



Transition Plan for Two-Factor Authentication Requirement for Accessing eRA Systems

August 2021

Key Highlights

- To make eRA user accounts more secure with two-factor authentication, eRA is offering its users two ways to comply:
 - use Login.gov
 - and/or use a two-factor compliant InCommon Federated account** (starting September 15, 2021)
- These two options should be used instead of an eRA account username and password to access eRA modules (eRA Commons, Commons Mobile, ASSIST, and Internet Assisted Review), per the adjusted timeline below.
- Instead of requiring users to transition to Login.gov by a fixed deadline of September 15, 2021, NIH will begin a phased approach to enforcement -- all [scientific account](#) holders should take action now, while [administrative account](#) holders will be required to move to two-factor authentication in early 2022.
- The timing for enforcing the requirement will depend on the type of user account and a new triggering event.
 - The Type of User Account:
 - This phased approach pertains to all scientific account holders but excludes administrative accounts until early 2022.
 - The Triggering Event:
 - All PIs and key personnel associated with an application or Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) will be required to transition to the use of two-factor authentication 45 days after the submission of their competing grant application (Type 1 or 2) or their RPPR.



Scientific Accounts*

If you only have a [scientific account](#) You should start using two-factor authentication now to access eRA systems before you are required to transition.

Once you are required to transition, you will no longer be able to use username and password to login.

All PIs and key personnel associated with an application or Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) will be required to transition to the use of two-factor authentication 45 days after the submission of their competing grant application (Type 1 or 2) or their RPPR.

*E.g. Principal investigator (PI), trainee, sponsor



Administrative Accounts*

NIH is exempting [administrative account](#) holders from the requirement to use two-factor authentication until early 2022, when eRA will implement support for users with multiple eRA accounts.

But if you only have a single administrative account, we encourage you to start using two-factor authentication now to access eRA systems.

If you have multiple administrative accounts, wait to transition your accounts.

*E.g. Signing Official (SO), Administrative Official (AO)



Scientific and Administrative Accounts

If you have both a [scientific account](#) and an [administrative account](#), you should start using two-factor authentication for your scientific account now; hold off on switching your administrative account(s) until eRA has implemented support for users with multiple eRA accounts in early 2022.

If you have already transitioned your administrative account to use two-factor authentication, but not your scientific account, request the eRA Service Desk to remove the two-factor authentication account (Login.gov or InCommon Federated) association from your administrative account and have it added to your eRA scientific account. This should be done before your scientific account is required to transition.

****InCommon Federated Accounts**

If you use an InCommon Federated account (this is when participating InCommon Federation organizations authenticate their own users), your participating organization(s) will need to implement support for NIH's two-factor authentication standards by September 15, 2021, so that you are able to continue to use those accounts to log in. If not, you will be required to switch to Login.gov to access eRA systems once you are required to transition to two-factor authentication. The NIH has been working with the [InCommon Federation](#), the organization that coordinates federated authentication across universities/organizations, on this effort.

InCommon Federated users who have already transitioned to Login.gov can also use their InCommon Federated account once their organizations's Federated account authentication process supports the NIH's two-factor authentication standards. Users can set up and use both Login.gov and InCommon Federated accounts (that comply with NIH's two-factor authentication standards) with an eRA user account.

Note that Federated accounts, currently limited to scientific accounts, will be opened up to administrative accounts effective September 15, 2021. If you have multiple administrative accounts, hold off on transitioning until early 2022.

Exceptions to the Adjusted Timeline and Approach

Reviewers

- The transition for reviewers (those with the IAR role) is ongoing and unchanged. Reviewers will continue to be required to use two-factor authentication as soon as they are enabled for a review meeting. However, reviewers will have the new option to use an InCommon Federated account that supports NIH's two-factor authentication standards.**

Non-NIH eRA Partner Agencies

- This only applies to NIH applicants/recipients; while non-NIH eRA partner agency users are encouraged to move to two-factor authentication now, they are not required to at this time (except for reviewers whose transition is ongoing; or applicants/recipients who apply to NIH or have an NIH grant).