NIH Neuroscience Development for Advancing the Careers of a Diverse Research Workforce

July 19, 2023

NINDS & NIMH
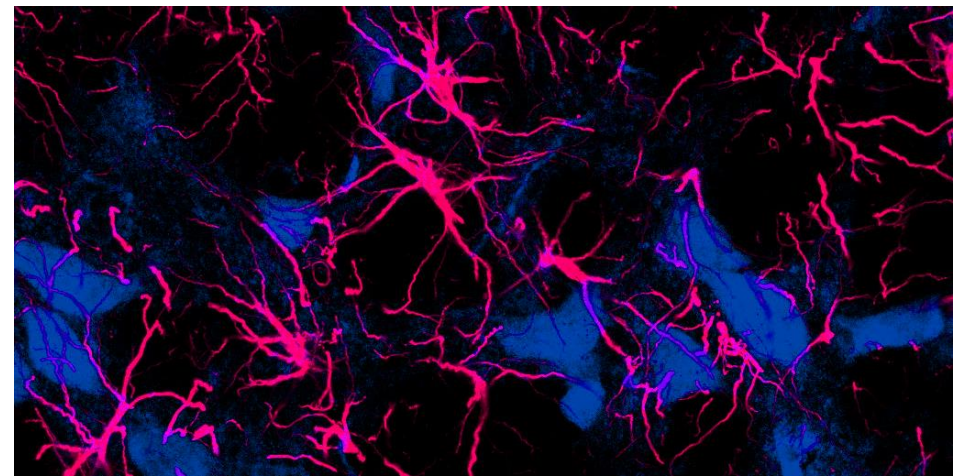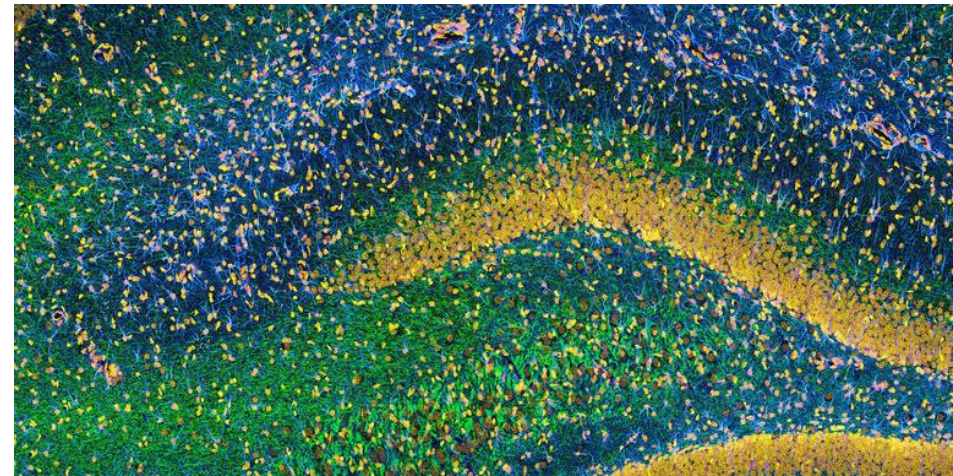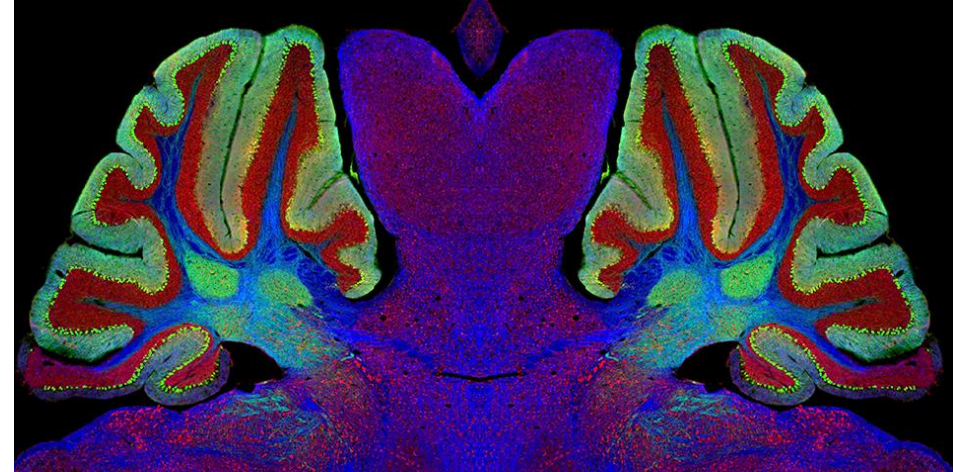
NIH Neuroscience Development for Advancing the Careers of a Diverse Research Workforce Webinar

- Captions and live transcript are available.

- Type any questions into the Q&A box. Questions will be addressed after the presentation.

- The recording and webinar resource materials will be available in a few weeks.

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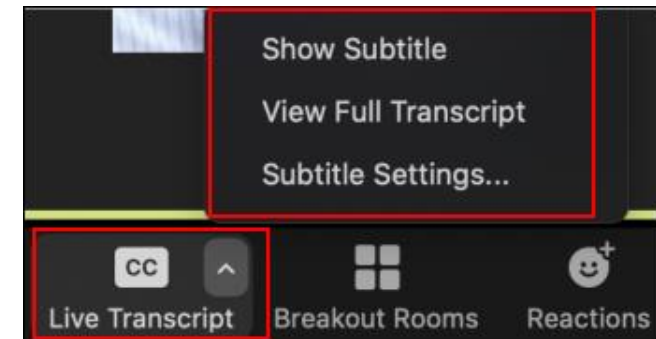
Speakers

Dr. James Churchill
Senior Advisor to the Director
NIMH

Dr. Michelle Jones-London
Chief
Office of Programs to
Enhance Neuroscience (OPEN)
Workforce Diversity
NINDS

Dr. Lauren Ullrich
Program Director
Office of Programs to
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Outline of the Webinar

- Program Vision and Purpose
- Program Eligibility
- Clarifying Application Policies and Components
- Key Components and Avoiding Frequent Mistakes
- Q&A

Program Vision and Purpose

NOFO Rationale and Purpose

- Increase the pool of current and future PhD-level research scientists from diverse backgrounds underrepresented in biomedical neuroscience research.

- Facilitate the career advancement/transition of the participants to the next step of their neuroscience careers.

- Scientific enrichment within the participating Institutes

Program Vision

- Programs should focus on factors that have been shown to affect retention of postbaccalaureate, graduate students, postdoctoral trainees, and junior faculty in neuroscience research such as:

✓ Mentoring

✓ Scientific networks

✓ Professional development

✓ Attention to the structural and institutional environment regarding inclusion

(*Structure and Belonging: Pathways to Success for Underrepresented Minority and Women Ph.D. Students in STEM Fields; The Science of Effective Mentorship in STEMM*)

Program Eligibility

Institutional Eligibility

- Non-domestic (non-U.S.) Entities (Foreign Institutions) are **not** eligible to apply.
- Non-domestic (non-U.S.) components of U.S. Organizations are **not** eligible to apply.
- Scientific societies and small businesses are eligible
- Appropriate institutional commitment to the program includes the provision of adequate staff, facilities, and educational resources that can contribute to the planned program.
- Only one application per institution (normally identified by having a unique entity identifier (UEI) or NIH IPF number) is allowed

Principal Investigator Eligibility

- PD/PI should hold a basic or health professional degree (e.g. Ph.D., M.D., or equivalent), and have clearly demonstrated training/mentoring credentials.
- PD/PI must have a regular, full-time appointment (i.e. not adjunct, part-time, retired, or emeritus) at the applicant institution and should have research, teaching, and/or academic administrative experience.
- Early-stage investigators are eligible to serve as PD/PIs, as long as doing so will not detract from their research program and career advancement.
- MPIs should have complementary and integrated expertise and must have leadership plan.
- If a scientific society is identified as the applicant organization, the advisory board of the given scientific society or organization should identify an affiliated member to serve as PD/PI
- Effort must be appropriate.
- Funding from the NIH Institute or Center is not required.

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Participant Eligibility

- Program-supported participants should help achieve the overall goals/objectives of the Advancing Neuroscience Diversity R25 Program
  - Encourage individuals from groups underrepresented in the neuroscience workforce, to pursue further studies or careers in research at **one or more** of the following career levels: postbaccalaureate, graduate, postdoctoral, and/or early career faculty.
    - At the graduate level, participants may include students seeking medical or research doctoral degrees.
    - At the postdoctoral level, participants may include those holding an MD, PhD, or dual degree
  - Research education programs should be used for the education of U.S. citizens and permanent residents.

To participate in this NOFO, must fall within the mission of one of the participating NIH institutes

Participating Institute	Contact
National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)	Michelle Jones-London Lauren Ullrich
National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)	Angela Holmes
National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)	James Churchill
National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)	Ivana Grakalic

Several NIH Institutes and Centers also have R25s to enhance workforce diversity; find additional NIH research mission funding opportunities:
https://researchtraining.nih.gov/programs/other-training-related/R25

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NINDS and NIMH share a review locus

- Applications with either a majority NINDS and/or NIMH mission relevance will be reviewed by the Scientific Review Branch at NINDS
- Applications that are deemed more scientifically relevant for NIDA or NIAAA will be reviewed by those specific Institutes
- We strongly encourage reaching out to Program Staff before application submission to discuss your specific program goals and design

How do I know if my research is a fit for one of the participating institutes?

- If you are not sure if your research is a fit, please reach out to the contacts listed in the NOFO

- The Matchmaker function of NIH RePORTER
  - Helps you identify the appropriate NIH Institute
  - You can also see currently funded programs!!
  - View the variety in types of programs

Clarifying Application Policies and Components

Research Education Plans

- NOFO will support creative activities with a focus on:
  - Mentoring Activities
  - Research Experiences
  - Courses for Skills Development
- All three activities must be included
- May complement ongoing programs but must be *distinct* from training and education programs receiving Federal support.
- Not intended to support long-term training by NRSA-eligible individuals and can not be used to circumvent/supplant NRSA mechanisms.

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Mentoring Activities

- Within a mentoring network, activities such as:
  - Professional career skills that advance broad career goals;
  - Facilitating scholarly writing and grantsmanship;
  - Promoting successful transitions from one career stage to another;
  - Providing leadership development;
  - Helping to identify potential collaborators and establishing interdisciplinary collaborations
- Welcomes programs aimed at improving the caliber of mentorship

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Research Experiences

- Provide hands-on, authentic research experiences appropriate to the needs and career levels of participants.
  - Postbaccalaureate and graduate students: research experiences and training not available through formal NIH training mechanisms;
  - Postdoctorates and junior faculty: extend their skills, experiences, and knowledge base.
- Complementary activities that support the participants' scientific development, such as scientific writing and presentation skills, and training in rigor and reproducibility.

Courses for Skill Development

- Activities should fill a gap in existing resources and provide a course that is significant and impactful for the neuroscience community.

- May include:
  - Enhancing the research skills through advanced courses in a neuroscience or specialized research technique within IC mission.
  - Career development seminars and workshops such as grant writing, manuscript preparation, laboratory management, building a successful career, experimental rigor and quantitative skills

Participants

- Applications must describe the intended participants, and the specific educational background characteristics that are essential for participation in the proposed research education program.

- Identify the career level(s) for which the proposed program is planned. Programs that target periods of transition and/or more than one career stage are strongly encouraged.

- Describe the selection process and criteria (e.g. who will be on the selection committee; their experience evaluating such applications).

- Applications must include a description of the potential applicant pool (including number and percent) based on the selection criteria established for the proposed program.

Program Faculty

- Mentors should have research expertise and experience relevant to the proposed program and should demonstrate a history of, or the potential for, their intended roles as mentors.

- Mentors must be committed to continue their involvement throughout the total period of the mentee's participation in this award.

- Researchers from diverse backgrounds, including racial and ethnic groups, persons with disabilities, and women are encouraged to participate as program faculty.

- Participating Faculty Biosketches: Participating faculty should provide a personal statement within their biosketch that describes their prior mentoring and educational experience for the proposed program.

Advisory Committee

- Not required, but recommended.
- The composition, roles, responsibilities, and desired expertise of committee members, frequency of committee meetings, and other relevant information should be included.
- Describe how the Advisory Committee will evaluate the overall effectiveness of the program.
- Renewal applications with Advisory Committees should include the names of all committee members during the past project period.

Budget	$250,000 DC/year for 5 years
Personnel Costs	• Up to $75,000 for administering the program • Individuals designing, directing, and implementing the research education program may request salary and fringe benefits appropriate for the person months devoted to the program
Salary	• NIH will provide salary and fringe benefits consistent with institutional salary policies. Institutional salary rates which exceed the hourly minimum wage must be justified. • Institutional training program costs to support full-time participants (supported for 40 hours/week for a continuous, 12-month period) are not allowable.
Other Allowable Costs	• Housing • Registration fees or tuition • Research supplies for R25 participants at visiting institutions where research will be conducted may be requested (not to exceed $2,000/year). • Consultant costs, equipment, supplies, travel for key persons, and other program-related expenses may be included if justified.

Unallowable Costs

- Costs associated with the mentoring participants, if mentoring interactions and other activities with participants are considered a regular part of an individual's academic duties
- Salary and support for central institutional administrative personnel or administrative activities (e.g., budget officers, grant assistants, building maintenance personnel, and institutional public relations)
- Costs of travel between the place of residence and the training institution except in cases of disability or extreme hardship
- Costs to support full-time participants (supported for 40 hours/week for a continuous, 12-month period)

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Institutional Environment

- Letter of institutional commitment must include a description of specific support (financial and otherwise) to be provided for the program.

- Provision of adequate staff, facilities, and educational resources.

- Institutions should clearly state the alignment of enhancing scientific workforce diversity to its mission and accountability to promote a climate of inclusion for participants within the institutional program.

- Takes advantage of the educational environment.

- Collaboration and buy-in from all programs, departments, and institutions involved. All collaborative arrangements must be clearly described, and agreements included in the application as letters of support.

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Recruitment Plan to Enhance Diversity

- New applications must include explicit plans to enhance diversity in recruitment, may include data in support of past accomplishments.

- Renewal applications must include detailed account of experiences in recruiting individuals from underrepresented groups during the previous funding period, including successful and unsuccessful recruitment strategies and how the proposed plan reflects the program's past experiences.

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Evaluation Plan

- Applicants should develop education programs and activities that can be amenable to formal program evaluation to determine their effectiveness.

- Must specify baseline metrics (e.g., numbers, educational levels, and demographic characteristics of participants), and measures of short or long-term success.
  - Awardees must submit Data Tables 8A and 8C, as applicable, with the RPPR.

- Applicants are encouraged to obtain feedback from participants.

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Dissemination Plan

- A specific plan must be provided to disseminate nationally any findings resulting from or materials developed under the auspices of the research education program.
  - Sharing course curricula and related materials via web postings, presentations at scientific meetings, workshops
- Publication of the program's findings and outcomes in peer-reviewed journals is highly encouraged.

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Renewal

- For Renewals, the committee will consider the progress made in the last funding period, and the success of the program in achieving its goals.

- Has the research education program successfully achieved its stated objectives during the prior project period(s)?

- Has the program had a strong impact on student success and if appropriate, provided added value to the participating institutions? If so, how has the added value been integrated into the fabric of the participating institutions?

- Is there evidence toward institutionalization of NIH-funded components?

Letter of Intent

- Indicate intent to submit an application, via email, to nindsdiversitytraining@mail.nih.gov (or your IC contact)
- Include the following information:
  - Descriptive title of proposed activity
  - Name(s), address(es), and telephone number(s) of the PD(s)/PI(s)
  - Names of other key personnel
  - Participating institution(s)
  - Number and title of this funding opportunity

Tips

- Pay attention to allowable appendix materials
- Submit early—there is only one receipt date per year (September)
- Funding will likely start in July

Key Components and Avoiding Frequent Mistakes

Not One-Size-Fits-All

- Addresses a **key audience** and an important aspect/need in research education.
- Has **clear program goals** and milestones and a plan that will achieve those goals.
- **Holistic approach**—taking advantage of institutional strengths and community attributes.
- Innovation is a bonus—**effectiveness** is most important.

Key Review Questions

If the aims of the education program are achieved, will they lead to the development of a diverse group of highly trained scientists in increased numbers and in neuroscience research areas?

Is the plan for evaluation sound and likely to provide information on the effectiveness of the program? If the proposed program will recruit participants, are the planned recruitment, retention, and follow-up (if applicable) activities adequate to ensure a highly qualified participant pool?

Do the institutions or organizations have experience providing educational opportunities to students or faculty from diverse backgrounds underrepresented in neuroscience research ? If so, are outcomes described for previous or currently supported programs? How will this proposed program fit with the existing environment? What is the stated commitment for assuring a climate of inclusion for the R25 program participants?

Key Components to a Successful Application

- The proposed research education program must address scientific/education areas and/or topics important to the mission of the NINDS and/or NIMH.
- The program should be based on sound research concepts and educational principles and **should also focus on asset models and leadership opportunities, rather than solely deficit models and remediation**
- Address a critical barrier to progress in the field for the participants – go beyond what should be standard practice for a good Institution
- Is this a **program** – will you have a cohort and critical mass of participants?
- Show reviewers some feasibility for the intervention or strategy you are proposing

Key Components to a Successful Application

- Educational experiences should increase the number and success of diverse trainees
- You do NOT need to include multiple career stages; it is bonus but only if it makes sense
- Provide evidence that the participating faculty have experience in mentoring students, trainees, and/or early career researchers, and teaching science – well known names are not enough
- Benchmarks should be specified, and specific plans and procedures must be described to capture, analyze and report outcome measures that would determine the success of the research education program in achieving its objectives.

Questions?

Program Contacts:

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