

Did you know that the top five eRA Commons errors account for about 80% of total SBIR/STTR submission errors?

Don't Be That Person

(Special thanks to Betty Royster and Matt Portnoy of the NIH SBIR/STTR program for their kind permission to reprint the informative article that follows.)

Developing an NIH SBIR or STTR grant application requires a lot of hard work and multiple steps. Once you've written your application, you must be able to successfully submit it electronically and error-free so NIH can review it.



Take some time to review these top five eRA Commons Submission errors in advance of the next NIH SBIR/STTR deadline on April 7, 2014. Doing so will help save precious time and ensure your application moves forward for review.

Please use the [Annotated SF424 Form set for IR/STTR applications](#) along with these tips to guide you during the electronic submission process. The annotated form set provides step-by-step instructions of which fields to complete and aligns with the information below.

Error #1: Each Senior/Key Person listed must include effort of value > 0 in calendar months, or academic and summer months

- It's okay to put 0 dollars (no salary), but **NOT** 0 effort.
- Be sure to describe the source of key personnel funding in the Budget Justification if \$0 salary is listed.

Error #2: All application attachments must be in [PDF format](#).

- Use simple PDF-formatted files (**no Word files**)
 - Do not use Portfolio or similar feature to bundle multiple files into a single PDF
 - Disable security features such as password protection
- Keep file names to 50 characters or less and use only letters, numbers, underscore, hyphen, space and period
- Use meaningful filenames and follow guidelines for fonts and margins
- Do not include headers or footers

Error #3: eRA Commons username must be supplied in the *Credential* field of Senior/Key Person Page

- For multiple PD/PI applications, select the PD/PI role for each PI and provide their eRA Commons username in the *Credential* field of Senior/Key Person Page
- This field is required for NIH grant submissions.

Error #4: NIH requires the Organization name for all Senior/Key listed.

- The application pre-populates for PI, but NOT other key personnel

Error #5: The Federal Identifier on the Cover Page should include only the IC and serial number of the prior grant number

- Federal Identifier: If box 1=Application and box 8>New, then leave blank
- If box 1=Changed/Corrected and box 8>New, then enter previous Grants.gov tracking number

- Otherwise, use Institute and serial # of previous NIH grant/app (e.g., use CA987654 from 1R01CA987654-01)

Other helpful tips to remember:

- Corrective submissions must be made BEFORE the submission deadline and overwrite previous submissions.
 - Errors stop application processing and **must** be corrected
 - Warnings do not stop application processing and are corrected at the discretion of the applicant
- Talk to an NIH Program Officer about your application and SUBMIT EARLY (days not hours and minutes)!
- If you have questions, please contact the eRA Commons Help Desk:
 - Toll-free: [1-866-504-9552](tel:1-866-504-9552)
 - Phone: [301-402-7469](tel:301-402-7469)
 - Hours : Mon-Fri, 7a.m. to 8 p.m. ET

Don't wait until the last minute to try and submit your application electronically. [Registration](#) itself can take between 6-8 weeks, and any application submission error can keep your application from processing. Plan ahead to ensure your application moves forward successfully and reduce last minute submission stress. Good luck!