

Review, Resubmissions, and Renewals – The Program Perspective

Wanping Xu, PhD
Program Director
Cancer Cell Biology Branch

Program Officer Responsibilities: Service Across the Grant Lifecycle

- Before submission
 - Help in identifying FOAs, FOA special requirements, policies, updates, etc
 - Scientific priorities; science of proposed research
- After review
 - Interpreting the summary statement
 - Providing advise on next steps
- Before the award
 - Issues that need to be addressed/ JIT
- After the award
 - Annual progress report monitoring (RPPR); changes to grant; carryover; transfers
 - Supplements
 - Scientific advances, trends; advocate for an area of science

Topics

- Review
- Resubmission
- Renewal

Goals

- Understand the role of a Program Officer as it pertains to application resubmission or renewal
- Understand the benefits and limitations of renewal applications

Interpreting the Unfavorable Summary Statement:

- Read it through and put it aside
- Read it again, as objectively as possible. Talk to your Program Officer and mentor/senior collaborator
- Identify patterns
 - List all the strengths made by all reviewers, organized by criterion
 - Tells what resonated positively with the reviewers
 - List all the weaknesses or concerns
 - Similar concerns – clear direction of needs
 - Distinct concerns – unclear communication of goals?
 - General comments
- Plan your response

*AN IDEA IS WORTH NOTHING
IF IT HAS NO CHAMPION*

That champion will be the reviewer(s) who will
advocate for your application.
Being adversarial to the reviewers will not help you.

Composing the Introduction to the Resubmission:

- Be direct and to the scientific points; respectful and thoughtful
- Summarize the strengths identified
 - Emphasize that these have been retained
- Carefully address the weaknesses, and summarize major changes
 - Take ownership of mistakes
 - Start with those mentioned in the Resume and Summary of discussion
 - Then address themes/issues common to the reviewers
 - Concisely describe how the issues were addressed, and whenever possible expand on how that changes the application/team etc
 - e.g., added a statistician with xxx expertise to help with yyy. Replaced model x with model x', which permits expression to allow for analysis of y'

Introduction to the Resubmission: Dealing with Criticisms of the Approach

- Rather than just saying deleted something – present why the experiments were there and that you can see where the reviewer is coming from
- Show thoughtfulness
 - Don't just say yes or delete everything to appease the reviewers
 - Think through the ask and if suggestion will not work, then propose alternative
 - Don't dismiss reviewers concern because their solution was not good – why did they suggest that? What is the underlying concern?
- Explain when it seems that the reviewer doesn't understand without being condescending
 - What does the reviewer need to know?

Planning the Resubmission:

- Get input – program staff, trusted mentors/peers, collaborators
- Collect new preliminary data or literature
 - Ensure that new prelim data are supportive of what it needs to be/demonstrate
- Rethink and refine methods, clarification of aims, significance
 - Include new/revised materials to satisfy reviewers' concerns
- Delete accordingly
 - Mention what has been deleted if substantive, so reviewers will know and not ask for it back
- Do not add material that is irrelevant to reviewers' concerns
- Plan and set aside time to rewrite

Remember:

Reviewers review the application in front of them, not which application (-01 vs -01A1) is better.

Resubmit or New Application Considerations

Original score –
how far from
payline

Study
section vibe

No. of
changes
needed

Timeline

-O1 vs -A1?

The bottom line:
Has the application
changed significantly
to justify an A0?

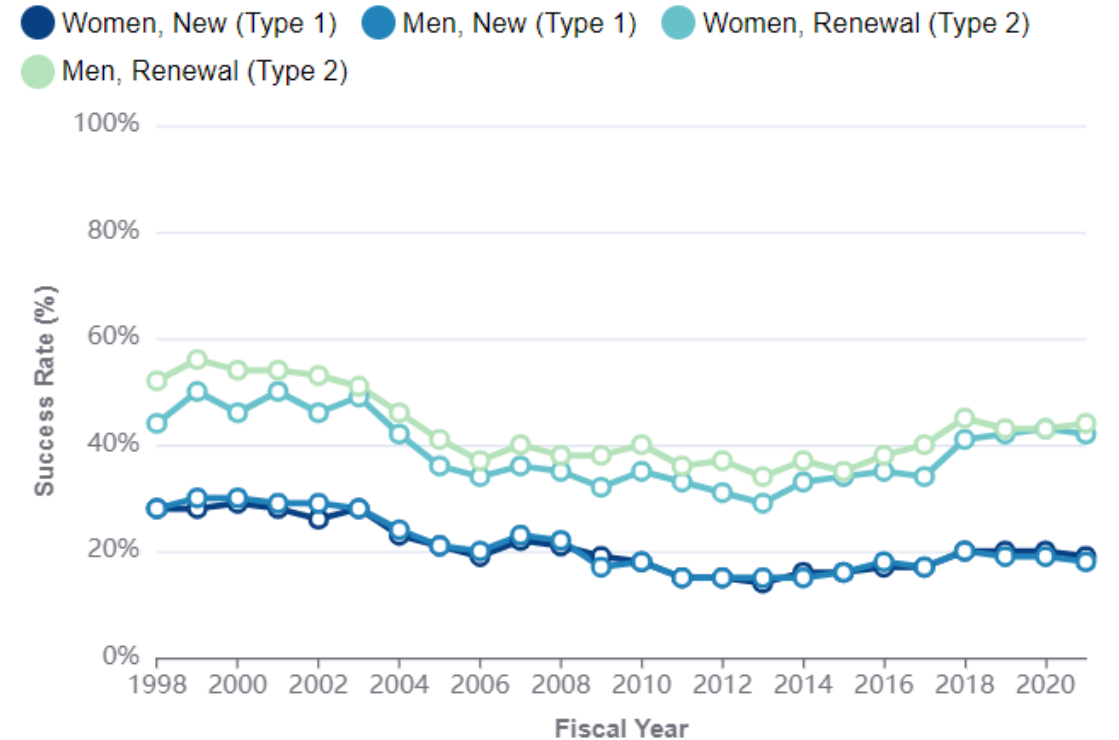
Renewal vs new application considerations

- Productivity
 - Completed aims
 - Publications
- Direction of science
 - Extension
 - New
- Budget
- Success rates
- Departmental requirements

R01-Equivalent Grants: Success Rates, by Gender and Type of Application

NIH Data Book Report ID: 131 [Share](#)

[Data](#) [Export](#)



FY 2009 and 2010 exclude awards made under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) and all ARRA solicited applications and awards.

*Excludes awards issued using supplemental Coronavirus (COVID-19) appropriations.

Last Updated: February 2022

[View More](#)

*Congratulations on your award
Wish you success in future applications*

