRA Commons and must be assigned the PI Role in that system (note other roles such as SO or IAR will not give PDs/PIs the appropriate access to the application records). Each PD/PI must include their respective eRA Commons ID in the Credential field. For more information on NIH Implementation of Multiple PDs/PIs, see: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/multi_pi/index.htm.

When completing the detailed budget component for either the prime organization or a subaward/consortium organization, the project roles listed in the budget component should be consistent with those used in the Senior/Key Person component.

Mac OS X security patch disables IBM Workplace Forms (PureEdge) Viewer

Apple recently released a new security patch. The IBM Workplace Forms (PureEdge) Viewer for Macintosh will not function if this security patch is installed. If you have not already installed the recent Apple security patch and you need to use the IBM Workplace Forms (PureEdge) Viewer for Macintosh, you are encouraged not to install the recent patch until the problem has been resolved.

Until the problem is fully resolved by IBM, they have offered a workaround for the MAC applicant community until a final resolution can be determined.



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Applicants that choose to use the workaround should follow the instruction below. **The Viewer will remain open until closed by the applicant; this script would have to be run every time an applicant decides to launch the Viewer.**

Instructions:

1. Launch a terminal. From the Menu select Go > Utilities > Terminal.
2. Copy the following script into the terminal window and press enter.

```
#!/bin/bash -f
#
clear
export DYLD_LIBRARY_PATH="/Users/$USER/IBM Workplace Forms/IBM
Workplace Forms Viewer.app/Contents/MacOS:/Users/$USER/IBM Workplace
Forms/IBM Workplace Forms Viewer.app/Contents/MacOS/API/70/system"
cd "/Users/$USER/IBM Workplace Forms"
open "IBM Workplace Forms Viewer.app" &

echo "To Open .xfd files Click the File menu then Open"
echo " You may close this window at any time, the Application will continue to run."

exit 0=
```

3. The Viewer should now be launched and the terminal window can be closed.

IBM is actively working to resolve this issue and we keep you informed regarding this matter.

