Reminder: The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has a long list of flexibilities to support the research community in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The full list is available on the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Information for NIH Applicants and Recipients of NIH Funding website. Below are some of the flexibilities.

Application and Review

- **Application development.** NIH recently provided guidance that investigators address effects due to the pandemic on productivity or other scoreable issues in the personal statement of the biosketch. (Applications should not include contingency or recovery plans for problems resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic as staff will assess these prior to award).

- **Review.** Review meetings continue to be held virtually. Reviewers will be instructed to take pandemic-related circumstances outlined in the biosketch into account when assessing applicants’ productivity and other score-driving factors.

- **Late applications.** NIH is taking a very flexible stance for applications submitted within the standard two-week late policy. See NIH FAQ on late applications during COVID-19. Many Institutes and Centers have also issued notices extending specific funding opportunities, which can all be found on the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Information for NIH Applicants and Recipients of NIH Funding page.

- **Preliminary data.** NIH is allowing the submission of preliminary data after application submission for most funding opportunities as long as it is provided to NIH at least 30 days before the study section meeting (and the funding opportunity allows preliminary data).

Extension of Funded Projects
The extensions outlined below are longstanding administrative flexibilities that NIH continues to make available to its recipients during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **No cost extensions.** NIH continues to provide maximum flexibility for COVID-19. For most NIH awards, standard NIH policy allows an initial no-cost extension without NIH prior approval. Recipients with awards not
eligible for an automatic first no-cost extension, including fellowships and some career development awards, may request prior approval of the first no-cost extension (this is done by the Authorized Organization Official (AOR)). Second and subsequent no-cost extensions may also be requested through prior approval.

- **Funded extensions** Recipients may request funded extensions due to COVID-19 by contacting the funding IC. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and are subject to the availability of funds. For F and K awards recipients may request a **funded extension** in instances where training or career development activities have been significantly hindered over and above lost research productivity experienced because of COVID-19 related shutdowns.

- **Administrative supplements.** If unanticipated costs are identified due to impacts of COVID-19, and unobligated balances are not available to rebudget, recipients may request **administrative supplements** from the funding NIH institute or center.

**Extensions of Eligibility for Early Career Scientists**

- **Extensions of eligibility for K99/R00 and other career development programs.** A number of NIH Institutes and Centers have extended the eligibility for these programs.

- **Early stage investigator (ESI) eligibility.** Investigators who have been affected by COVID-19 may submit requests for an extension of ESI status. In addition, NIH has clarified its ESI FAQs and will consider requests for extensions of ESI eligibility for life events occurring during an extension period.

**Extensions of Reporting Timelines**

- **Federal Financial Reports (FFRs), Research Performance Progress Reports (RPPRs) and Closeout reports.** Recipients who need additional time for FFRs, RPPRs or closeout reports due to COVID should contact their funding NIH institute or center, and requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

**Costs**

- NIH institutes and centers may approve cost related flexibilities on a case-by-case basis.

**Questions?** If you have any questions about these (or other) NIH flexibilities, please feel free to contact your DCG Officer.