NIH Changes to the Biographical Sketch:
What Your Company Needs to Know for Submission

Effective January 25, 2026, the National Institutes of Health is implementing some significant changes to how Biographical Sketches are prepared and submitted. All Biosketches for Sr/Key Persons uploaded into ASSIST must be certified PDFs that were generated and downloaded from SciENcv.

What's Changing and When?

Per NOT-OD-26-018, NIH is requiring all grant applicants to use standardized "Common Forms" within SciENcv for Biographical Sketches. These replace the traditional NIH-specific PDF template that was previously required. The change affects all application submissions, including SBIR/STTRs, with deadline dates on or after January 25, 2026.

For now, according to this informal notice from NIH, though, failure to upload the new approved form will only result in a "Warning" in ASSIST up to ~May 2026, after which NIH will then enforce the use of Common Forms by generating an "Error" that will prevent submission.

New Requirements that Require Immediate Attention:

1. **Use SciENcv to Generate a Certified NIH Biosketch:** All Sr/Key Persons on the grant must now prepare and certify their NIH Biographical Sketches through the SciENcv (Science Experts Network Curriculum Vitae) platform using their own account. NIH Biosketches will also now include two components: the "NIH Biographical Sketch Common Form" and the "Biographical Sketch Supplement". The final form must be certified within SciENcv before it can be downloaded. Once certified, SciENcv will generate a digitally certified PDF that is to be uploaded to the grant submission. Do not flatten that PDF after it is downloaded.

   This is the biggest change, and it will create a new challenge. In the past, it was not uncommon for the person(s) leading the grant preparation to take responsibility for drafting or editing the Biosketches for Sr/Key Persons on the project. Now, because the old blank format pages can no longer be used, each individual Sr/Key Person on the grant is now responsible for preparing and certifying their own Biosketch. Only the individual named on the form can certify it in SciENcv.

2. **ORCID iD Mandate:** Anyone with an eRA Commons account can log into SciENcv. Therefore, because all Sr/Key Persons on a NIH grant must have an eRA Commons account, creating a SciENcv account should not be a problem. However, to create a Biosketch, every Sr/Key Person must also now obtain an ORCID iD (Open Researcher and Contributor Identifier) and link it to their eRA Commons account for SciENcv. This unique identifier will appear on all Common Forms and is required for certification. Even if you have not published research articles in journals, you will still be required to obtain an ORCID iD.

3. **Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Program (MFTRP) Certification:** Individuals who are currently party to a Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Program are now ineligible to serve as a Sr/Key Person on NIH grants. There are now two certifications that will occur in submission regarding MFTRP:

   a) Institutional Certification: In accordance with Section 10632 of the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022 (42 U.S.C. § 19232), the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) must certify on the face page of the application (i.e., SF424 R&R cover form), via their signature, that all senior/key personnel on the grant have been made aware of and have complied with their responsibility under that section to certify that the individual is not a party to a malign foreign talent recruitment program.

b) Individual Certification: Each individual identified as a senior/key person must also provide individual certification on their NIH Biographical Sketch Common Form that they are not a party to a malign foreign talent recruitment program.

What's Different in the NIH Biographical Sketch Common Form?

Both the NIH Biographical Sketch Common Form and the Biographical Sketch Supplement can be completed and certified together in a single user interface in SciENcv to produce a single PDF, so it's not like you will now have one extra document to maintain. In the forms, the Common Form will contain the following sections: Professional Preparation (formerly, "Education/Training"), Appointments and Positions, and Products; the Supplement will contain the Personal Statement, Honors, and Contributions to Science. So as you can see, almost all the same content that was in the old format is going to appear in the new forms, just in a different format and with some minor tweaks:

- The Personal Statement has a 3,500-character limit (including spaces). Citations are no longer allowed under the Personal Statement. In fact, no citations are permitted in the Supplement; instead, cited Products must be listed in the Common Form.
- The new "Products" section in the Common Form takes the place of the citation of "research products" that were formerly allowed under the Personal Statement and Contributions to Science. You can list up to 5 Products that are closely related to the project and up to 5 Other Significant Products highlighting Contributions to Science. Citations other than published journal articles (e.g., patents, presentations, software, etc.) are still allowable and possible to include (albeit, with a bit more difficulty).
- Honors are limited to 15 entries.
- Contributions to Science section allows 5 narratives, each with a 2,000-character limit.

What to do next?

- Ensure all Sr/Key Persons have an active eRA Commons account. Notify them of the need to create a SciENcv account and ORCID iD.
- Verify everyone links their ORCID iD to their eRA Commons and SciENcv account.
- Train all Sr/Key Persons on the grant on MFTRP disclosure requirements.
- Dive into SciENcv and start getting comfortable with the interface – it's not always straightforward!

For NIH SciENcv technical assistance, you can also contact the SciENcv Help Desk (7:30 AM – 5:30 PM Eastern Time, Monday through Friday except for federal holidays):

- Email the SciENcv Help Desk: NLMSciencv@mail.nih.gov
- Create a ticket: https://support.nlm.nih.gov/support/create-case/

For questions about NIH Common Form policies, requirements, or what information to include on the form (not technical issues with SciENcv), email NIH at nihosbiosketch@nih.gov.