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March 6, 2023

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Dr. Kristin Kramer  
Office of Extramural Research

Re: Proposed Simplified Review Framework for NIH Research Project Grant Applications

Dear Dr. Kramer,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Proposed Simplified Review Framework for NIH Research Project Grant Applications. I write on behalf of the Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences (FABBS), a coalition of 29 scientific societies and 60 academic departments that come together to advance the rigor, impact, equity, and accessibility of our disciplines. Our members include both NIH reviewers and researchers who compete for grant funding.

FABBS appreciates the NIH commitment to reduce both reputational bias and reviewer burden in the grant review process. FABBS strongly supports the proposed change to simplify criteria, specifically in consolidating the five main criteria into three factors, prompting reviewers to focus on the significance/innovation and approach sections of research projects. FABBS also appreciates the shift in the Expertise and Resources factor to categories ranging from ‘additional resources needed’ to ‘fully capable’ as one way to reduce potential biases in grant scoring that can result from the reputations of institutions and investigative teams.

FABBS commends NIH for the careful thought and consideration that went into these proposed changes and consideration of diverse research institutions and processes. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes and offer to be a resource in the future, if ever the need would arise. We note that FABBS researchers have a breadth of expertise regarding cognitive biases.

Sincerely,

Juliane Baron  
Executive Director