NHGRI Research Diversity Supplement Application Guidelines

Introduction

The Research Supplements to Promote Diversity in Health-Related Research (or "Diversity Supplements") program was established by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to improve the diversity of the research workforce by recruiting and supporting students, post-doctorates, and eligible investigators from groups that have been shown to be underrepresented in health-related research. This supplement opportunity is also available to PD(s)/PI(s) of research grants who are or become disabled and need additional support to accommodate their disability in order to continue to work on the research project.

This document clarifies the application process and requirements for NHGRI grantees, including NHGRI-specific limitations and recommendations. **It is not intended to replace the detailed information in the program announcement.** The full program announcement is available at NIH [Research Supplements to Promote Diversity in Health-Related Research (PA-20-222)](#). Please also refer to the updated Notice of NIH's Interest in Diversity [NOT-OD-20-031](#).

NHGRI-specific Guidance

In addition to the information found in PA-20-166, NHGRI provides the following additional guidance for Principle Investigators or Candidates/Trainees interested in applying for a Diversity Supplement award. Principle Investigators (PIs) or Candidates/Trainees are encouraged to contact Tina Gatlin, Ph.D. (gatlincl@nih.gov) with the NHGRI Extramural Training Program prior to submission of an application to discuss important eligibility and timeline considerations, and the guidance provided below:

- The PI of an eligible grant award (referred to as the "parent grant") is the applicant who submits the diversity supplement application to NIH/NHGRI on behalf of a candidate/trainee who will be supported by the award. Note: The candidate/trainee who will be supported by the diversity supplement must have an NIH [eRA Commons](#) account.
- Candidates **cannot** be supported during a no-cost extension (NCE). There should be at least one year left on the award to provide meaningful research experience.
- Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. If an applicant is seeking an award before the end of a fiscal year (September 30) applications must be received no later than May 15 in order to allow NHGRI adequate time for review and processing**.**

- The budget period for the supplement will sync with the budget period of the parent grant during the first 12 months. For example, if the parent grant budget period ends on June 30 of each year, and the supplement is awarded starting March 1, then the first budget period of the supplement will be only 4 months, March 1 – June 30 of the same year, and the second budget period will be a full 12 months, July 1 – June 30 (of the next year)
- A candidate **cannot** not be supported by the parent grant at the time the application is submitted to NHGRI. The program is not intended to provide an alternative or additional means of supporting individuals who receive support from an NIH grant.
- If there is significant unobligated balance on a parent award, supplement applications for additional funds are not encouraged. Please check with your program officer before considering a submission.
- A parent grant may support only one diversity supplement, and NHGRI will only support one candidate per award.
- All salary and budget limitations per career level in the FOA (Section IV.6) are strictly enforced. Additional restrictions include:
    - Baccalaureate/Master's degree holders: salary up to $35,000 plus fringe benefits;
    - Investigators Developing Independent Research Careers: up to $75,000 plus fringe benefits. Total costs requested may not exceed $125,000 per year.
- References/letters of support are optional but may be included in the supplement application.
- Transcripts are required for high school, undergraduate, post-baccalaureate, post-master's, or graduate students.
- Applications must include: 1) a plan for the candidate to interact with other individuals on the parent grant, to contribute intellectually to the research, and to enhance her/his research skills and knowledge regarding the selected area of genomics research, 2) evidence of a focus on the enhancement of the research capability of the underrepresented individual and that the research experience is intended to provide opportunities for development as a productive independent genomics researcher and 3) it must demonstrate that the PI(s) is willing and able to provide appropriate mentorship.

Application Content Guidance

Eligibility

- NIH Diversity Supplements support the research training of individuals at the career levels of: high school, undergraduate, postbaccalaureate, masters, predoctoral, postdoctoral, and faculty investigators. Supplemental awards are limited to citizens or non-citizen nationals of the United States or to individuals who have been lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the United States (i.e., in possession of a Permanent Resident Card, Form I-551). This program may not be used to provide technical support to NIH-supported investigators. NIH encourages applications from individuals from groups identified in NIH's Notice of Interest in Diversity (NOT-OD-20-031) as underrepresented in the biomedical, clinical, behavioral, and social sciences.
- Applicants are required to submit a Candidate Eligibility Statement that establishes the eligibility of the candidate for support under this program. The statement must include clearly presented information on candidate's citizenship and a description of how the appointment of this candidate will address the issue of diversity within the national scientific workforce (i.e., what underrepresented group the candidate falls into).

- Graduate student and postdoctoral fellow candidates who are receiving support from an agency of the Public Health Service (PHS) at the time of submission are not eligible. Also, if supported by an institutional Kirschstein-NRSA, they may not be transferred to supplemental support prior to the completion of their appointed period of training.
- In addition, individuals may not be transferred to a supplement to increase the availability of funds to the parent grant for other uses.

Research Strategy: Research Plan, Career Development Plan, and Mentoring Plan (12-page limit)

The following elements must be included with in the Research Strategy Section which consists of the Research Plan, Career Development Plan, and Mentoring Plan.

Research Plan

- The Research Plan should address specific aims, the research proposal, preliminary data, specific skills, responsibilities, and activities that demonstrate the candidate's increasing independence as a researcher, and any need for additional training that will result in an independent genomics research career. There should be a clear statement about the level of genomics-specific training and research experience the candidate/trainee will gain during the supplement award period.
- It is expected that **candidates at the postdoctoral or investigator level** provide evidence that research proposed during the funding period will enhance overall research skills and lead directly to careers as independent genomics investigators.
- A brief summary of the parent grant (typically the abstract or a summary paragraph).
- Scope of the research planned for the Candidate.
- The plan must address how the supplement's research is related to the parent grant goals or how it is a logical extension of that research, depending on the level of the supplement. Include a brief statement of assurance that the research delineated in the supplement is not an expansion (change in scope) requiring peer review (see the NIH Grants Policy Statement).
- A timetable for the proposed research experience, outlining the candidate's major research and development activities, must be provided.

Career Development/Mentorship Plan

An appropriate career development/mentorship plan for the candidate must be included in the application. The expectation is that the PI will prepare a detailed career development/mentorship plan that will include objectives and associated timelines for helping the candidate make the transition to the next stage of his/her research career. Components of the career development should include:

- Details of mentor-candidate interactions. The plan should go well beyond simple laboratory assignments and supervision plans or stating that the candidate will attend seminars or lab meetings. The career development plan should be structured, specific and stage-appropriate for the candidate and include parameters such as the frequency of meetings, topics to be discussed, and how progress will be monitored.
- The PI must describe how he/she will assist the candidate in achieving the objectives and goals they have described in their Candidate Eligibility Statement.

- The plan should take into account the typical barriers and impediments encountered by all trainees, as well as the unique challenges that individuals from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, individuals with disabilities, or individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds may encounter in gaining entry and progressing in the biomedical workforce.
- A timeline for the research and career development activities is required for investigators, postdoctoral researchers, graduate students, post baccalaureate students and undergraduates.

Mentoring Experience of PI

- All applicants should describe their experience and track record as a mentor.
- The PI should provide evidence of mentoring experience and success, e.g. a list of past trainees and their current positions. If the PI is a junior faculty member, it may be appropriate to include an experienced co-mentor in the Career Development/Mentorship plan.
- The role of other investigators who will contribute to the research mentoring must be included with the application.

Senior/Key Personnel

- List the PD/PI as the first person (regardless of their role on the supplement activities).
- List the candidate proposed to be added through this supplement.
- Candidates for supplement support must have an eRA Commons account and the candidate's Commons Username must be entered in the Credential field.
- A Biographical Sketch for the PI and candidate must be included. The personal statement of the candidate's biographical sketch should address:
    - Research objectives and career goals
    - Research experience
    - Length of and reason for any career hiatus
    - A description of how the candidate has kept current or attempted to keep current in her/his field

Budget

Follow guidance in the FOA, noting additional restrictions in the NHGRI-specific guidance section above.

Application Submission Guidance

There are several options available to electronically submit Diversity Supplement applications. Please see the FOA for detailed guidance.

Review and Award of Applications

Supplement applications are reviewed internally at NHGRI. Funding decisions are generally based on:

- The scientific merit (research plan) and the proposed project activities (career development/mentorship plan)
- The potential for continued research progress of the candidate
- The availability of funds