**NIH Extension of Early Stage Investigator Status** (posted 4/14/20)

NIH has [announced](https://nexus.od.nih.gov/all/2020/04/09/can-esi-status-be-extended-due-to-disruptions-from-covid-19/) that investigators are eligible to request an extension of their status as an Early Stage Investigator (ESI) for the amount of time that their research was shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic response.

They suggest waiting to request that extension until the investigator knows precisely how much research time was lost, except when ESI status is due to expire soon – in which case the investigator should request an extension now for however much time they’ve already lost, and then update it in future once the full amount of time is known. ESI status typically expires as soon as an investigator serves as PI of a major NIH grant (R01 or similar – R03s, R21s, and R15s don’t count) or when it’s been 10 years since they completed either their terminal research degree or their clinical training, as applicable. It can be extended, upon request and at NIH’s sole discretion, for things like medical or family leave, military service, and, now, COVID-related suspensions of research.

Investigators who have ESI status get priority for funding when they have a meritorious R01-equivalent proposal under consideration, which increases their chance of getting funded. To request an extension of their eligibility as an ESI, investigators can log into their eRA Commons profile. Note that eRA Commons will be entirely offline as it transitions to a cloud service provider starting Friday, April 17, and extending through Monday, April 20.