Personally Identifying Information (PII) & ezFedGrants
Quick Reference

What is PII?

Personally identifying information (PII) is information that uniquely identifies an individual when combined with the individual's name. Without an accompanying name, most potential PII is harmless, but some PII is considered sensitive without an accompanying name.

Examples of PII include:

- Social Security Number (SSN)
- Place of Birth
- Date of Birth
- Mother's Maiden Name
- Biometric Record (i.e. fingerprints, iris scan, DNA & genetic testing)
- Medical History Information (i.e. medical conditions, weight, height, blood pressure)
- Individual Criminal History
- Sensitive Employment Information (i.e. Disciplinary Actions, Performance Reviews)
- Personal Financial Information
- Personal or Business Credit Card Numbers
- Personal or Business Bank Account Numbers
- Security Clearance History or Related Information (does not included types of clearances held)

The following **are not** generally considered PII. If you have any concerns about sharing your non-PII details, please contact a USDA agency representative.

- An Individual's Name
- EIN/TIN as a Business Identifier
- Phone Numbers
- Street Addresses
- Email Addresses
- Digital Pictures
- Resumes (except those including SSNs)
- Occupational Titles & Responsibilities
- Security Clearances Held
- Publicly-Distributed Written Biographies (i.e. those used to introduce speakers, journalists, etc.)
- Academic Information (i.e. Credentials, Areas of Study)

Note on Publicly-Reported Occupational Information

Depending on your occupation (i.e. federal, state or local government employees, elected officials, and non-profit employees), additional details of your employment (current and historical) may be reported or available publicly, and therefore **not** considered PII. This may include salary information.

PII & ezFedGrants

During eAuthentication/Login.gov Registration

You will be requested to provide PII during eAuthentication/Login.gov Account registration and identity verification. This information is required because the ezFedGrants System (and other grants-related systems) are linked to USDA financial systems. Therefore, it is necessary to verify users' identities to reduce the chance of fraud within these financial systems.

While Using ezFedGrants

While managing your organization(s)' grants/agreements in ezFedGrants, you will enter information into standard forms and submit additional documentation in the form or PDF or Word files. Additionally, you may need to contact the ezFedGrants Help Desk or an agency representative with questions about the ezFedGrants System or the terms of your grants/agreements.

There is no reason to include PII in grants-related submissions or communications, because within ezFedGrants you are acting as a representative of an organization, not as an individual.

*Personally identifying information (PII) **should not** be included in ezFedGrants attachments, documents, or communications including, but not limited to, applications, emails, faxes, reports, and claims.*

Removing or Masking PII

If you have a document or communication that includes PII, the easiest way to protect this information is to remove it. This can be achieved by:

- Deleting the PII text (recommended for Word documents and emails)
- Recreating the document without the PII and destroying the old version by saving-over, deleting, or shredding (recommended for PDFs and printed documents)

If you cannot remove the information, you can physically or digitally obscure the information by:

- Using permanent marker, opaque tape, or paper to block PII, and then scanning or photocopying the document with this information obscured. (This is the least secure method for handling PII, as the PII still exists on the original document. This method is only recommended if you have no digital copy or other method of recreating the document)
- Using document editing software to censor, encrypt, or password-protect documents.

Version Control

Date	Changes Made
Feb. 2025	Updated the dates and added Login.gov references
Aug. 2019	Extensive revisions to format & organization of content
Jun. 2017	Initial Document Created, based on PDF "USDA Examples of Personally Identifiable Information (PII)" and OCIO PDF "Quick TIP: Steps to Create an Action to Secure/Lock on Redacted PDF Documents in Adobe Acrobat DC Professional"