

PHS Assignment Request Form or Cover Letter?

NIH applicants have the opportunity to suggest information to help NIH refer and review their grant application. Applicants are to include specific requests on the new **PHS Assignment Request form**, rather than in a cover letter (as has been done in the past).

Applicants should use the assignment request form if they choose to:

- Request assignment to an institute/center for funding consideration
- Request assignment to a particular study section for initial review
- Identify individuals they do not think should review the application
- Identify scientific areas of expertise needed to review the application

This information may also be included in an *optional* cover letter but not *in lieu* of the assignment request form

A **cover letter** must be submitted for the following situations:

- Late applications
- Changed/correct applications after the due date
- Explanation of why any sub award budgets are not active for all budget periods
- Budget requests >\$500,000 per year.
- When submitting a video as part of the application
- If the proposed study generate large-scale genomic data

Note: The cover letter and form are for internal use by the referral staff/scientific review officers –reviewers never see these two items.

Importance of the Project Title and Abstract

The title of your grant proposal is your first chance to win over peer reviewers. Carefully craft your project title and abstract – use key words that help officials direct your proposal to an appropriate study section. Use results-drive words instead of those that describe your process. Titles are limited to 200 characters (including spaces).

Should I Call the Program Officer Before I Apply?

YES! Early in the planning stage of your project, it is recommended you contact the program officer listed on the specific FOA. They are listed in section VII of the FOA. They can advise you regarding:

- An institute's potential enthusiasm about your research area
- Potential application topics
- The appropriate FOA through which to apply (very important now that many are not accepting clinical studies to parent FOAs)
- The appropriate study section to request on your assignment form

Dr. Berger's Recommendation: *Read* the Instructions, *Understand* the Instructions, *Believe* the Instructions!

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SPECIAL EDITION

This special edition contains important information related to NIH applications.

TOPICS FOR THIS EDITION

- PHS Assignment Request Form or Cover Letter?
- Importance of the Project Title
- When to Contact the Program Officer

WEBSITE

<http://www.unmc.edu/nursing/research/index.html>

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