

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH COMMITTEE MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK

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ADMINISTRATIVE FACT SHEET FOR Integrated/Initial Review Groups (IRGs) and Special Emphasis Panels (SEPs)

Membership or participation on IRGs and SEPs is subject to prescribed procedures applicable to all officially established advisory committees of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

[eRA COMMONS](#)

The Electronic Research Administration (eRA) Commons (eCommons) is an online interface where signing officials, principal investigators, trainees and post-docs at institutions/organizations can access and share administrative information relating to research grants. eCommons accounts are also necessary to gain access to the eRA [Internet Assisted Review \(IAR\) module](#) where you will perform confidentiality and lobbyist certifications, electronically certify pre and post review conflict of interest certifications, and other peer review meeting activities. Additionally, having an eCommons account will allow you to access [Secure Payee Registration System](#) (SPRS) to enter/review your information for reimbursement/compensation. You may want to ensure now that you have a current eCommons account and can gain access to that system.

Please note: You may access and maintain your NIH personal profile by logging into your eCommons account. This data includes your personal and employment information that is already part of the NIH computerized system of record. We require that you manage your own profile and keep it up to date.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

In order to participate at an IRG/SEP meeting, two steps will be required in IAR to gain access to the meeting. The steps are to review and certify that you are 1) not a federally registered lobbyist and 2) a confidentiality agreement which explains the process in reviewing documents for each meeting. Certifying both steps will allow you to gain access to the meeting. Once this is completed, the Scientific Review Officer (SRO) for the meeting, will provide you with a list of applications/proposals to be reviewed in advance of the meeting. SROs may also use an optional phase called the recruitment phase. During this phase reviewers will be able to see a list of all the senior/key personnel on the application, any additional key persons that the SRO has identified, the institutions of the key personnel, and the title of the project. SROs may also choose to display the project abstract. Reviewers should review the information. If they have

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a conflict, they can indicate the conflict by clicking the radio button for that application. Reviewers also have the option of flagging the application to let the SRO know that there may be a question about a potential conflict and the reviewer could like to discuss more with the SRO. Once the recruitment phase is over the SRO will use this information to add conflicts between a reviewer and applications. You will be required to certify an NIH pre-meeting COI Certification Form in IAR indicating whether you do or do not have a conflict of interest. Conflicts may be added or removed (if needed) throughout the review process. Certification (or recertification) of a COI form will be required when changes are made. Once a meeting begins reviewers should report all newly discovered conflicts to the SRO. The SRO will add the conflict for the reviewer and may ask the reviewer to leave the room for the discussion of that applications. Once the reviewer has participated in the review of the last application for that meeting, they should certify their post meeting COI form. Reviewers will have access to this form until the edit phase ends. A daily reminder will be sent to the reviewer until they have completed that task or the edit phase ends.

For your information, a link of the COI portion from the regulations ([42 CFR Part 52h](#)) governing the Scientific Peer Review of Grant Applications and Research and Development Contract Projects is provided in this document for you. These regulations preclude members of peer review committees from participating in the review of any matter in which they, their spouse, parent, child, partner, close professional associate, or any organization with which they are associated has a financial interest. When in doubt, you should seek a determination from the Scientific Review Officer. We recommend that you read the regulations and become familiar with their provisions.

REIMBURSEMENT/COMPENSATION

IRGs usually meet three times a year. SEPs meet as many times as needed in a single Council Round. Members are compensated \$200 per day for time spent at meetings or on-site visits. In addition, members will receive a flat rate for allowed travel expenses and per diem while serving away from their place of residence. The flat rate payment for allowed travel expenses is per meeting, while the per diem for meals will be paid based on the number of meeting days. Hotel sleeping rooms and airfare will be billed directly to NIH. See [here](#) for various flat rate payments, determined by meeting length and whether you fly or drive to the meeting.

The NIH uses a simplified and secure registration process for reviewers to receive reimbursement and honoraria for their valued participation in IRGs and SEPs. The system is the [Secure Payee Registration System \(SPRS\)](#). For NIH to disburse your honoraria and flat rate

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payment, you must be registered in SPRS. The NIH Office of Financial Management (OFM) controls this secure payment site. However, ***only you can access your financial information details, using your [eRA Commons](#) (eCommons) user name and password.***

NIH's OFM will reimburse you for your meeting participation by direct deposit to the bank account that you entered in your SPRS record. If you do not have a United States bank account, you must still register in SPRS. If you do not have a U.S. bank account, you may receive reimbursement by paper check. **Please note that some non-US banks do not accept/process US checks.**

The NIH is required, under the Federal Tax Regulations (Section 1.6041-1 of Title 26, Code of Federal Regulations), to provide you with an annual statement of miscellaneous income for all payments which includes honorarium fees, and flat rate payment for meals and ground transportation that is aggregating \$600 or greater for one calendar year. This information must be sent to you no later than January 31 of each year by means of a "1099-Miscellaneous Income Form". Your 1099-MISC Form will be sent to the residential address that is associated with your SPRS record. Therefore, it is extremely important that you keep this address current in your eCommons account and SPRS.

You may want to keep a separate record of your expenses relating to this income for use in preparing your annual tax return.

If you have any questions regarding this document and/or the links, please contact **(name), Committee Management Officer, (Institute or Center), at (email address) or (phone #)** for assistance.