

Becoming a Peer Reviewer for NIH: Four Ways to Engage

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If asked, most psychological scientists would gladly serve the research community as a reviewer of grant applications or R&D contract proposals at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). But the question for many is “How can I get asked?”

NIH has made clear it expects funded researchers to also serve as reviewers ([NIH-OD-15-035](#)), and that’s who NIH Scientific Review Officials (SRO) tap for review and other advisory activities. But what about not yet funded scientists?

There are a few simple ways to bring your research expertise and interest in serving as a peer reviewer to the attention of SROs.

First, consider applying to the [NIH Early Career Reviewer Program](#). This program is great way to share your research expertise with the SROs who are seeking reviewers. To apply, go to the [online portal](#) and share your current CV, your [eRA Commons Personal Profile\[1\]](#), and direct your information to the relevant study sections that most closely match your research interest and expertise. This program can give you a foot in the door as a reviewer and allows you to work collaboratively with some of the most accomplished researchers in your field while you assist NIH to identify the most promising grant

applications. Find details about this program at:

<https://public.csr.nih.gov/ReviewerResources/BecomeAReviewer/ECR/Pages/default.aspx>

Second, if you are a more established researcher, you can catch the attention of an SRO directly by sending them your CV and a brief description of your research expertise and interests. To find an SRO who manages applications most relevant to your area of research, you might consider reviewing the [Center for Scientific Review \(CSR\) website](#). On this page, you can find full listing of all CSR SROs as well as a description of the [Integrated Review Groups](#) that handle different areas of science on their website. If you skim the list, several are likely to jump out at you as most relevant to your area of research. Better yet, try contacting an SRO who coordinated the review of an application you previously submitted or an SRO who contacted you (or one of your collaborators) to serve as a reviewer in the past. Timing your contact might also be a point to consider. SROs are seeking the highest volume of reviewers within a few weeks following application due dates, so plan to reach out around key application due dates. Standard due dates can be found on the [NIH Office of Extramural Research site](#).

Third, by keeping your [eRA Commons Personal Profile](#) updated with your relevant expertise, you are making it easier for SROs to find you. A common strategy used by SROs when seeking reviewers is to search the NIH database of Commons Profiles for keywords relevant to the content of the grant applications assigned to their study section. The more closely your relevant expertise matches the scientific content of the grant applications under review, the more likely you are to be contacted as a potential reviewer.

Finally, APS is committed to helping our members come to the attention of NIH SROs. So as you contemplate the above options, go ahead and send us your CV and brief statement of your research interests and expertise (aps@psychologicalscience.org) and we will share it with relevant programs at NIH.

[1] eRA Commons is the electronic system used by NIH for all grant related materials. Your Personal Profile is the module within eRA Commons where users can enter their personal information including name, contact information, employment history, training experience and areas of relevant expertise and you are responsible for keeping your information current and correct.