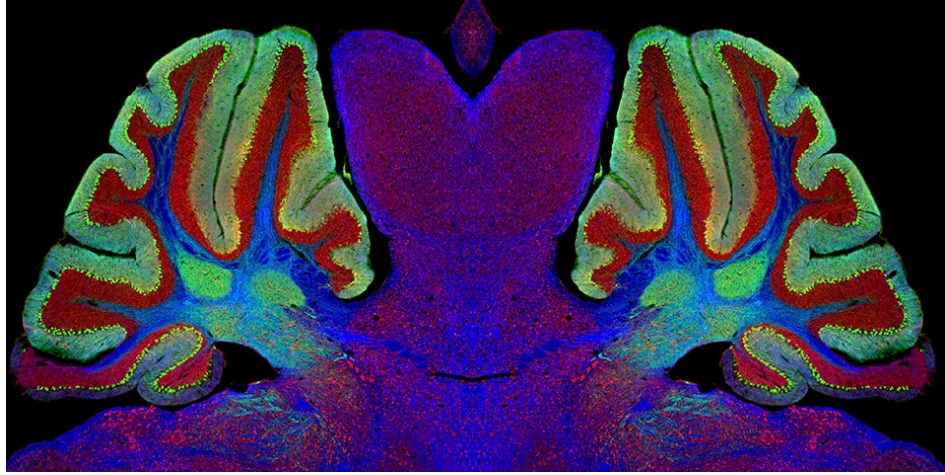
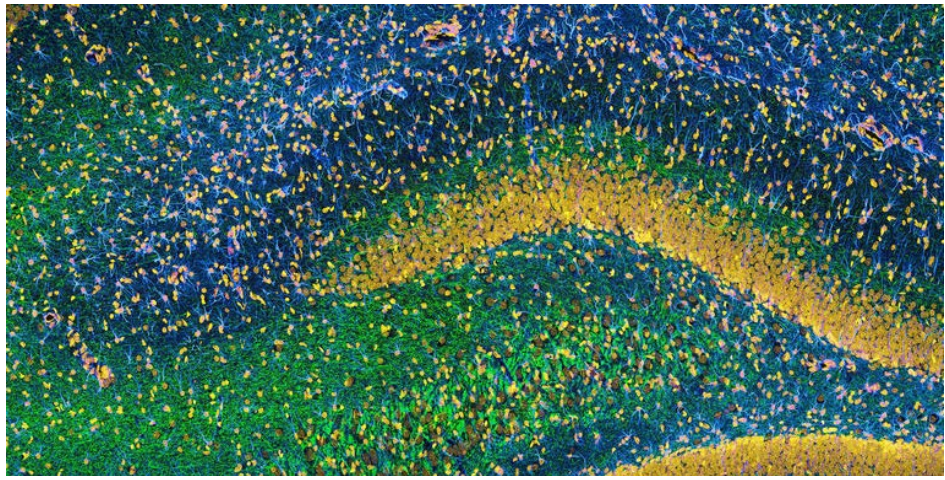
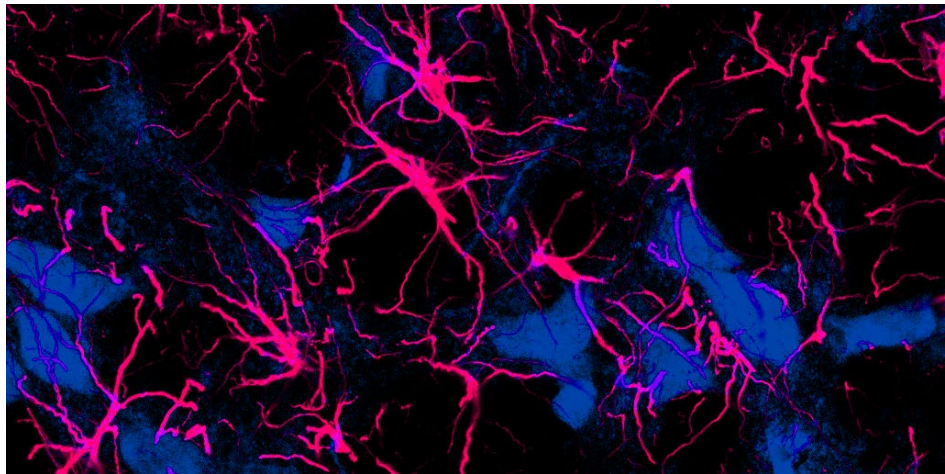
National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

Diversity F31 OPEN House

May 9, 2023

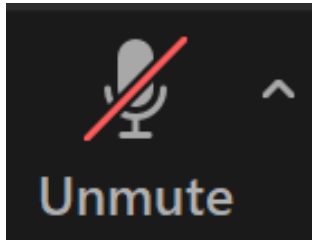




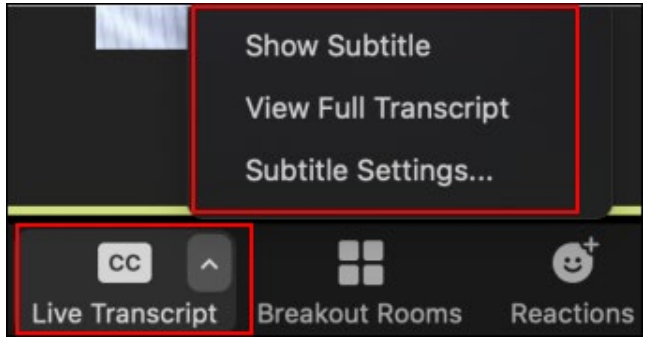


Meeting Reminders

Attendees are muted



Live transcript available



Presentation is being recorded

Goals of Today's OPEN House

1. Understand the Diversity F31 fellowship and what you need to put together a strong application

2. Meet some of the NIH Staff who are a resource to you as applicants

3. Encourage you to apply!

Speakers

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

Marguerite Matthews, PhD
Program Director
OPEN, NINDS

Anahid Ebrahimi, PhD
Health Program Specialist
OPEN, NINDS

Jennifer Kielczewski, PhD
Scientific Review Officer
Center for Scientific Review, NIH

Lauren Ullrich, PhD
Program Director
OPEN, NINDS

Michael Tennekoon, PhD
Health Program Specialist
Office of Training & Workforce Development, NINDS

NIH & NINDS: Who We Are

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

NIH & NINDS

- NIH has 27 Institutes and Centers (ICs)
  - Each IC has its own mission
  - Each IC has its own budget
  - Each IC has its own activities
  - Each IC has its own way of doing business

- The mission of NINDS is to seek fundamental knowledge about the brain and nervous system and to use that knowledge to reduce the burden of neurological disease for all people.

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

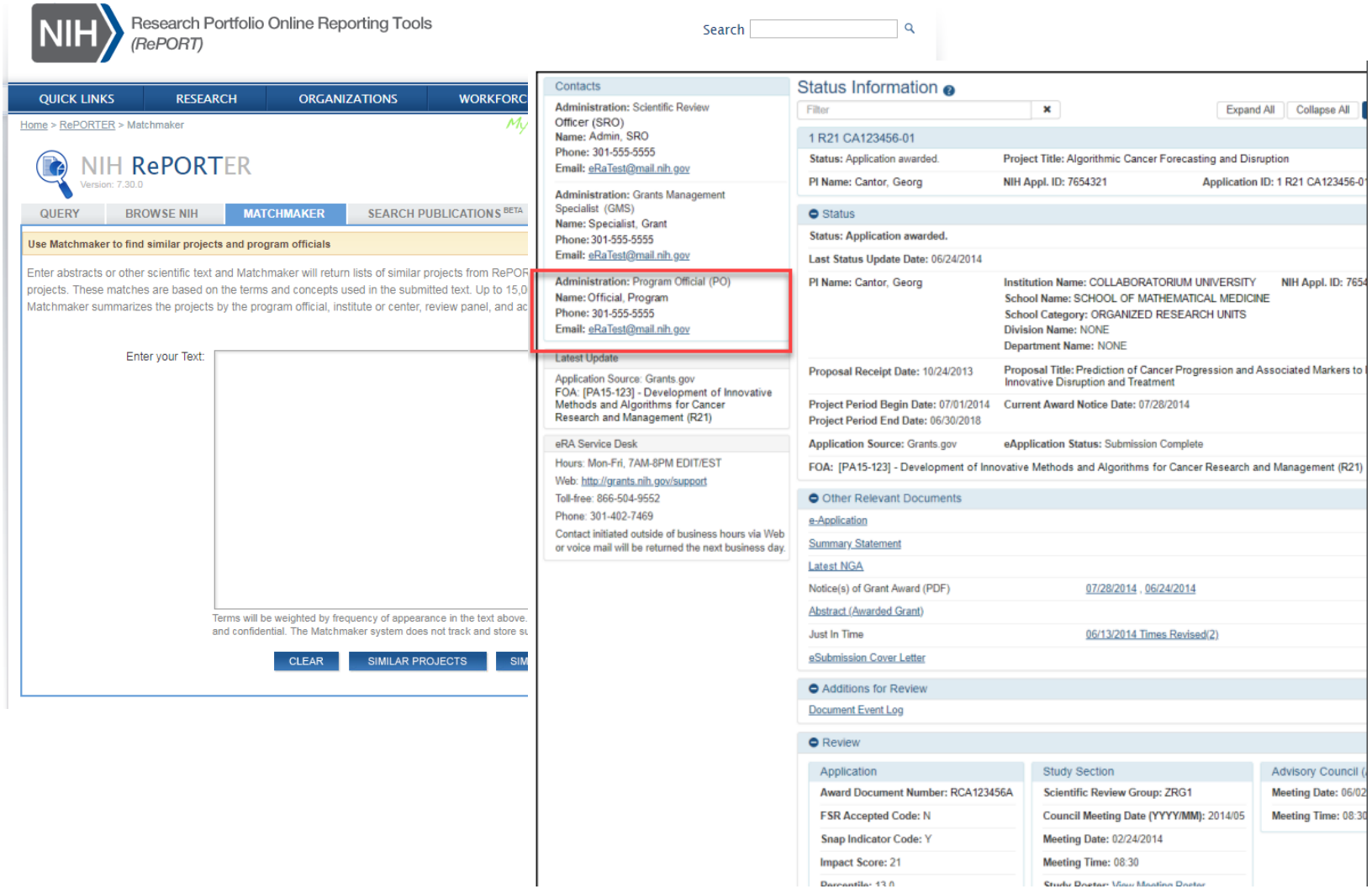
Finding the Right Program Official (PO)

Before you apply, talk to your "likely" PO. Options:

- Contact OPEN office!
- Contact Mentor's PO
- Use Matchmaker function in NIH RePORTER
- Check Funding Opportunity's "Table of IC-specific contacts"

After you apply, you will be assigned a PO

- Check eRA Commons



The NINDS Diversity Office is “OPEN”

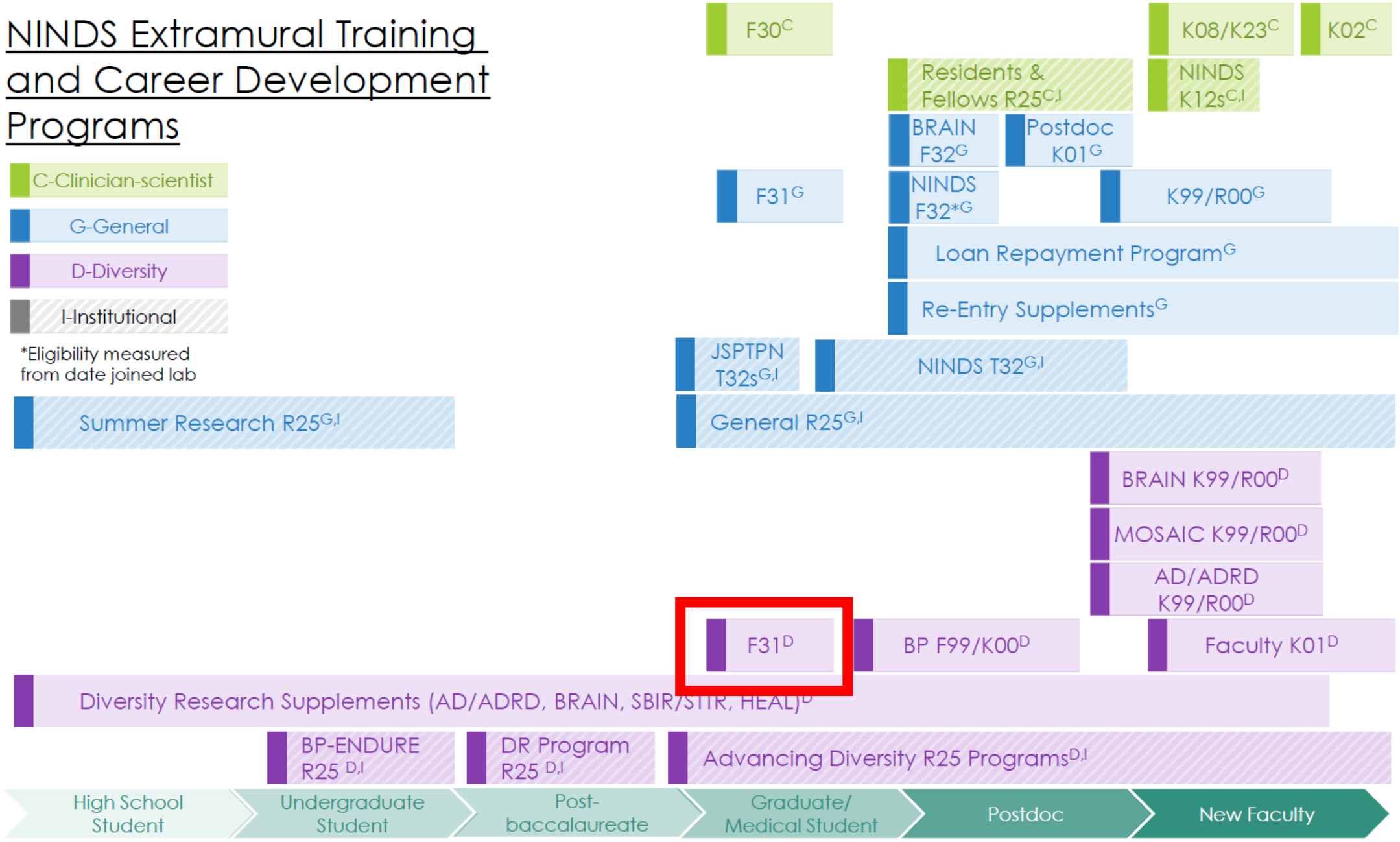
- Our goal is to open opportunities and access to enhance the diversity of the neuroscience workforce
- We develop and implement specific funding opportunities (individual and institutional) and work across the NINDS scientific portfolio to promote inclusion
- An OPEN Pathway of programs across career stages

From Potential to Action: NINDS Trainees Navigate Diverse Paths to Success

https://www.ninds.nih.gov/About-NINDS/Workforce-Diversity/Success-Stories

https://www.ninds.nih.gov/About-NINDS/Workforce-Diversity/Enhancing-Diversity

NINDS Extramural Training and Career Development Programs



Anahid Ebrahimi, PhD
Health Program Specialist
OPEN, NINDS

Diversity F31 Fellowship

Diversity Predoc Fellowship (F31)

The Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award (NRSA) ***Individual Predoctoral Fellowship to Promote Diversity in Health-Related Research (F31)*** will enable promising underrepresented predoctoral students to obtain individualized, mentored research training from outstanding faculty sponsors while conducting well-defined research projects

Eligibility

- US citizen or permanent resident only
- For the purpose of this announcement, institutions are encouraged to recruit potential student participants from diverse backgrounds
- Must be pursuing a PhD or equivalent research degree, or a combined professional and research doctoral degree in biomedical, behavioral, health services, or clinical sciences (e.g. MD/PhD)
- Can only be supported within first 6 years of graduate school
  - **Must have a minimum 12 months remaining by award start date**

Award Details

- Duration of support:
  - Up to 5 years of aggregate NRSA predoctoral support (up to 6 years for dual degree training, e.g., MD/PhD), including any combination of support from institutional training grants (T32) and an individual fellowship award

- Award budget:
  - Stipend
  - Tuition and fees
  - Institutional allowance (health insurance, research supplies, equipment, books, and travel to scientific meetings)

Choosing Between General F31 & Diversity F31

- NINDS supports both the **General F31** and the **Diversity F31**
  - **Diversity F31** is for students underrepresented in [illegible]dical research
  - **Diversity F31** funding rates are similar t[illegible]
- Differences are based on career[illegible]
  - **General F31**: Appli[illegible]dates for the PhD degree and have identifi[illegible]esearch project and sponsor(s).
  - **Dive**[illegible]ants may apply at any time, applications are encou[illegible]once an applicant has identified a specific research project that will be undertaken in the sponsor's laboratory. This often occurs in the second year of a PhD program.

You can not send the same grant to both programs and you cannot apply for both at the same time.

Marguerite Matthews, PhD
Program Director
OPEN, NINDS

Putting Together Your Application

Before You Start Your Application

Take a step back and view the process of writing the grant not only for money/funding, but as an exercise to organize a vision of your research, a timeline for your career development and as a vehicle to have focused engagement with your mentor

Remember – you shouldn't do this alone! Engage your mentors and peers in the process

Be specific:
My goal is _____
My research question is _____
At the end of this award, I will be ready to _____

Work backward from your end goal - where do you need to be in:
Discipline-specific knowledge, technical skills, communication skills, leadership skills, etc.

What will you learn from each identified mentor?

Are all your areas of development covered?

Be consistent
Be realistic
Be explicit

Step 1

- Define your career goals and research interests

Step 2

- Perform a skills “gap analysis”

Step 3

- Build a career/training plan that is tailored to your needs
- Seek guidance and mentorship!

Step 4

- Read instructions and put it all together!
- Get LOTS of feedback

Select Application Materials

- Biosketch
- Applicant's Background and Goals for Fellowship Training
  A. Doctoral Dissertation and Research Experience
  B. Training Goals and Objectives
  C. Activities Planned Under this Award
- Research Training Plan

Select Application Materials

- Sponsor & Co-Sponsor Statement
  - Research Support Available
  - Sponsor's/Co-Sponsor's Previous Fellows/Trainees
  - Training Plan, Environment, Research Facilities
  - Number of Fellows/Trainees to be Supervised During the Fellowship
  - Applicant's Qualifications and Potential for a Research Career
- Referee letters (different from Letters of Support!)
- Description of Candidate's Contribution to Program Goals

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

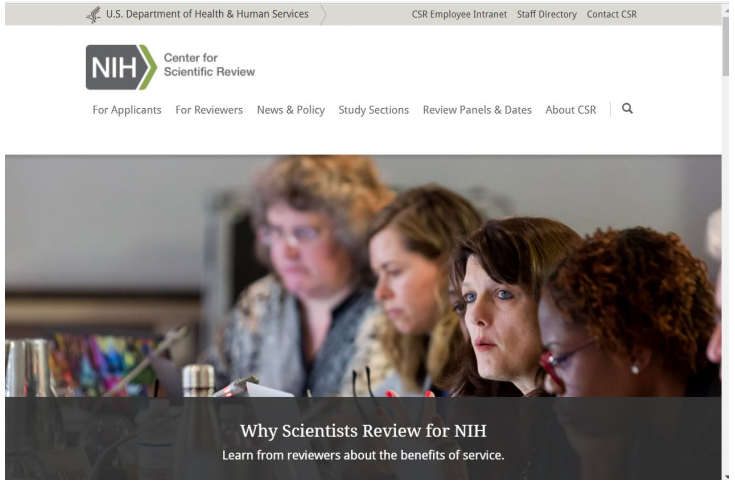
NIH Center for Scientific Review

Review

Dr. Jennifer Kielczewski, SRO in Center for Scientific Review (CSR)

CSR Web Site

- About CSR
- Applicant Resources
- Study Sections
- Rosters and Meetings



http://www.csr.nih.gov

CSR's Mission

Center for Scientific Review

To ensure that NIH grant applications receive **fair**, independent, expert, and timely scientific reviews **- free from inappropriate influences** - so NIH can fund the most promising research.

bias in review? https://public.csr.nih.gov/AboutCSR/Address-Bias-in-Peer-Review

General Scientific Review Officer (SRO) Duties

- Responsible for the scientific and technical review of applications
- Review applications for completeness and conformance with application requirements
- Ensure fair and unbiased evaluation of the scientific and technical merit of the proposed research
- Provide accurate Summary Statements of the review to aid funding recommendations made by National Advisory Councils and Institute Directors

Review Process of NRSA Fellowship Applications

Before

- Scientific Review Officer (SRO) assigns 3 reviewers to your fellowship application
- Reviewers provide scores & written critique

During

- 70-90 total fellowship applications per fellowship panel reviewed. Discussed in clusters (F31, F31-DIV, F30, F32)
  - ~50% discussed
- For discussed applications, all panel members participate in discussion

After

- SRO will release final scores and Summary Statements
- Applicants should contact Program Officers (PO) after reading their Summary Statement with any questions pertaining to their review

Application Scoring- There are 5 review criteria contributing to the Overall Impact Score

Impact	Score	Descriptor
High Impact	1	Exceptional
	2	Outstanding
	3	Excellent
Medium Impact	4	Very Good
	5	Good
	6	Satisfactory
Low Impact	7	Fair
	8	Marginal
	9	Poor

- High value/benefit of training to applicant
- High potential for applicant to develop into a productive, independent scientists
- Some or no weakness in criteria

- Moderate to high value/benefit of training to applicant
- Moderate to high potential for applicant to develop further
- Weaknesses reduce to medium impact

- Low to moderate value/benefit of training to applicant
- Low to moderate potential for applicant to develop further
- Weaknesses reduce to low impact

Fellowship Application Review Criteria - Five Criteria

1. Fellowship Applicant
2. Sponsors, Collaborators and Consultants
3. Research Training Plan
4. Training Potential
5. Institutional Environment & Commitment to Training

Review Criteria

1. Applicant

- Are the applicant's academic record and research experience of high quality?
- Does the applicant have the potential to develop into an independent and productive researcher?
- Does the applicant demonstrate commitment to a research career in the future?

2. Sponsors, Collaborators, and Consultants

- Are the sponsor(s') research qualifications and track record of mentoring individuals at a similar stage appropriate for the applicant's needs?
- Do the applicant's research interests match the sponsor(s)? Do(es) the sponsor(s) understand the applicant's training needs and show commitment to assist in meeting those needs?
- Is there adequate funding to support the applicant's proposed research and training for the duration of the research component of the fellowship?

Review Criteria

3. Research Training Plan

- Is the research project of high scientific quality and well integrated with the proposed training plan?
- Is the proposed research project sufficiently distinct from the sponsor's funded research, and consistent with the applicant's stage of research development?
- Is the time frame feasible to accomplish the proposed training?

4. Training Potential

- Are the proposed research project and training plan likely to provide the applicant with the requisite individualized and mentored experiences in order to obtain appropriate skills for a research career?
- Does the training plan take advantage of the applicant's strengths and address gaps in needed skills, and document a clear need for, and value of, the proposed training?
- Will the proposed training enhance the applicant's ability to develop into a productive researcher?

Review Criteria

5. Institutional Environment & Commitment to Training

- Are the research facilities, resources (e.g., equipment, laboratory space, computer time, subject populations), and training opportunities (e.g. seminars, workshops, professional development opportunities) adequate and appropriate?
- Is the institutional environment for the applicant's scientific development of high quality?
- Is there appropriate institutional commitment to fostering the applicant's mentored training.

Additional Review Criteria

- As applicable for the project proposed, reviewers will evaluate the following additional items while determining scientific and technical merit, and in providing an overall impact score, but **will not** give separate scores for these items.
  - Protections for Human Subjects
  - Inclusion of Women, Minorities, and Individuals Across the Lifespan
  - Vertebrate Animals
  - Biohazards
  - Resubmissions

After the review… Applicants should

- Carefully read their Summary Statement
- Contact your Program Officer (PO) and be prepared to discuss any questions:
  - Reviewer comments from Summary Statement
  - Scores and percentiles
  - Funding prospects
  - Resubmission and other options

After the review meeting….. Keep in mind

- Your **Program Officer (PO)** can assist with any questions regarding the review of your fellowship application (scoring, funding etc.)

- An SRO can not answer specific questions about the review of your fellowship application once the Review meeting has occurred.

Reporting Review Concerns about Bias or Integrity

For issues related to respectful interactions, bias or anything else that could affect the fairness of the review process, contact the CSR Associate Director of Diversity & Workforce Development at G.Fosu_AssocDir@csr.nih.gov.

Gabriel Fosu, Ph.D.

For issues related to review integrity, contact your SRO, or the CSR Review Integrity Officer at csrrio@mail.nih.gov, or the NIH Review Policy Officer at reviewpolicyofficer@mail.nih.gov.

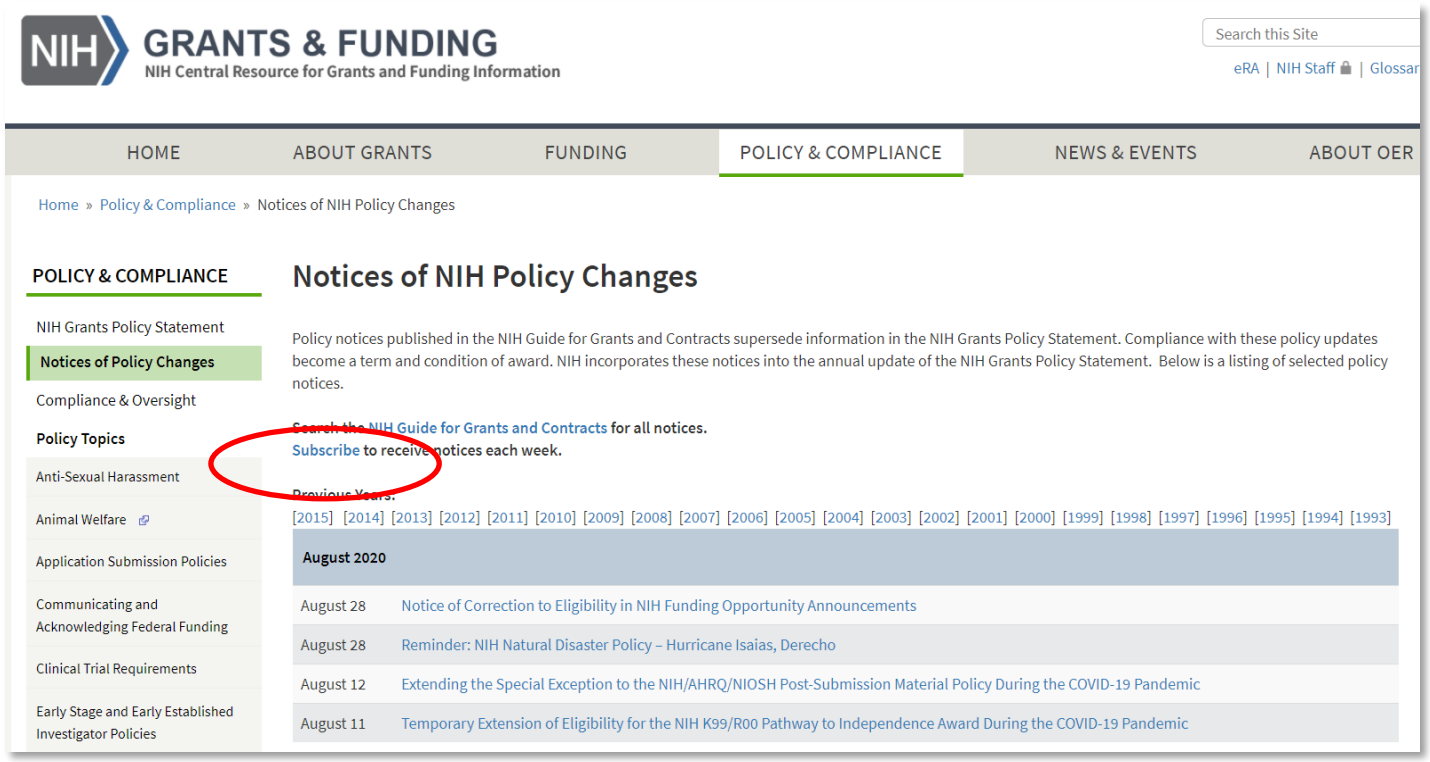
Existing CSR policy regarding a potentially flawed/biased review

Assessment by CSR management – is it a flawed review?

- Yes - CSR re-reviews the application in the same council round.
- No – CSR refers PI to program officer for guidance on council appeal process

How can you stay abreast of policy changes?

Subscribe to the NIH Guide Notice – this is the primary means of communication from NIH to the external community: https://grants.nih.gov/policy/notices.htm



NIH Guide

For Grants and Contracts

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

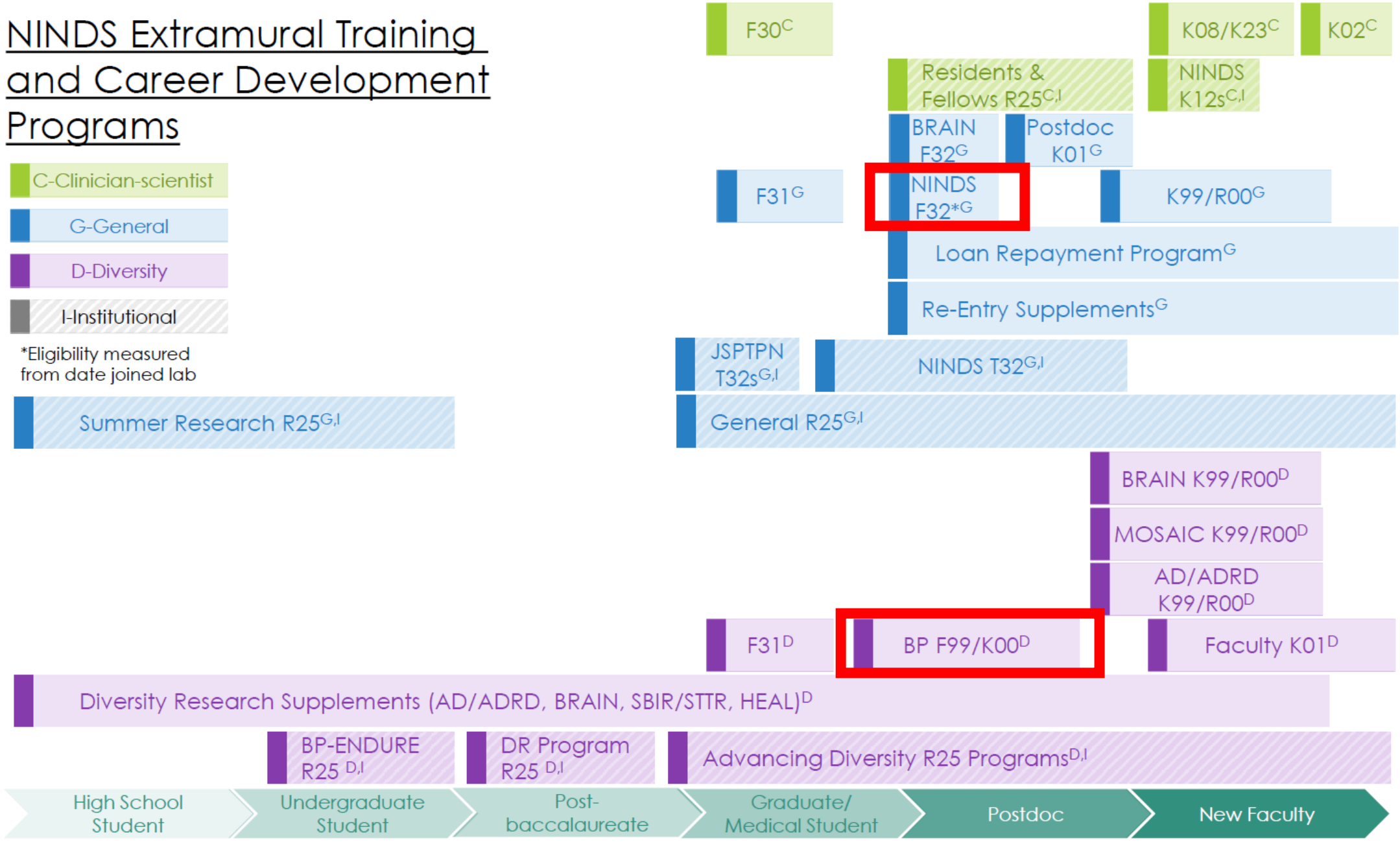
- Announces NIH scientific initiatives
- Provides NIH policy and administrative information
- Supplies links to application forms
- Available on the NIH Web Site: http://www.nih.gov

Other funding opportunities

Michael Tennekoon, PhD
Health Program Specialist
Office of Training & Workforce Development, NINDS

Lauren Ullrich, PhD
Program Director
OPEN, NINDS

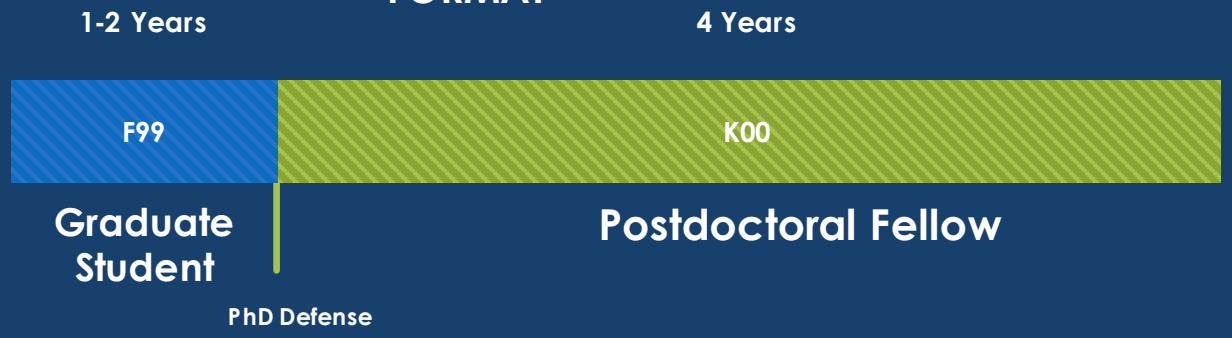
NINDS Extramural Training and Career Development Programs



NIH Blueprint and BRAIN Initiative Diversity Specialized Predoctoral to Postdoctoral Advancement in Neuroscience Award (F99/K00)

@NINDSDiversity

FORMAT



April 15, 2022; December 15, 2022; April 14, 2023; December 15, 2023

PARTICIPATING INSTITUTES

- NEI
- NIA
- NIAAA
- NIBIB
- NICHD
- NIDCR
- NIDA
- NIEHS
- NIMH
- NINDS
- NINR
- NCCIH

RFA-NS-21-012

INTENDED FOR

PhD students with 1-2 years left in a research doctoral degree program;

From diverse backgrounds (NOT-OD-20-031), such as:
- Individuals from nationally underrepresented racial and ethnic groups (African Americans, Hispanic/Latinx, American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders), and
- Individuals with disabilities;
- Individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Performing neuroscience research within the BRAIN Initiative or Blueprint missions;

At a U.S. domestic institution; and are

U.S. citizens or permanent residents by time of award

National Institutes of Health

NINDS Postdoctoral NRSA Fellowship (F32) – PAR-21-032

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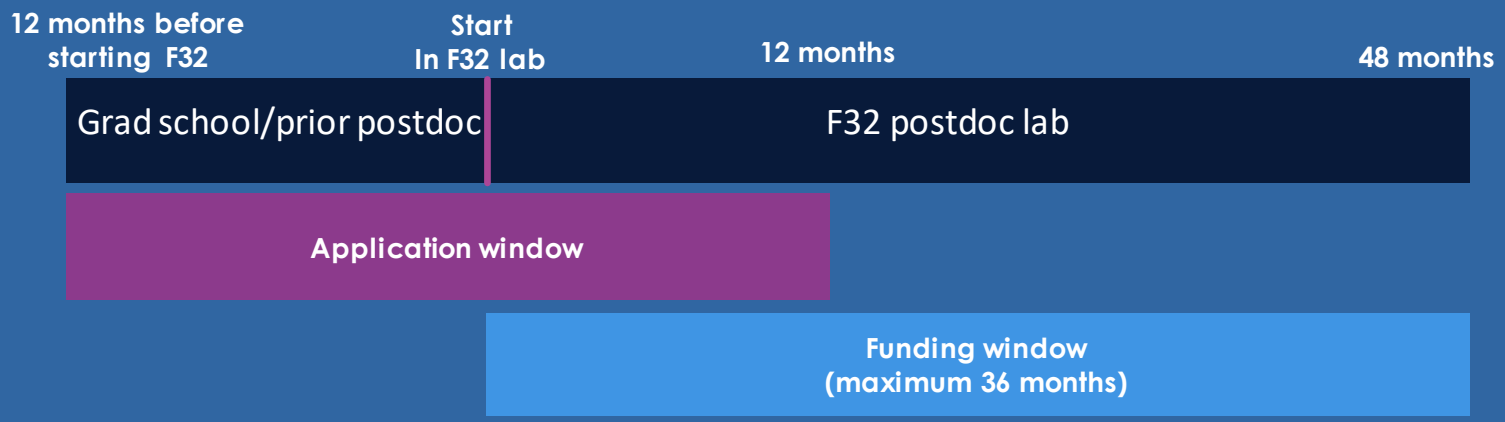


February 9, 2023; June 8th, 2023; October 10th 2023
Dates for 2024 will be published in due course

Contact: Michael Tennekoon
Michael.tennekoon@nih.gov

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

INTENDED FOR

Postdoctoral Fellows that are early in their training;

- Can apply before joining the postdoc lab you will be doing the F32 project in
- Preliminary data are **NOT** required!
- **Not intended** to continue training in same research environment
- Encourage creative, bold, innovative ideas that are an intellectual collaboration between the individual and their mentor
- Do not wait to apply!

Performing neuroscience research within the NINDS mission (please send specific aims to Michael Tennekoon to confirm)

U.S. citizens or permanent residents by time of award

At a U.S. domestic institution or;
Foreign institution – however, it must be justified as to why this work cannot be done at a US. Domestic institution

OPEN Connections

LISTSERV

http://go.usa.gov/xkpN6

TWITTER

@NINDSDiversity

PODCAST

ninds.buzzsprout.com

NIH NINDS
Building up the Nerve

E-MAIL

NINDSDiversityTraining
@mail.nih.gov

Breakout Rooms

Michelle Jones-London, PhD

SPONSOR/CO-SPONSOR

Marguerite Matthews, PhD

Anahid Ebrahimi, PhD

F31

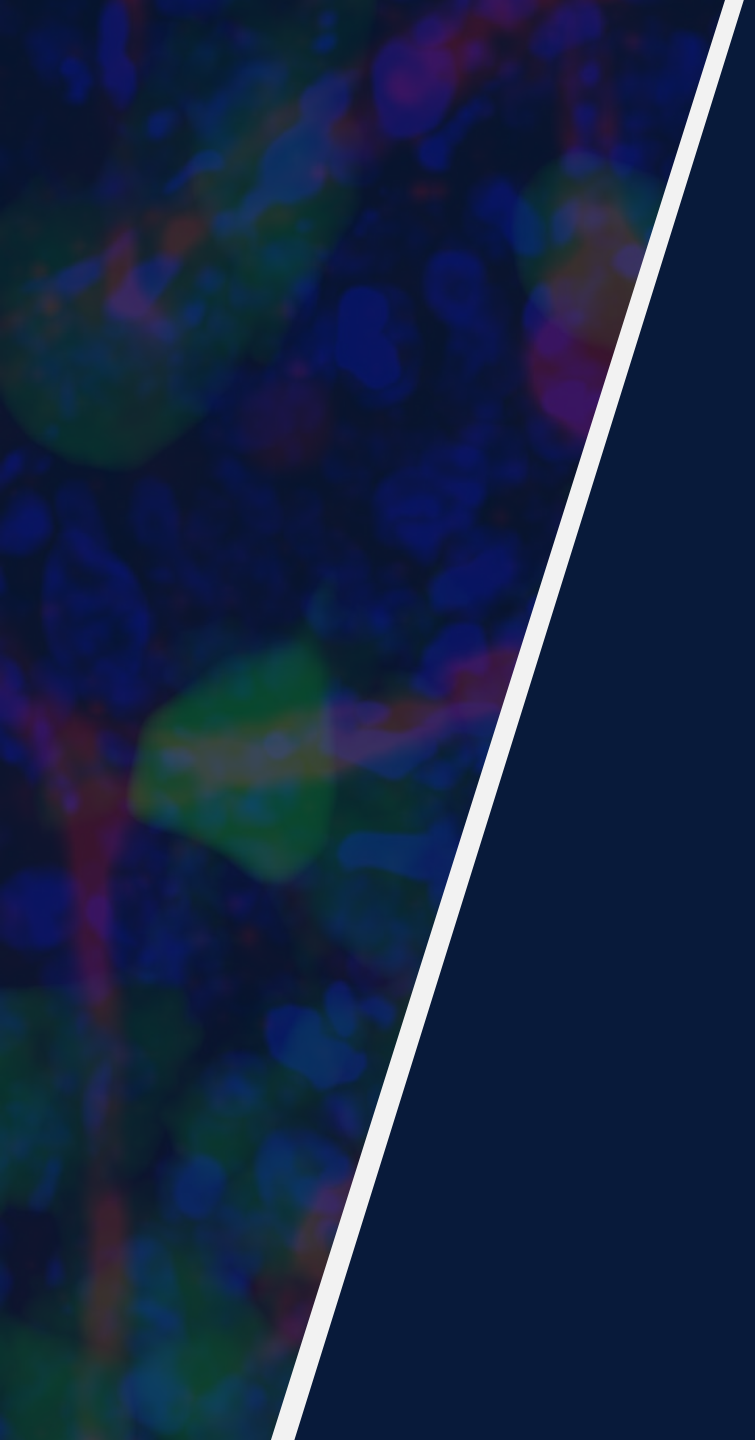
Jennifer Kielczewski, PhD

SCIENTIFIC REVIEW

Lauren Ullrich, PhD

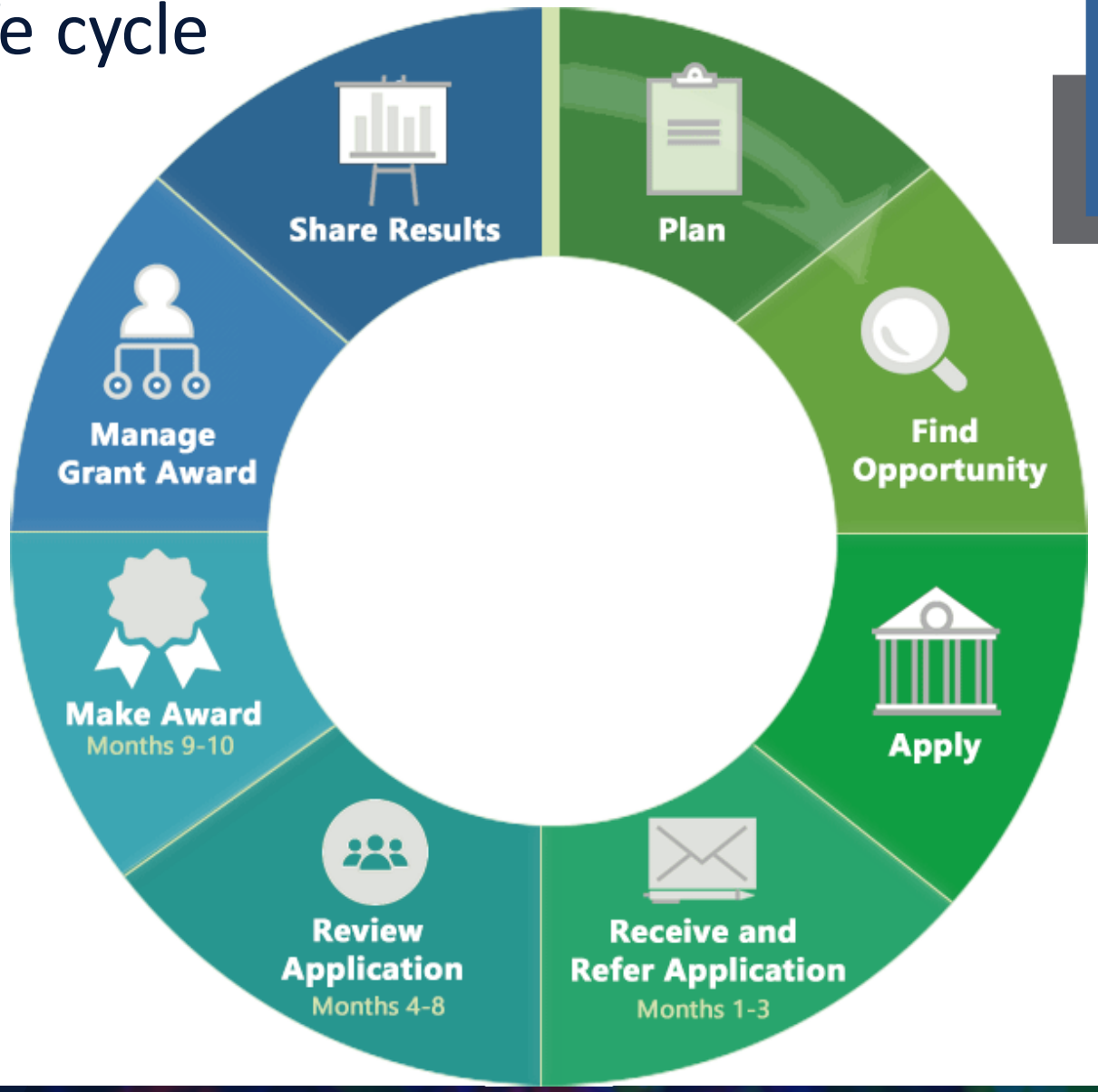
Michael Tennekoon, PhD

F99/K00, NINDS F32



Additional Slides and Information

The grant life cycle



Building Up the Nerve
A NEW PODCAST FROM NINDS

Learn how to navigate through the life cycle of a grant from idea to award with the help of the NINDS staff who make it happen.

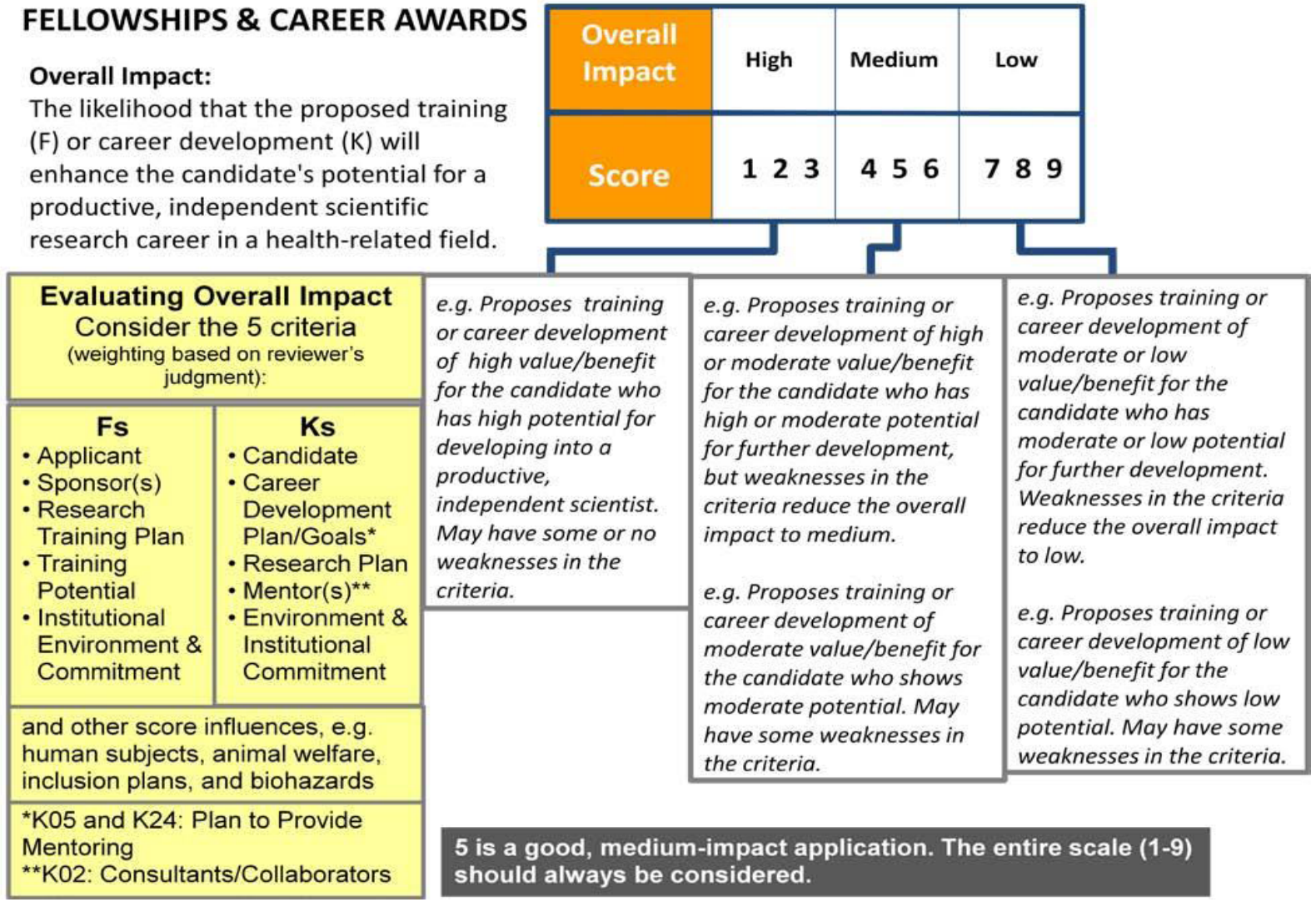
Subscribe at ninds.buzzsprout.com
Send questions to NINDSNervePod@nih.gov

- Start planning early
- From “Plan” to “apply” could take 8+ Months

Who are the people behind NIH?

	Program Officer	Scientific Review Officer	Grants Mgmt. Officer
Duties:	Manages grants Communicates with IC Leadership, Investigators	Manages grant reviews Prepares summary statements	Ensures grantee compliance with NIH policies & regulations
When to contact:	*Before submission:* Fit with IC, funding mechanism *After:* discuss next steps	*Between submission & review:* - Missing info - Supplemental info	- NIH grants policy - Budget - Grant start dates

Scoring Fellowship Applications for Overall Impact



Research Supplements to Promote Diversity

Administrative supplements to active NIH research grants (R, P, U) to support the training of underrepresented individuals and enhance the diversity of the research workforce

- NIH Parent FOA (PA-21-071)
- Alzheimer's Disease and Alzheimer's Disease-Related Dementias (NOT-NS-21-047)
- HEAL (NOT-NS-20-023)
- BRAIN Initiative (NOT-MH-19-038)

For Research and Development Small Businesses

Administrative supplements to active NIH SBIR/STTR grants to enhance the diversity of the research workforce and increase the participation of women and socially and economically disadvantaged individuals in small businesses (PA-18-837)

Resources

- Watch the 2019 Applicant Assistance Webinar
- Read Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) thoroughly!
- Follow Fellowship (F) Instructions in the SF424 Application Guide