Research Supplements to Promote Diversity in Health-Related Research (PA-21-071)

Objective: To enhance the diversity of the research workforce by recruiting and supporting students, post-doctorates, and eligible investigators from diverse backgrounds, including those from groups that have been shown to be underrepresented in health-related research. Also available to PD(s)/PI(s) of research grants who are or become disabled and need additional support.

What it is: An administrative supplement submitted by the PI of an ongoing grant (parent award e.g., R01, R00, R21, R34) to support a candidate in obtaining training to conduct research. Due dates and budgets vary by awarding institute.

Who is eligible to be a candidate:
- Candidates can be at different training levels – high school, undergraduate, post-baccalaureate, masters, doctoral, post-doctoral, faculty
- Candidates must have a racial or ethnic identity that has been shown to be underrepresented in biomedical research. Defined by NIH this includes people who are Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander.
- In addition, NIH recognizes that “underrepresentation can vary from setting to setting; individuals from racial or ethnic groups that can be demonstrated convincingly to be underrepresented by the grantee institution should be encouraged to participate in this program.”
- Individuals with disabilities, who are defined as those with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, as described in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended.
- Individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds: Check NIH definition in the announcement
- The candidate cannot have been supported on the parent award.
- Check the specific institute (e.g., NIMH, NIAAA, NICHD) guidelines.

Important other requirements:
- Clinical trial proposals are not allowed.
- Cannot be submitted in the last year of the parent award or during a no cost extension (NCE).
- Project period must fall within the parent award start/end dates (NCE period does not count).
- Must support research within the scope of the parent award. Check with your PO early!
- Scope of the project should be appropriate for the level of the trainee.

Budget and scope:
- Budget cannot exceed that of the parent award.
- Budgets and length of the award vary by institute so check specific institute statement.
- Can be $100,000+ in direct costs and 3 years in length. Depending on stage of applicant.
- Check with Office of Grants and Contracts early to establish the candidate salary since this is set by NIH.
- Supplement can support the candidate’s salary, proposed research (e.g., supplies, participant payments), and travel for the candidate to conferences/trainings.
- Mentor does not receive salary support on this supplement.
Required documents:
- Biosketch of the mentor/co-mentor and candidate.
- Research experience plan: research strategy, how the proposed research activities relate to the parent award, training plan, focus on how the project advances the candidate, describe PIs willingness to provide mentorship to candidate.
- Budget and budget justification.
- Project summary, project abstract.
- Candidate eligibility statement.
- Candidate official transcript (depending on career stage).
- If you are highlighting different facilities, resources, aspects of environment, human subjects: you will need to include updated versions.
- The supplement documents cannot exceed the length requirements for the parallel parent award documents (supplement can be shorter).

How does it get selected?
- Selected by NIH staff based on overall merit
- Does not go through peer review (i.e., study section)
- From NIH: general criteria are:
  - The qualifications of the candidate including career goals, prior research training, research potential, and any relevant experience.
  - Evidence of educational achievement and interest in science (if the candidate is a student).
  - The strength of the description of how this particular appointment would further the goals of this funding opportunity, consistent with the Notice of NIH’s Interest in Diversity (NOT-OD-20-031).
  - The plan and timeline for the proposed research and career development experiences in the supplemental request and their relationship to the parent grant.
  - Evidence that the proposed experience will expand and foster the research capabilities, knowledge, and/or skills of the candidate.
  - Evidence that the activities of the candidate will be an integral part of the project.
  - Evidence of adequate mentoring experience and success.
  - Evidence that the candidate will receive research career mentoring.

Additional tips for the mentor:
- Ask for examples from recent submissions!
- Really consider scope of research and training aims based on career stage.
- A big component that drives funding decisions for these applications are the proposed mentorship and career development plans. Provide specific details (e.g., frequency of meeting, secondary mentor/consultants, specific workshops/courses)
- If you are in Pitt Psychiatry: this application will require RRC review.
- The candidate needs to obtain an ERA commons account and log in.
- Recognize that many candidates have not submitted a grant before and this is a confusing process
- Include the candidate as much as possible in the behind the scenes of grant submissions (e.g., on emails about budget, approaching consultants). This is great experience!
- Depending on the career stage of the applicant and current position, this award may result in a decrease in salary for the applicant. Talk with them openly about pros and cons of this as you both decide on applying for this award.
Additional tips for the candidate:

- **Biosketch:** Ask your mentor for examples but do not feel worried that your biosketch does not look like theirs. You are an early-stage investigator! There are examples and more information on NIH’s Grants & Funding website: https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm

  Biosketch should include:
  - Evidence of scientific achievement or interest.
  - Any source(s) of current funding.
  - A statement from the candidate outlining research objectives and career goals.

- **Candidate eligibility statement:** We recognize that this is asking you to disclose identities that have historically and currently been discriminated against, including in academia. Be kind to yourself while writing this section. This statement does not need to be long (~ ½ page) and **must include**:
  - A description of why you are eligible for this supplement: disclosure of racial and/or ethnic identities, disability, disadvantaged background.
  - Information on your citizenship.
  - Description of how funding will further NIH’s mission of increasing diversity in health-related research.

- Ask questions along the way! This process is confusing to everyone the first time they submit a grant. View this experience as a learning opportunity! Celebrate this submission! It is a big deal and a lot of work.

- Be active in developing your training plan to ensure you are going to get the training you want and need.

- Even though you are not the “PI” of this supplement, you need to obtain an ERA Commons user name and complete your profile.

- The timing of hearing back from NIH about if the supplement will get awarded is unclear. You may be notified after the first possible award date. Talk to your mentor about their experiences with the waiting period.

- You will receive fringe benefits but the salary is taxed, so keep these things in mind when evaluating the financial component of applying for this award.