

## Common eRA Submission Issues

When an organization goes to submit an application in Grants.gov, the application package will be submitted to two sets of checks. This is new and has been confusing. Briefly, the first check occurs at the Grants.gov level and only checks for on-time submission and that attachments attached to each required form in the application package. The second, more robust check, happens at the eRA level and we have been seeing loads of rejections occurring at this level in Sea Grant competitions. Please see below to try to avoid the most common error messages we're seeing.

### eRA Commons IDs

The transition to eRA means that applicants are now required to register in [eRA Commons](#) for grant application and management. In order to successfully submit a proposal through grants.gov, the PI listed on the application materials **must** have an eRA Commons account, and that Commons account must be (1) affiliated with the applicant organization and (2) hold the PI role. That valid, affiliated Commons ID must then be included on the application materials in the following place(s):

In SF424 Packages: In the "4. Applicant Identifier" box of the SF424.

In R&R Packages: (1) In the "4. Applicant Identifier" box of the R&R SF424; and (2) in the "Credential, e.g., agency login" field of the Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile Form.

Failure to register in eRA Commons and to include a valid, affiliated PD/PI Commons ID in those places listed above will prevent the successful submission of an electronic application. Additional personnel included on the form do not need to include this information, however eRA will create a *warning* recommending those personnel also have valid eRA Commons IDs. Warning messages do not prevent successful submissions. Again - it is not required that those additional personnel include valid eRA Commons IDs regardless of the warnings created by the eRA system.

If an organization needs to register for an eRA account, **we recommend doing so as soon as possible**, because this account can take weeks to be approved by eRA staff. Applicants can find more information on registering your organization in eRA Commons [here](#).

### Congressional District

Applicants are required to enter their Congressional District on the SF424 (both standard SF424 and R&R SF424) in a very specific format. For tips on finding and entering Congressional District correctly, applicants can review the info found [here](#).

Briefly, it should consist of their state's two-letter abbreviation and end with a three-digit district number. A hyphen separates the two parts, like this, "VA-001" [State of Virginia – 1st Congressional District]. Any other format (for example "VA001" or "VA-01") will result in an error and rejection from eRA.

### **Formatting Issues**

In addition, we're seeing many error messages resulting from eRA formatting requirements. The majority of errors we've seen related to formatting are:

- File sizes that are too large (over 100 MB)
- Including paper (page) size larger than standard letter paper size (8 ½" x 11")
- File names that are too long (greater than 50 characters including spaces)
- Including invalid characters in the file name
- Not "flattening" the PDF prior to attachment

To try to avoid these mistakes, please take the time to review the full list of eRA formatting requirements found [here](#).

Additional training and information for DOC Applicants can be found [here](#).