



Purpose

Personally identifying information (PII) **should not** be included on any grants-related attachments, documents, or communications including, but not limited to, applications, emails, faxes, and claims, unless specifically requested.

This document defines personal identifying information (PII) and provides examples what is and is not PII.

Ultimately, we would like to stress the following:

Please DO NOT include any PII on any attachments, communications, or documents unless specifically requested.

What is PII?

Examples of 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.

- 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 include types of clearances held)

Examples of Non-PII

The following types of information are generally not considered PII. If you have any doubts about sharing the below information, please contact a USDA agency point of contact.

- 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)

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.



Personally Identifying Information (PII) & ezFedGrants Quick Reference



PII & eAuthentication

You will be requested to provide PII during eAuthentication Level 2 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.

PII & ezFedGrants

At certain points in the grants process, you will have the opportunity to submit additional documentation in the form of PDF or Word files.

Additionally, you may need to contact the USDA for support with the ezFedGrants System or with completing grants-related activities.

Please DO NOT include PII in any attachments, communications, or documents unless specifically requested.

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

Removing 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 & 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

Name	Date	Changes Made
April Murphy	6/14/2017	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"