NIH Center for Scientific Review

Simplifying Review Framework – An Update

Lisa Steele, Ph.D.
CSR Review Branch Chief, Co-Chair SRF Executive Implementation Committee

Kristin Kramer, Ph.D.
Director, CSR Office of Communication & Outreach

Miriam Mintzer, Ph.D.
Director, CSR Office of Training & Development

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Goals of the Simplified Framework for NIH Peer Review

1. Enable peer reviewers to better focus on answering the key questions necessary to assess scientific and technical merit

   Should the proposed research project be conducted?

   Can the proposed research project be conducted well?

   Will the proposed research project be conducted?

2. Mitigate the effect of reputational bias

3. Reduce reviewer burden

Guide Notice
NOT-OD-24-010

When?

Applies to most research project applications submitted on or after January 25, 2025

The Simplified Review Framework Reorganizes Five Regulatory Criteria into Three Factors

Before January 25, 2025

- Significance - scored
- Investigator(s) – scored
- Innovation – scored
- Approach – scored
- Environment - scored

On or after Jan 25, 2025 - Simplified Framework

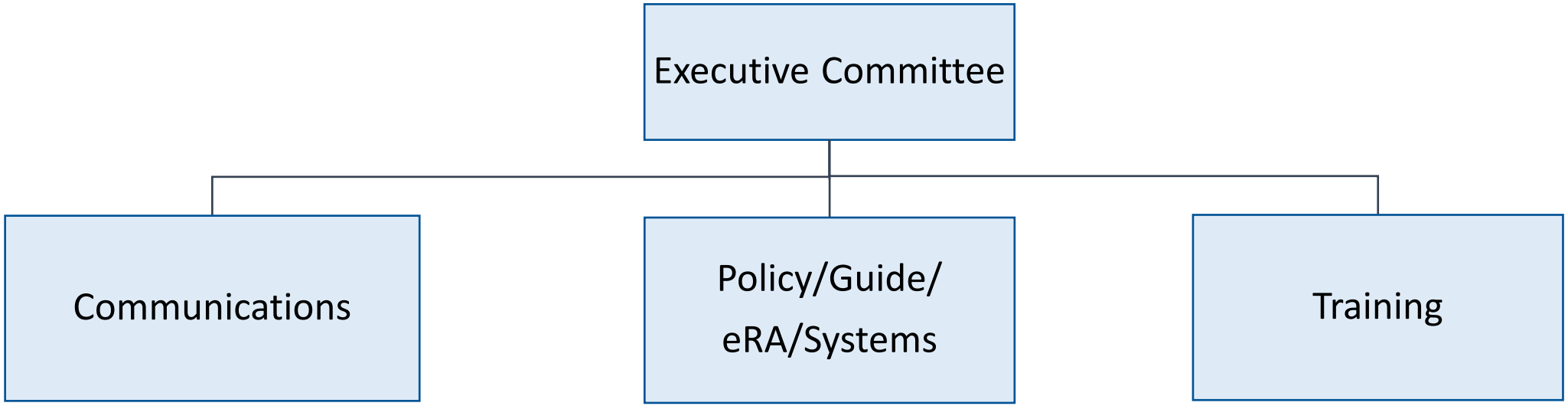
(<u>all</u> considered in Overall Impact Score)

- **Factor 1: Importance of the Research**
  - Significance, Innovation
  - **Scored 1-9**
- **Factor 2: Rigor and Feasibility**
  - Approach (*includes Study Timeline for clinical trials and Inclusions*)
  - **Scored 1-9**
- **Factor 3: Expertise and Resources**
  - Investigators, Environment
  - Evaluated as appropriate or additional expertise/resources needed; gaps require explanation
  - **Considered in overall impact; no individual score**

*Applies to most RPGs: R01, R03, R15, R16, R21, R33, R34, R36, R61, RC1, RC2, RC4, RF1, RL1, RL2, U01, U34, U3R, UA5, UC1, UC2, UC4, UF1, UG3, UH2, UH3, UH5, R21/R33, UH2/UH3, UG3/UH3, R61/R33

Simplified Review Framework Implementation

Trans-NIH implementation committee with deep, multidimensional domain expertise in peer review, communications, policy, eRA systems, reviewer training, staff training



Communicating with the extramural community

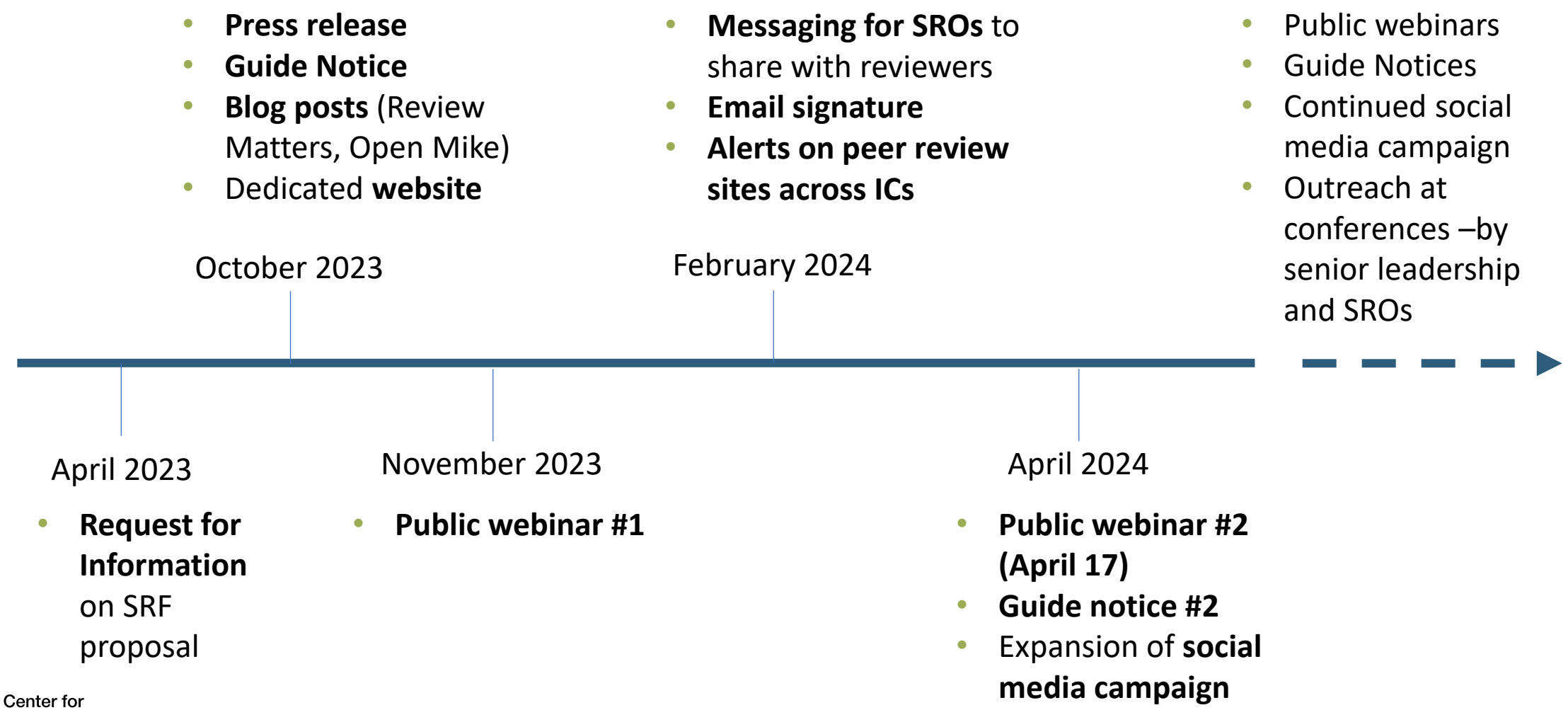
Goal

- Ensure that the community is aware of changes well in advance of their implementation

Approach

- Frequent communications
- Variety in -
  - Communication vehicles (Guide Notices, talks, social media)
  - Messages (detailed and in depth vs. “bites” of key points)
  - Messengers (leadership, SROs, peers)

Major Communication Milestones



- **Press release**
- **Guide Notice**
- **Blog posts** (Review Matters, Open Mike)
- Dedicated **website**

- **Messaging for SROs** to share with reviewers
- **Email signature**
- **Alerts on peer review sites across ICs**

- Public webinars
- Guide Notices
- Continued social media campaign
- Outreach at conferences –by senior leadership and SROs

April 2023

- **Request for Information** on SRF proposal

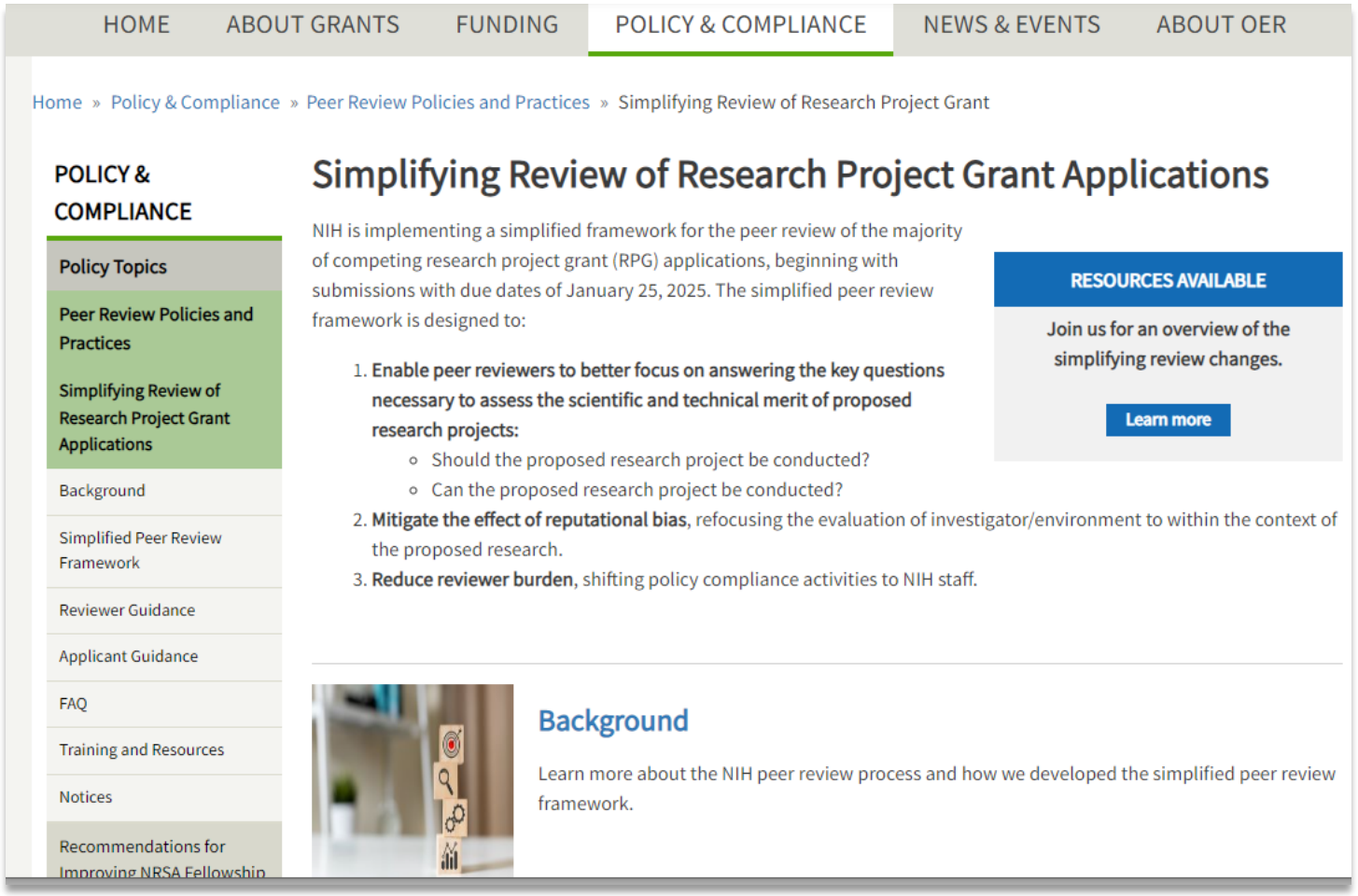
November 2023

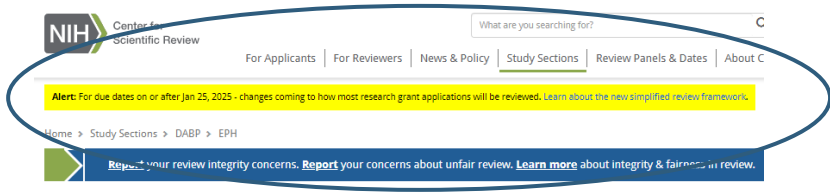
- **Public webinar #1**

April 2024

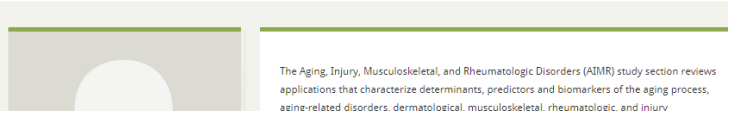
- **Public webinar #2 (April 17)**
- **Guide notice #2**
- Expansion of **social media campaign**

Resources and Communications





Aging, Injury, Musculoskeletal, and Rheumatologic Disorders – **AIMR**



https://grants.nih.gov/policy/peer/simplifying-review.htm

Policy/Guide/eRA Systems Milestones

- Reissuance of Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs)
  - Updated review language will be included in the NOFOs
  - Internal training March 2024
  - Guide Notice announcing reissuance with public webinar April 17, 2024

- Adaptation of eRA systems for new format of scoring and critiques

Training Vision

Goal

- Support change in reviewer practices and the culture of study sections, while clearly conveying details of the new framework.

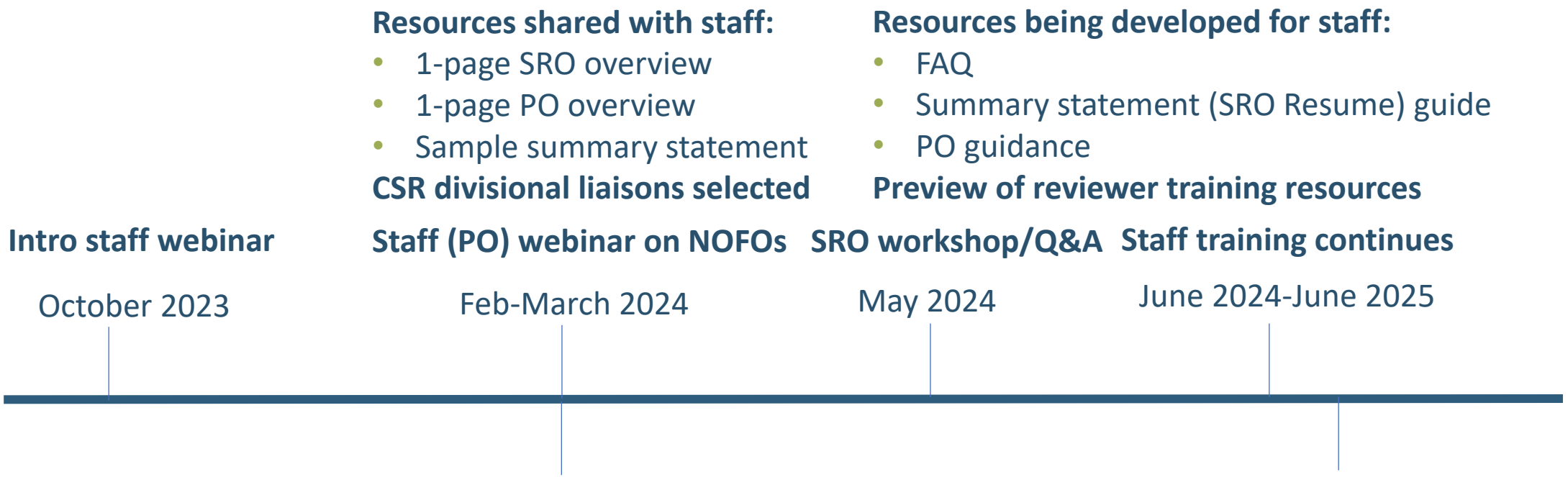
Approach

- Focus on underlying rationale (the why?)
  - Use examples as a key training tool to flesh out ideas.
  - Provide SROs opportunities for active practice intervening/refocusing reviewers.

Timing/change management

- Engage SROs early in the process, preview resources, identify pain points, and inform further training development.
- Develop select staff as experts/resources to facilitate training dissemination (liaisons).
- Raise awareness of reviewers early, with targeted training closer to 1st review meeting.

Major Training Milestones



Resources and Information: https://grants.nih.gov/policy/peer/simplifying-review.htm

Questions? simplifiedreview@nih.gov