# Special Registration Instructions for Unaffiliated/Independent Applicants

Individual applicants not affiliated with an organization or who want to submit a grant application independently must complete all the required registrations as though they are an organization. There is NO cost associated with ANY of these registrations.

When all is said and done, you will have multiple accounts (sometimes more than one for the same system) and serve many roles.

In addition to our standard registration guidance, here are some tips to help you successfully navigate the registration process.

You must obtain your unique identifier from the System for Award Management (SAM) prior to starting any other registration.

## System for Award Management (SAM)

**Purpose:** Required to do business with the U. S. government. Your organization (referred to as an "entity") must have a valid and active SAM registration at time of application and award. SAM confirms supplied information with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

**What you need to know:**
- The federal government uses a 12-character unique entity identifier (UEI) created in SAM.gov as the official entity identifier (replaced DUNS in April 2022).
- The government uses lots of identifiers. As part of the SAM registration process, you will be assigned a Commercial & Government Entity Code (CAGE) code. It is simply a 5-character ID used to identify vendors. You will see the CAGE code mentioned in documentation, but we will not request it as part of your application so don't worry too much about it.
- You will be asked to identify an Entity Administrator – you can provide your own information.

## Grants.gov

**Purpose:** To register your organization and the individuals authorized to do business on behalf of your organization to submit grant applications to Federal agencies.

**What you need to know:**
- Grants.gov is the federal-wide portal used to find and apply for federal grant funding. All NIH competing grant applications must be submitted through Grants.gov.
- You must have registered in SAM prior to starting your Grants.gov registration.
- Follow the Registering an Organization instructions.
  - DO NOT use the "Registering as an Individual" instructions. NIH posts all opportunities such that only organizations can apply.
- The EBiz POC (entity administrator in SAM) is responsible for authorizing individuals with legal authority to bind your organization in grants and contracts. Those individuals are referred to as Authorized Organization Representatives (AORs). If you are the EBiz POC and the AOR, you will need to authorize yourself by giving your Grants.gov account the AOR role.

## eRA Commons

**Purpose:** To register your organization and key individuals in NIH's system used to exchange information between applicants, recipients, and NIH staff.

**What you need to know:**

- You must obtain your SAM-issued unique entity identifier (UEI) before you can Register in eRA Commons.
- Go to the registration form accessed by clicking the "Register Organization" link on the eRA Commons home screen.

*Figure 1: The Registration screen, showing Step 1 of the new Registration screens where you choose purpose for registration.*

- Step 1 is to select the purpose of your request. Select the checkbox for **NIH Grants/Contracts**. You then need to check the second checkbox that appears, acknowledging the legal implications of applications. Click **Next** to go to Step 2.

- Step 2: Verify Identification by selecting the Unique Entity Identifier radio button. Once your identify is verified, click the **Next** button.

- Step 3: Review the details of your contact information as provided in your institution registration with SAM. To move on to Step 4, add your email address to the *Closeout Email* field and the *Notice of Award (NoA) Email* field. Once completed, click **Next** to move to Step 4.

- Step 4: Create your signing official (SO) account. Complete the required fields for your SO account and click **Next**.



*Figure 2: Step 4 in the registration process, creating your signing official account.*

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- Step 5: Review and Submit your registration request. Review all the information provided and click **Submit**. A series of emails will follow the submission of your request to guide you through the final steps of registering with eRA Commons.

- Once your registration is complete and your SO account is created, you can create a separate Principal Investigator account for yourself with the PI role. You will need both your SO and your PI accounts to complete the application process. The specific roles on each account indicate the actions you can take in eRA Commons. The SO account allows you to sign legal documents and administer your application/grant while your PI account is included in your application and identifies you as having scientific oversight for the proposed application. Both the SO and the PI can view review outcome information in eRA Commons.