

Creating personnel documents for USDA using the SciENCv Common Forms

USDA now requires the Common Form for Biographical Sketches and Current and Pending Support per the [2026 NIFA Grants Application Guide](#). This document contains instructions on how to set up the necessary system accounts, create the Common Form personnel documents, and frequently asked questions.

Contents

<i>Creating personnel documents for USDA using the SciENCv Common Forms</i>	1
Overview of Personnel documents in USDA Grant Proposals	2
Biosketch Common Form	2
Current and Pending (Other) Support	2
Creating and connecting your accounts	3
Set up your ORCID account.....	3
Set up and connect your profile in SciENCv:	3
Creating personnel documents in SciENCv	5
Creating USDA Common Form Biosketch.....	5
Creating Current and Pending Support documents	7
Frequently Asked Questions	8
Do I need an ORCID account to create my new USDA biosketch?	8
How do I add publications and patents to my ORCID account?	8
What is meant by “Products”?	8
How many products can I include in my biographical sketch?	8
Does the USDA Biosketch have a page limit?	8
What should I include in the In-Kind section of my Current and Pending Support document?.....	8
Can my delegate download my completed documents in SciENCv?	9
Can I modify the PDF of my completed Biosketch or Current and Pending Support document if I notice a typo?	9
Why does the PDF I downloaded have a blue error message across the top saying that there are problems with at least one signature?	9
What Research Security Training do I need to complete to accurately certify the biographical documents?	9

Creating personnel documents for USDA using the Common

Overview of Personnel documents in USDA Grant Proposals

- **PIs/PDs and all senior/key personnel will need to use [SciENCv](#) to complete and certify their Biosketch and Current and Pending Support personnel documents.**
- **[SciENCv](#) (Science Experts Network Curriculum Vitae)** is a feature within My NCBI designed to help researchers create profiles in a compliant biographical sketch format.
- **SciENCv will add a certification** in which the document owner acknowledges that the information is: 1) current, accurate, and complete, 2) have completed or will complete by the time of application, research security training, and 3) at time of submission, they are not a party to a malign foreign talent recruitment program.

Biosketch Common Form

The components of the Biosketch Common Form include:

- **Professional Preparation:** Education and Training including postdoctoral and fellowship appointments.
- **Appointments and Positions:** Academic, professional, and institutional appointments. This includes unpaid and part-time positions. Include all positions at your current institution, and positions outside of your current institution for a period up to three years of this submission.
- **Products:** Publications, conference papers, presentations, websites, technologies, patents, licenses, datasets, video products, software, instruments, etc.

Current and Pending (Other) Support

The components of the Current and Pending Support Form are as follows:

- **Proposals and Active Projects:** Projects with ongoing effort commitments, no matter the source, even if the effort is unpaid. Includes funded and unfunded sponsored projects with an effort commitment. Also includes internally funded projects.
- **In-kind Contributions:** Contributions from outside of your organization with an estimated dollar value of \$5000 or more and that require a commitment of your time (e.g., laboratory space, data sets not generally available, equipment, employee or student resources)

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Creating and connecting your accounts

To use the USDA Common Form, you will need to connect **SciENcv** with **ORCID**. An eRA Commons account may also be required to be connected for some USDA programs.

Set up your ORCID account

- **What is ORCID?** ORCID is a free, unique, persistent identifier (PID) for individuals to use as they engage in research, scholarship, and innovation activities.
- **Who needs an ORCID ID?** All senior/key personnel are required to have (or obtain) an ORCID ID. You will be required to enter your ORCID ID in the Persistent Identifier (PI) section of the Common Forms.
- **How do you set up an ORCID ID?** Follow the easy steps below to get started:
 - [Register for an ORCID account](#)
 - [Build your ORCID profile](#) – Update your ORCID account to be able to import information into SciENcv when you create a biosketch.
 - Employment (*transfers into Positions and Appointments in SciENcv*)
 - Education and qualifications (*transfers into Professional Preparation in SciENcv*)
 - Works (Can be added [manually](#) or set to [automatically update](#) with new publications)
 - Optionally, you can also add Professional Activities and Funding details, but these will not be imported to SciENcv
- **Adjust [visibility settings](#)** for the fields you will use for your biosketch (item #2 above) as either “visible to everyone” (green icon) or “visible to trusted sources” (yellow icon)
- **Add [trusted individuals](#)** who can act as delegates to manage your account by clicking on your profile and navigating to “trusted parties”. Trusted individuals must have their own ORCID ID.

Set up and Link your Accounts to SciENcv:

- **Logging into SciENcv:**
 - **If you already have a My NCBI account and want to connect your new ORCID login to it,** don't login use your new ORCID login this first time. Rather [sign into your existing My NCBI account](#) and then link your ORCID account through the [account settings](#) page. You can use your ORCID credentials in subsequent logins (Follow the same process to link your eRA Commons account).

Creating personnel documents for USDA using the Common

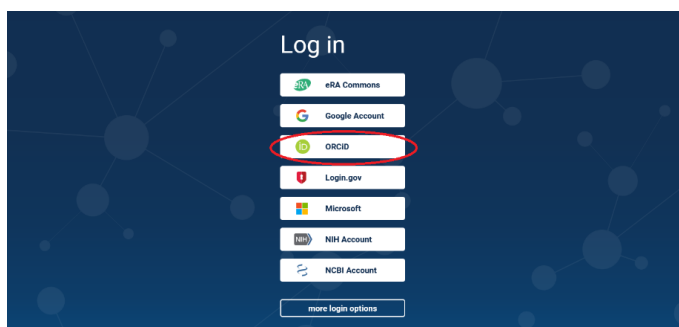
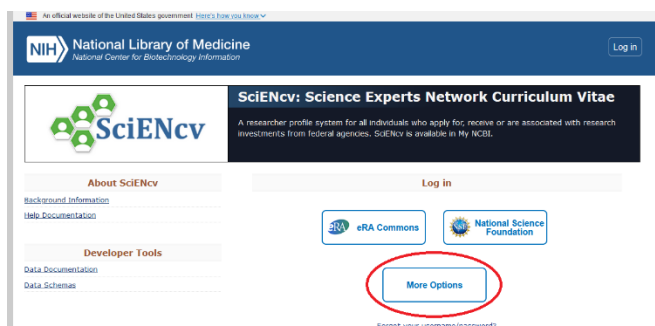
Linked Accounts

You can log into your NCBI account via these third parties. Contact the third party about any issues related to logging into any of the accounts below.

Account	Email/ID	Remove
		

Add account

- If you don't already have a My NCBI account, from the [SciENcv login page](#), log into SciENcv via ORCID. Click More Options, then click ORCID. Sign in with your email/ORCID and Password. Click Authorize to grant permission



3. The first time you log into SciENcv, you will need to complete your identifying information under "My Profile". Click edit to add personal data

SciENcv

My Profile [Edit](#) 1

User profile has not yet been set up.

- **Ensure that your ORCID account is properly linked to SciENcv:** Click on your username in the upper right corner and select "Account Settings". Scroll down to the "Linked Accounts" section. Your ORCID account should be listed as one of the linked accounts. If not, click on "Add Account" and search for ORCID. Once selected, you will be prompted to authorize access to your ORCID profile.

Creating personnel documents for USDA using the Common

Linked Accounts

You can log into your NCBI account via these third parties. Contact the third party about any issues related to logging into any of the accounts below.

Account	Email/ID	Remove
		

[Add account](#)

- **Optional, but recommended: Link your eRA commons account to SciENcv:** Some USDA programs require an eRA commons login.
 - Click on your username in the upper right corner and select “Account Settings”. Scroll down to the “Linked Accounts” section. Click on “Add Account” and search for eRA commons. You will be prompted to authorize access to your eRA commons profile. **If you do not already have an eRA Commons account, email ocg@ucanr.edu to request one.**
 - You also need to log into eRA Commons and click the Personal Profile button on the left side of the screen. In Personal Profile, click the Create or Connect Your ORCID iD link and authorize access. Once you have successfully linked your ORCID iD to your Commons account, it is displayed on your Personal Profile. This number is linked to the ORCID iD system and clicking it displays your information.
- **Add a delegate:** A delegate can help update or populate your biosketch and current and pending support forms. To add a delegate, click on your username in the top-right corner of the screen, and select “Account Settings”, scroll down to the “Delegates” section and click “Add a delegate” using their email address. Delegates cannot certify documents.

Creating personnel documents in SciENcv

Creating USDA Common Form Biosketch

1. Go to [SciENcv main page](#)
2. Click “+ New Document”, name the document, and select USDA Biosketch from the drop-down menu. Selecting a different agency under the document type will cause the proposal to error out.

My Documents

+ NEW DOCUMENT

Create a New Document

Asterisks (*) indicate required fields.

Document Name *

Test USDA Biographical Sketch

Document type *

USDA Biographical Sketch

Data source *

☒ Use an external source

Source *

ORCID

Your eRA Commons and Orcid accounts are linked to SciENcv. For more options, [link additional external accounts](#). [Learn more](#).

☐ Use an existing document in SciENcv

☐ Start with a blank document

CANCEL NEXT

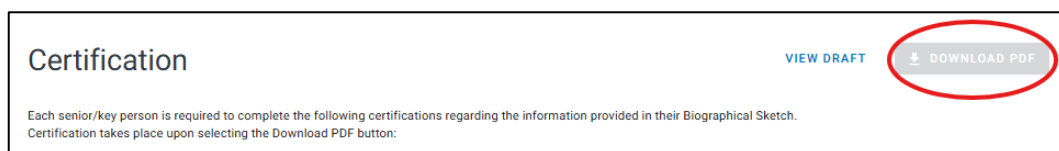
•To prepopulate the biosketch, you can import information from ORCID by selecting “Use an external source”.

•If you’ve previously created a Biosketch in SciENcv, even for another agency, you can import information from that document by selecting “Use an existing document”

•Next, you will be prompted to select a sub-agency at USDA before you can click “Create”

Creating personnel documents for USDA using the Common

3. On the next screen you will be able to view and edit the information in your biosketch.
4. Under “Identifying Information,” *do not edit your primary position here*. Adding a position here will create a duplication in “Appointments and Positions.” Rather, follow step 5 to populate this field.
5. Under “Appointments and Positions”, click to edit your current, primary position. In the window that pops up, click the box next to “Primary appointment or position” and then click save. This will automatically update your position in “Identifying Information.”
6. Confirm that all information in “Appointments and Positions” and “Education and Training” is complete and correct (red exclamation points on the right-hand side will indicate areas that need to be updated before creating a pdf).
 - NIFA Grant Application Guide: "The biographical sketch should summarize academic and research credentials for the PD/PI. This can include earned degrees, teaching experience, employment history, professional activities, honors and awards, and grants received.
7. Select the Products that you wish to include in your biosketch. They can be sourced from My Bibliography or ORCID. You can also add and edit them manually.
 - ORCID and MyBibliography are generally good at capturing peer reviewed publications.
 - To add other kinds of products that aren’t peer reviewed, you should add them manually in ORCID, and then click “Refresh From ORCID” in SciENcv
 - NIFA Grant Application Guide: "Include a chronological list of all publications in refereed journals during the past 4 years, including those in press. List only those non-refereed technical publications that have relevance to the proposed project. List all authors in the same order as they appear on each paper cited, along with the title and complete reference as these usually appear in journals."
8. **Once your biosketch is final you must certify it by clicking the blue download button at the bottom of the form to download a compliant PDF form.** (Note: the button will be grayed out if required items are missing.)



Certification

VIEW DRAFT

DOWNLOAD PDF

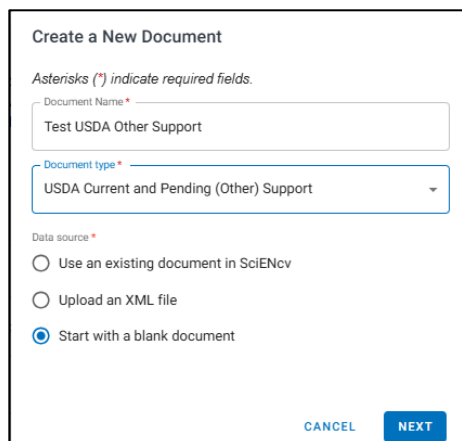
Each senior/key person is required to complete the following certifications regarding the information provided in their Biographical Sketch. Certification takes place upon selecting the Download PDF button:

IMPORTANT: Altering a certified form in any way after it has been downloaded will cause the file to error out when trying to submit.

Creating personnel documents for USDA using the Common

Creating Current and Pending Support documents

1. [SciENCv main page](#).
2. Make sure that your “My Profile” information on the main SciENCv page is correctly entered (this information will populate the identifying information on the C&P document).
3. Click “+ New Document”, name the document, and select USDA Biosketch. Selecting a different agency under the document type will cause the proposal to error out.



- Select “Start with a Blank Document” or copy an existing document in SciENCv.
- A pop-up window will prompt you to select a sub-agency at USDA before you click “Create”

4. Enter information about your Proposals and Active Projects.
5. **Be sure to include the proposal currently in preparation (this proposal) as one of your Pending proposals.** In *Statement of Potential Overlap* write “This proposal.” (If you copied from an existing document, be sure to edit this statement on the prior proposal and add it to the new current proposal.)
6. If you have any In-Kind Contributions, enter them in the appropriate section.
7. Double-check that all information is complete and correct (red exclamation points on the right-hand side will indicate areas that need to be updated)
8. Once your document is final, click the Blue download button at the bottom of the form to certify and download the Current and Pending Support document in a compliant PDF form.

IMPORTANT: Altering a certified form in any way after it has been downloaded will cause the file to error out when trying to submit.

Creating personnel documents for USDA using the Common

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need an ORCID account to create my new USDA biosketch?

Yes, an ORCID account is required to generate compliant biosketches in SciENcv.

How do I add publications and patents to my ORCID account?

There are two ways to add publications to your ORCID account:

- You can [add them manually](#)
- You can [automatically update](#) them via trusted publication databases

What is meant by “Products”?

“Products” refers to publications, patents, software, and other scholarly output. Many USDA investigators will use the Products section to refer to their publications. Educators, Extension Specialists, and trainees and early career investigators with a limited number of peer-reviewed publications may choose to include workshops, white papers, conference abstracts or other items that are indexed online.

How many products can I include in my biographical sketch?

The USDA Biographical Sketch in SciENcv allows an unlimited number of products.

For publications, the NIFA Grant Application Guide says to "include a chronological list of all publications in refereed journals during the past 4 years, including those in press. List only those non-refereed technical publications that have relevance to the proposed project."

Does the USDA Biosketch have a page limit?

Unlike in prior versions, which indicated a 2-page plus publications limit, the [NIFA Grants Application Guide dated March 2026](#) does not indicate any page limit for the biosketch.

What should I include in the In-Kind section of my Current and Pending Support document?

In-kind contributions include non-cash, external resources directly supporting an investigator's research but *not related to the current project*—such as office/laboratory space, equipment, supplies, or personnel (employees/students)—that require a time commitment. These include both foreign and domestic sources.

In-kind sources that are intended for use on this specific proposal should be included in the Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources document, and should not be duplicated in the Current and Pending Support document. In-kind sources valued less than \$5,000, and resources (e.g., databases) generally available to the public or scientific community, need not be included.

Creating personnel documents for USDA using the Common

Can my delegate download my completed documents in SciENcv?

Delegates **CANNOT** generate a certified PDF of a Biosketch or Current and Pending Support for the person who delegated them. When a delegate clicks “Download PDF,” a Certification Required message appears and the delegate has an option to send an email notification to the PI to certify the form. The PI must then log in to SciENcv to certify each document created for them by a delegate.

Once the PI has certified a document in SciENcv, the delegate can now download any **unmodified document** that has been previously certified as a PDF file and will not see the Certification Required message.

Can I modify the PDF of my completed Biosketch or Current and Pending Support document if I notice a typo?

No, modifying a certified PDF will invalidate the credentials and will render the document un-uploadable. You must edit in SciENcv and re-download to certify.

Why does the PDF I downloaded have a blue error message across the top saying that there are problems with at least one signature?

If you open your certified PDF in Adobe Acrobat, you may see a blue error message pop up across the top shortly after it is opened. **This error message will not impact the compliance of your file.** The blue error message is due to security settings within Adobe Acrobat and does not indicate an issue with the file. You can [update your instance of Adobe to trust digital signatures generated by SciENcv](#).

What Research Security Training do I need to complete to accurately certify the biographical documents?

To accurately certify the SciENcv Research Security Training requirement:

1. Within the past 12 months, must have completed **Research Security Training module in the [UC Learning Center](#)**. A copy of your current Research Security Training completion must be provided to OCG to verify compliance prior to submission.
2. Every 2 years you must complete the “**UC Ethics and Compliance Briefing for Researchers**” in the [UC Learning Center](#)