Evaluating Proposals at NIH

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Study Section

- Study section – panel of outside experts
- Social Sciences and Population Studies Study Section (SSPS)
  - [http://cms.csr.nih.gov/PeerReviewMeetings/CSRIRGDescriptionNew/PSEIRG/SSPS.htm](http://cms.csr.nih.gov/PeerReviewMeetings/CSRIRGDescriptionNew/PSEIRG/SSPS.htm)
  - SRA – Robert Weller

- Population Science Subcommittee:
  - SRA – Carla Walls
Steps in Process

- Send expertise/conflict form to Study section members, along with abstracts.
- Assignments
  - Initial applications versus resubmissions
- Review proposals on e-commons
  https://commons.era.nih.gov/commons/
- Review criteria
Review Criteria

- Significance
- Innovation
- Approach
- Investigator
- Environment
• **Significance.** Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the field? If the aims of the project are achieved, how will scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice be improved? How will successful completion of the aims change the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field?

• **Investigator(s).** Are the PD/PIs, collaborators, and other researchers well suited to the project? If Early Stage Investigators or New Investigators, do they have appropriate experience and training? If established, have they demonstrated an ongoing record of accomplishments that have advanced their field(s)? If the project is collaborative or multi-PD/PI, do the investigators have complementary and integrated expertise; are their leadership approach, governance and organizational structure appropriate for the project?

• **Innovation.** Does the application challenge and seek to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions? Are the concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions novel to one field of research or novel in a broad sense? Is a refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions proposed?

• **Approach.** Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project? Are potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented? If the project is in the early stages of development, will the strategy establish feasibility and will particularly risky aspects be managed? If the project involves clinical research, are the plans for 1) protection of human subjects from research risks, and 2) inclusion of minorities and members of both sexes/genders, as well as the inclusion of children, justified in terms of the scientific goals and research strategy proposed?

• **Environment.** Will the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th>Additional Guidance on Strengths/Weaknesses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Impact</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
<td>Exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>Extremely strong with negligible weaknesses</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Very strong with only some minor weaknesses</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Strong but with numerous minor weaknesses</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Strong but with at least one moderate weakness</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Some strengths but also some moderate weaknesses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moderate Impact</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Some strengths but with at least one major weakness</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>A few strengths and a few major weaknesses</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Very few strengths and numerous major weaknesses</td>
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<td>Low Impact</td>
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Non-numeric score options: NR = Not Recommended for Further Consideration, DF = Deferred, AB = Abstention, CF = Conflict, NP = Not Present, ND = Not Discussed

Minor Weakness: An easily addressable weakness that does not substantially lessen impact
Moderate Weakness: A weakness that lessens impact
Major Weakness: A weakness that severely limits impact
### OVERALL IMPACT

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<th>Overall Impact</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strengths</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Weaknesses</strong></td>
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### SCORED REVIEW CRITERIA

1. **Significance**

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<tr>
<td><strong>Weaknesses</strong></td>
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2. **Investigator(s)**

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<td><strong>Weaknesses</strong></td>
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3. **Innovation**

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<td><strong>Weaknesses</strong></td>
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4. **Approach**

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<tr>
<td><strong>Weaknesses</strong></td>
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### 5. Environment

**Strengths**
- 

**Weaknesses**
- 

### ADDITIONAL REVIEW CRITERIA

The following review criteria are not scored individually, but should be considered when determining the overall impact/priority score.

#### Protections for Human Subjects

- Click Here to Select
- Comments (Required Unless Not Applicable):
  - 

- Data and Safety Monitoring Plan (Applicable for Clinical Trials Only):
  - Click Here to Select
  - Comments (Required Unless Not Applicable):
    - 

#### Inclusion of Women, Minorities and Children (Applicable Only for Human Subjects Research)

- Click Here to Select Gender Code
- Click Here to Select Minority Code
- Click Here to Select Children Code
- Comments (Required Unless Not Applicable):
  - 

#### Vertebrate Animals

- Click Here to Select
- Comments (Required Unless Not Applicable):
  - 

#### Biohazards

- Click Here to Select
- Comments (Required Unless Not Applicable):
  - 

Please limit text to ¼ page.
### Resubmission
Please limit text to ¼ page

Comments (if applicable):
- 

### Renewal
Please limit text to ¼ page

Comments (if applicable):
- 

### Revision
Please limit text to ¼ page

Comments (if applicable):
- 

### ADDITIONAL REVIEW CONSIDERATIONS
The impact/priority score should not be affected by the following considerations.

### Budget and Period of Support
Click Here to Select
Recommended budget modifications or possible overlap identified:
- 

### Select Agents
Click Here to Select
Comments (Required if Unacceptable):
- 

### Applications from Foreign Organizations
Click Here to Select
Comments (Required Unless Not Applicable):
- 

### Resource Sharing Plans
Click Here to Select
Comments (Required if Unacceptable):
- 

At the Study Section Meeting

- Initial scoring (overall)
- Reviewed or Unscored by study section
- Primary, second, third reviewer – give initial scores
- Discussion among all panel members
- Final scoring with range (e.g., 2-4)
Outcome

- https://commons.era.nih.gov/commons/
Good Luck