



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

March 25, 2024



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

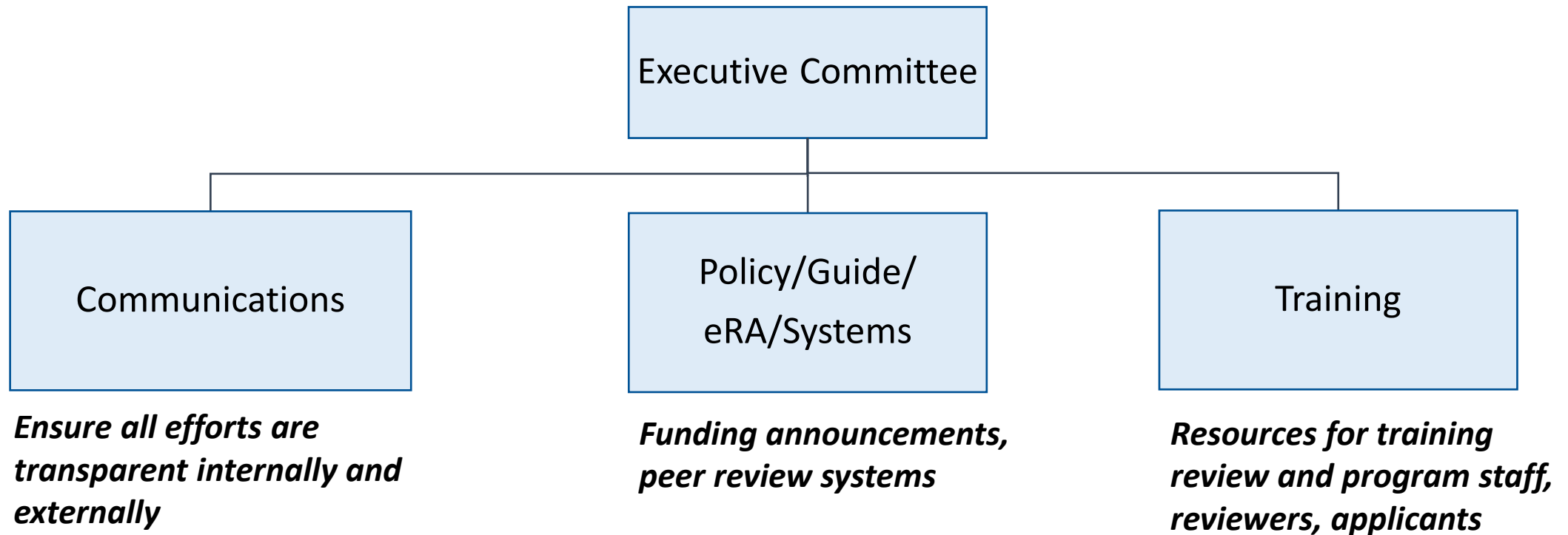
On or after Jan 25, 2025 - Simplified Framework (all considered in Overall Impact Score)

- **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

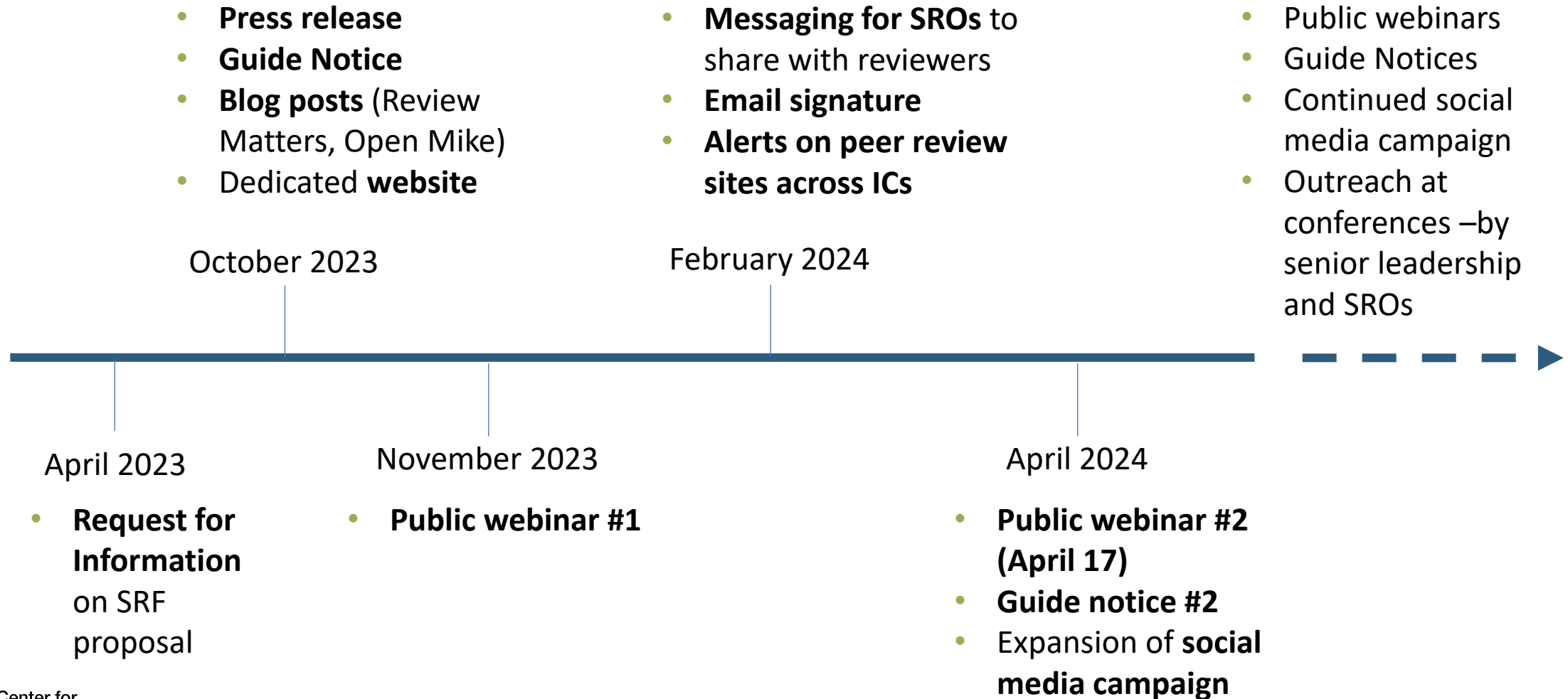
Goal

- 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



Resources and Communications

HOME ABOUT GRANTS FUNDING **POLICY & COMPLIANCE** NEWS & EVENTS ABOUT OER

Home » Policy & Compliance » Peer Review Policies and Practices » Simplifying Review of Research Project Grant

POLICY & COMPLIANCE

Policy Topics

Peer Review Policies and Practices

Simplifying Review of Research Project Grant Applications

Background

Simplified Peer Review Framework

Reviewer Guidance

Applicant Guidance

FAQ

Training and Resources

Notices

Recommendations for Improving NRSA Fellowship

Simplifying Review of Research Project Grant Applications

NIH is implementing a simplified framework for the peer review of the majority of competing research project grant (RPG) applications, beginning with submissions with due dates of January 25, 2025. The simplified peer review framework is designed to:

1. **Enable peer reviewers to better focus on answering the key questions necessary to assess the scientific and technical merit of proposed research projects:**
 - Should the proposed research project be conducted?
 - Can the proposed research project be conducted?
2. **Mitigate the effect of reputational bias**, refocusing the evaluation of investigator/environment to within the context of the proposed research.
3. **Reduce reviewer burden**, shifting policy compliance activities to NIH staff.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Join us for an overview of the simplifying review changes.

[Learn more](#)

Background

Learn more about the NIH peer review process and how we developed the simplified peer review framework.

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

NIH Center for Scientific Review @CSRpeerreview · Mar 7

FY: In advance of the new simplified review framework, @NIH scientific review officers will: **1** be trained, and **2** will train reviewers.

As necessary, SROs will intervene to ensure the SRF is implemented appropriately.

More info: go.nih.gov/SRF

Scientific review officers and reviewers will be fully prepared to implement the new simplified review framework.

NIH National Institutes of Health
Turning Discovery Into Health

NIH Center for Scientific Review

What are you searching for?

For Applicants | For Reviewers | News & Policy | **Study Sections** | Review Panels & Dates | About C

Alert: For due dates on or after Jan 25, 2025 - changes coming to how most research grant applications will be reviewed. Learn about the new simplified review framework.

Home » Study Sections » DABP » EPH

Report your review integrity concerns. Report your concerns about unfair review. Learn more about integrity & fairness in review.

Aging, Injury, Musculoskeletal, and Rheumatologic Disorders – AIMR

The Aging, Injury, Musculoskeletal, and Rheumatologic Disorders (AIMR) study section reviews applications that characterize determinants, predictors and biomarkers of the aging process, age-related disorders, dermatological, musculoskeletal, rheumatologic, and injury

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.

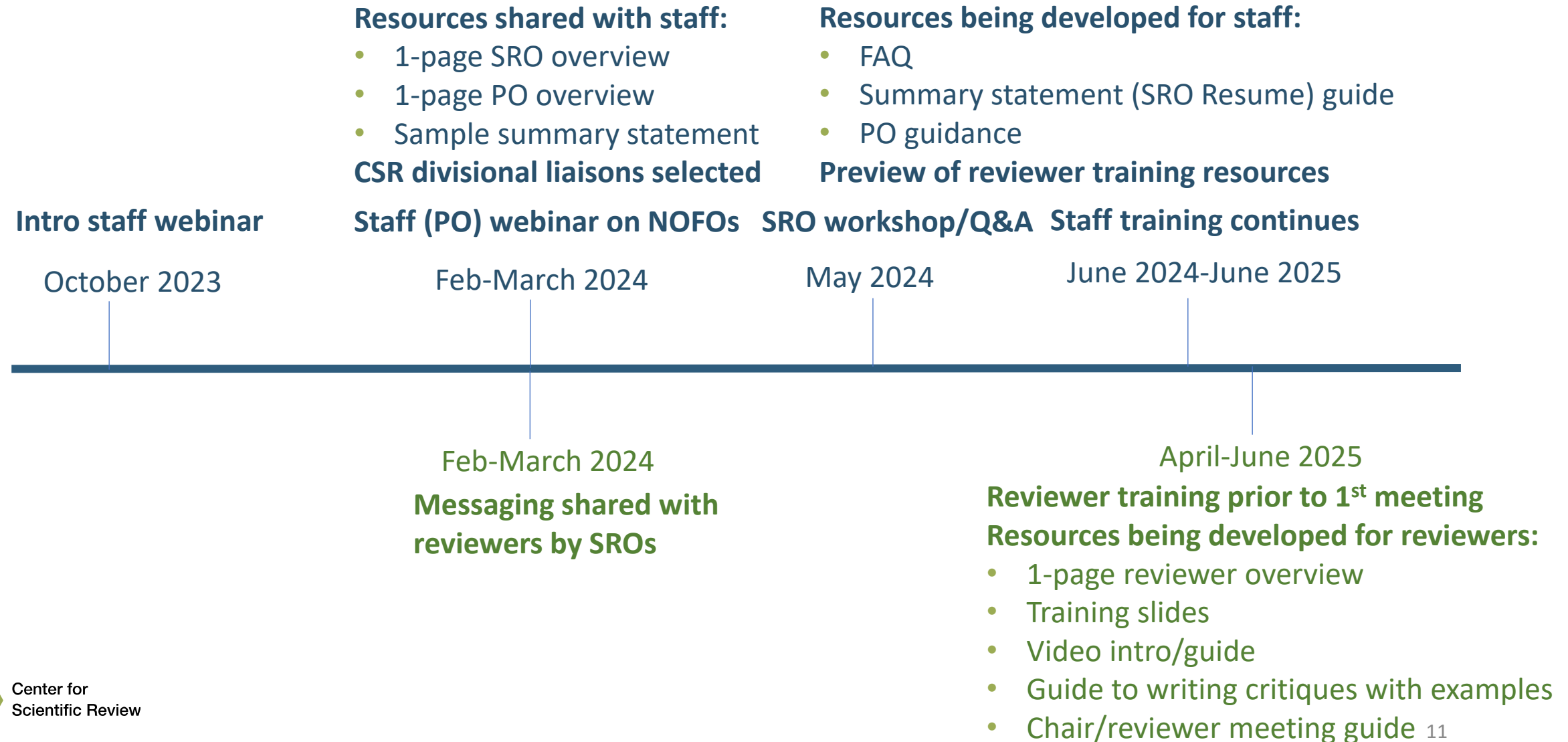
Approach

- 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