The NIH

Nation’s medical research agency

Largest source of funding for medical research

27 Institutes and Centers
- 75 buildings on 322 acres in Bethesda, Maryland
- Intramural all over the country (NC, MT, AZ, MI, MA)
- Clinical Center (largest hospital dedicated to clinical research in the world)

80% of budget goes to the Extramural community
- Over 2,500 university and research institutions
The National Institutes of Health

Extramural only

No Funding Authority
Vision: The NIMHD envisions an America in which all populations will have an equal opportunity to live long, healthy and productive lives.

Mission: Lead scientific research to improve minority health and eliminate health disparities.

Health disparity - “a particular type of health difference that is closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage. Health disparities adversely affect groups of people who have systematically experienced greater obstacles to health.”  Healthy People 2020

- Current health disparity populations:
  - Racial/ethnic minorities
  - Rural populations
  - Low-income populations
  - Sexual Gender Minority (SGM)
Where does one begin?

- Office of Extramural Research (OER)
  - [https://grants.nih.gov/grants/oer.htm](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/oer.htm)

- Centers for Scientific Review (CSR)
  - [https://public.csr.nih.gov/ApplicantResources/Pages/default.aspx](https://public.csr.nih.gov/ApplicantResources/Pages/default.aspx)
Where does one begin?

• Educating yourself on these processes is always necessary

• “Information for Reviewer” resource tab to gain insight on what’s relevant among/between reviewers

• Attend the Regional Meetings
  o Trainings

• CSR page provides information on the Early Career Reviewer (ECR) program
  o Early in your career, learn review from within
Bias and the Peer Review Process

• What do we know?
  o There are biases in peer review

• What is NIH doing to resolve this?
  o CSR has been and continues to perform evaluative work
    ▪ Early Career Review, Anonymization

• Where are we now?
  o The process has uncovered more questions than currently there are answers to

• Precise areas in grant writing process where minority investigators may “fall short” has not yet been determined
  o Some data on how all “Investigators” more broadly, overall may “fall short”

*Monica Basco
ORWH
Advice to (New) Investigators

• Sign up for the NIH Guide

• NIH Reporter
  [https://projectreporter.nih.gov/reporter.cfm](https://projectreporter.nih.gov/reporter.cfm)

• Familiarize yourself with the various Institutes, Centers, and Offices (IC)
  o Find an IC with area of interest (i.e., cancer, child health, diabetes, mental health, etc.)
    o Reach Out
  o NIH’s “interest” in underrepresented populations
    • NIMHD and the offices of Special Populations and HD in other ICs
Advice to New Investigators

Prepare yourself to Seize NIH Opportunities

• Familiarize yourself with the multiple phases of the application process
• Become knowledgeable about research and researcher development activities/trainings at the various ICs that support work related to your interest
• Read their web pages
• Identify the mechanism(s) to be used
• Read PAs/RFAs, **contact the Program Official** listed
• **Know Program Officials** at the ICs
• Prepare an “elevator pitch” and even a short concept paper (1-5 pages) on your research ideas
Advice to New Investigators

• Know who will likely review your application
  o Know the CSR various Study Sections
    o Know the rosters of the various Study Sections
  • Discuss with your Program Official

• Never submit an application without conferring with Program

• Expect not to be funded the first time around
  o It’s not the norm; do not give up

• Cultivate a strong support system that understands the process
Program Officials

Critical that you develop a relationship with at least one Program Official at the IC where you are likely to apply

• Why?
  o That Program Official will be familiar with your research and able to fit a particular application into the programmatic view of the work.
  o You become a person/face/voice that will be recognized in the sea of otherwise anonymous applications.
  o You can stay abreast of most recent opportunities: funding, workshops, trainings, etc.
POs and Early Stages of the Application Process

Confirm the IC has signed onto the FOA

- If an IC is not listed on the “Participating ICs” list then it cannot be referred to that IC

Confirm if your idea fits within the IC’s mission and priorities

Can offer suggestions to a rough design and/or aims

- A one page concept paper AND your CV
  - Why CV? For example, the PO can tell you if a Co-PI or consultants are needed if the PI has no publications in that area as evidenced in the CV
POs and Post-Review

Contact shortly before your indicated review

- Draws particular attention to your application and you can confirm that the PO will have time to listen in or attend the review

Contact AFTER SUMMARY STATEMENT is released

- Interpret SS – can be “guesswork” otherwise
  - The PO will know how to help you understand “reading between the lines” For example, a comment stating an aim as being “overly ambitious” may really read as “aim 4 is too much” which in turn is an invitation to drop that aim
    - Response to the critiques
POs and Post-Review

Call even when Not Discussed at review as there is still a lot of information to be discussed between PI and PO

Emails offering dates/times

- Perseverance

Rare that an application gets funded upon initial submission

- Much of what makes an application successful lies in the PI’s tenacity with revising and resubmitting
NIMHD Health Disparities Research Institute

• Early stage research investigators
  o Post-Doc, Assist Prof
• Aug 14-18, 2017
• Stimulate research on Minority Health & Health Disparities
  o Focused instruction on the principles and applications of health disparities research
  o Development of grant applications
  o Integrate into research and routine, clinical practice
• Free
• 60 scholars selected

https://www.nimhd.nih.gov/programs/edu-training/hd-research-institute/

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