

**CONCEPT CLEARANCE FOR RFA
CENTERS FOR EXCELLENCE IN ETHICAL, LEGAL, AND SOCIAL
IMPLICATIONS (ELSI) RESEARCH (CEERs)
*LIMITED COMPETITION***

Purpose of this RFA

The Ethical, Legal, and Social Implications (ELSI) Research Program of the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) proposes to offer a limited competition invitation for the development of P50 Centers of Excellence in ELSI Research (CEERs). Only investigators currently holding a P20 Exploratory CEER grant will be invited to submit an application.

Background

The NHGRI ELSI Research Program has funded a large number of research grants from investigators in a wide range of disciplines. Many of these projects have used interdisciplinary approaches to investigate important ELSI questions. While considerable progress has been made on ELSI issues, much remains to be done. In addition, as the pace of genomic and genetic research increases, the development of research teams that have the expertise and flexibility to anticipate and respond rapidly to the large number of emerging and evolving ELSI issues is critical. These factors contributed to a need for new and more innovative approaches, including new organizational structures and funding mechanisms, to carry out ELSI research. As a result, the ELSI Research Program released an RFA in fiscal year (FY) 2004 to solicit applications for Centers of Excellence in ELSI Research (CEER). The solicitation encouraged applications for full-fledged Centers (P50 grants) and for planning grants (P20 Exploratory Centers).

The CEER Program was designed to develop transdisciplinary teams with the expertise and flexibility to anticipate and respond rapidly to many ELSI issues related to emerging genome technologies and information. In addition, the CEERs were expected play a role in ensuring that relevant ELSI research findings are available to policy makers in their deliberations on issues related to genome technologies and information. Finally, CEERs were expected to play a significant role in training the next generation of ELSI researchers, with particular emphasis on training researchers from minority communities.

In FY 2004, four P50 CEERs were funded, as well as three P20 Exploratory Centers. The P50s were funded for five years, and the P20s were funded for three. Therefore, funding for the P20 Exploratory Centers will be ending in September 2007. NHGRI would like to re-release the RFA to allow the investigators funded for the P20 grants to compete for full P50 Center grants.

Eligible Investigators

Only investigators with P20 Exploratory CEER Grants will be invited to submit an application. The rationale for this limitation is to try to maintain the CEER program as a coherent entity while providing the opportunity for the investigators currently holding P20 planning grants to apply for a full-scale Center. NHGRI will hold another competition at the time that the current P50 grants are eligible for renewal. That competition will be open to all investigators, whether current CEER grantees or not.

Investigators from institutions that serve primarily majority populations are encouraged to consider partnering with minority-serving institutions.

Mechanism of Support

This RFA will use the Specialized Center (P50) grant mechanism.

Investigators will be able to request up to five years of support. The total length of support for any P50 Center under this program will not exceed ten years (the initial grant period of up to five years, plus one renewal for up to an additional five years).

The requested budget for a CEER may be up to \$750,000 in direct costs for the first year for continuing operations (e.g., personnel, standard office equipment, supplies, travel and other expenses).

Funds Available

NHGRI intends to commit approximately \$2,250,000 direct costs (\$3,300,000 total costs) in FY 2007 to fund up to 3 Specialized Centers (P50s) in response to this RFA. Support in the form of co-funding will also be sought from other NIH Institutes

Anticipated Timeline

RFA Release Date: June/July 2006

Letter of Intent Receipt Date: November 2006

Application Receipt Date: December 2006