

FOA FAQs

1. Do the CCSG Guidelines still exist?

NIH rules require that all information pertinent to an application be included in the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA). All information that was once included in the Guidelines is now in the FOA with the exception of a description of peer review processes. A document that describes these processes is now available at: http://cancercenters.cancer.gov/grants_funding/PeerReviewProcessesRelevanttotheCCSG508.pdf,

2. The Essential Characteristic “Facilities” is now called “Physical Space.” Is there a change in this component?

No, the same review criteria apply and the narrative will be similar to before. The term “Facilities” has a specific meaning in NIH applications, prompting a change of the name of this Essential Characteristic. Applicants will use the “Facilities and Other Resources” attachment to provide certain information, such as a map of the center and other information as listed in the FOA and the Summary of 2014 FOA Changes.

3. The FOA indicates that Specific Aims are required for every component. What Specific Aims are appropriate in components such as Shared Resources, Planning and Evaluation, etc.?

Some of the components of a CCSG do not readily lend themselves to the formulation of useful Specific Aims; however, the NIH templates for FOAs require Specific Aims for every component. Applicants should do their best to briefly describe the aims of each component.

4. How should Appendices on the PHS 398 be used?

Applicants cannot use Appendices (or Attachments) to circumvent page limits. Misuse could result in rejection of the application by CSR. Since reviewers are not required to view Appendices, care should be exercised in using these. Colored photos are now included with the Research Programs narrative. Please contact your OCC program director to discuss any proposed use of Appendices.

5. There is now an extensive set of Attachments. Can we be sure that reviewers will examine them?

Much essential information, such as the Data Tables, will now be presented as Attachments. Applicants should include Attachments only as described in the FOA. Reviewers will be instructed by the Senior Review Official to consider them. Applicants may want to refer in the narrative to the information in an Attachment to ensure that reviewers can easily find it. An Attachment is not required if an applicant

has enough space in the Research Strategy section of a component to include all relevant information.

6. The use of the term “Core” now includes components that are not shared resources. How does this affect review?

The term “core” is one of the component types in ASSIST and does not refer to a core service or shared resource. Because they are not Research Programs (which are considered “Projects”), Planning and Evaluation, Developmental Funds, Shared Resources, CPDM, and EPCRS are termed “Cores.” They will continue to be reviewed by the criteria specific for each component listed at the end of the FOA.

7. The FOA limits budget requests to 10% above the level in the final year of the previous cycle (unless the award is at \$6 million in direct costs). How does the 6.5% reduction in awards due to sequestration affect this calculation?

Until further notice, centers should use their pre-sequestration award (FY12) as the basis in formulating a budget request. Final funding levels, of course, will be determined by NCI based on merit and NCI budget.

8. Where can applicants get help with ASSIST?

The ASSIST user guide is at http://era.nih.gov/files/ASSIST_user_guide/pdf.

An archived Webinar about using ASSIST is at http://grants.nih.gov/grants/webinar_docs/webinar_20130813.htm.

OCC program staff is not trained in ASSIST.

9. Is a table required to show accruals of minorities and women, as previously?

Yes. Instructions for accrual reporting may be found in at <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-CA-14-008.html>.

10. There is reference to additional materials to be submitted “...as described in Section V.2.” What is that?

The FOA reference should be ignored, since the NIH deleted the relevant text in Section V.2. The list of materials to be made available is now located in the document entitled “Peer Review Processes Relevant to the Cancer Center Support Grant” (see link above). The SRO requests them after submission of the application; they apply to both application only and site-visited centers. Site visited centers will want to consult with the SRO on any additional materials that may be provided.

11. How should a center answer questions in the electronic application about Human Subject research?

In each component of the CCSG application, ASSIST asks “Are Human Subjects Involved?”

Most cancer centers conduct NIH-defined Human Subjects research. Centers should check **Yes** in any individual component that carries out research on Human Subjects directly supported by the CCSG. Typically, these would be restricted to Early Phase Clinical Research Support, Developmental Funds, and certain types of shared resources. The CCSG does not directly support human subject research in most other components, including the CPDM, Research Programs (unless the application requests direct funding to a Research Program for use in pilot projects that contain Human Subject research), etc.

If you check **Yes** to any component in the application, you must check **Yes** to the same question in the Overall component.

If Human Subjects is checked **Yes** on the SF 424 R&R Other Project Information form, ASSIST will require attachments on the Protection of Human Subjects, Inclusion of Women and Minorities, and Inclusion of Children. However, since this specific information is not relevant to the various components of CCSG applications, the applicant should attach pdfs simply stating “Not applicable.” Otherwise, ASSIST will not allow the submission of the application.

Aggregate inclusion data (Inclusions of Women and Minorities) for all clinical research at a center should be included as Other Attachments to the CPDM component, as stated in the FOA.

12. Should re-competing centers submit the Data Tables to the OCC at the same time as their Type 2 application?

No, re-competing centers should not submit the Data Tables to ccsgdata@mail.nih.gov concurrent with their application submission.

Although the re-competing application serves as the progress report for that year, centers should still submit Data Tables to ccsgdata@mail.nih.gov 60 days prior to their next start date as usual. These tables should be updated to cover the previous year, and be continuous with the last year of the previous cycle.

Type 1 centers will submit Data Tables covering the previous year to ccsgdata@mail.nih.gov at the time of their first Notice of Grant Award.