

NIH Diversity Supplements

What's a diversity supplement?

Fostering diversity by addressing underrepresentation in the scientific research workforce is a key component of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) strategy to maintain the quality of U.S. research endeavors. NIH Research Supplements to Promote Diversity in Health-Related Research ([PA-21-071](#)) hereafter referred to as “diversity supplements” comprise funding for which a scientific researcher can apply to allow for the addition of a trainee from an underrepresented minority group to an existing NIH-funded award to further that trainee’s education and career development.

Who's eligible for funding by a diversity supplement?

The NIH invites diversity supplement applications incorporating a range of learners, including:

- High school students
- Undergraduate students
- Baccalaureate and master's degree holders
- Graduate (pre-doctoral) and health professional students
- Individuals in postdoctoral training
- Investigators developing independent research careers

What are the basic parameters of a diversity supplement?

- Supplements must support work within the scope of the parent project.
- Budget requests must follow the budget cycle of the parent grant, and supplemental funding may not extend beyond the parent grant’s project end date.
- There is generally no set application deadline, but applications must be submitted at least 10 weeks before the desired start date of the project activity.
- Supplements are generally much less competitive than peer-reviewed grant funding mechanisms and can provide an excellent entry point for a research career.
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How can I receive a diversity supplement?

1. Determine if you have an eligible grant

Principal investigators are generally eligible to submit a request for a diversity supplement if they hold an active G12, P01, P20, P30, P40, P41, P50, P51, P60, P2C, PM1, PN2, U10, U19, U2C, U41, U42, U54, U56, UC2, UL1, UM2, DP1, DP2, DP3, DP4, DP5, G20, RC2, RC3, RC4, R01, R03, R15, R18, R21, R24, R33, R34, R35, R37, R41, R42, R43, R44, R61/R33, RC1, RC2, RC3, RC4, RM1, RF1, SC1, SC2, SC3, U01, U13, U18, U24, U44, UB1, UC4, UG1, UG3, UH2, UH3, UM1, or UF1 grant.

Please note that grants eligible for diversity supplements vary by institute. You should refer to the NIH [Table of IC-Specific Information, Requirements and Staff Contacts](#) before preparing your application, and be sure to contact the program officer for the relevant institute.

2. Identify a candidate

The NIH believes in providing research opportunities for qualified individuals at various career levels. Accordingly, principal investigators are encouraged to consider administrative supplements under this program for the following candidates:

- **High school students** who have expressed an interest in the health-related sciences
- **Undergraduate students** who wish to pursue graduate-level research training in health-related sciences
- **Post-baccalaureate students** and **post-master's degree students** who have recently graduated and wish to pursue further graduate training in health-related research
- **Pre-doctoral students** who wish to develop their research capabilities in the health-related sciences
- **Individuals in postdoctoral training** who wish to participate as postdoctoral researchers in ongoing research projects and career development experiences in preparation for an independent career in a health-related research
- **Faculty** who wish to participate in ongoing research projects while further developing their own independent research potential
- **Established investigators** who become disabled may be eligible for additional support or special equipment that will facilitate a continuing contribution to the goals of the parent grant

Note that some NIH institutes do not accept applications for all candidate career stages. Be sure to consult the institute or center's diversity supplement [program officer](#) to confirm eligibility.

In keeping with its goal of diversifying the research workforce, the NIH is particularly interested in encouraging the recruitment and retention of:

- **Individuals from racial and ethnic groups that have been shown by the [National Science Foundation](#) to be underrepresented in health-related sciences on a national basis.** These include: Blacks or African Americans, Hispanics or Latinos, American Indians or Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders.
- **Individuals with disabilities**, who are defined as those with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, as described in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended.
- **Individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds**, defined as:
 - From a family with an annual income below established low-income thresholds. These thresholds are based on family size, published by the U.S. Bureau of the Census; adjusted annually for changes in the Consumer Price Index; and adjusted by the Secretary for use in all health professions programs. The Secretary periodically publishes these income levels at <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/index.shtml>.

- From an educational environment such as that found in certain rural or inner-city environments that has demonstrably and directly inhibited the individual from obtaining the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to develop and participate in a research career.
- Eligibility related to a disadvantaged background is most applicable to high school and perhaps to undergraduate candidates, but is difficult to justify for individuals beyond that level of academic achievement.

Note: Awards under this program 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 an Alien Registration Receipt Card or some other legal evidence of admission for permanent residence at the time of application).

3. Contact the program officer for the parent grant

Talk to your program officer about the eligibility of the parent grant to have this supplement and the willingness of the institute to consider this supplement. Also discuss the duration of the supplement relative to the end of the grant project period. Rules differ by institute.

4. Contact the diversity supplement program officer for the institute or center

Contact the program officer in charge of the diversity supplement mechanism for your NIH Institute (list of contacts available [here](#)). Ask about candidate eligibility, appropriate application submission dates and start and end dates, and application components.

5. Prepare an application

A diversity supplement application contains multiple sections (see below). General instructions are provided in FOA ([PA-21-071](#)) and on the funding institute's website.

6. Submit your supplement

Inform the program officer in charge of the diversity supplement mechanism for your NIH Institute that your application has been submitted.

Required application materials

Required sections in a diversity supplement application may vary somewhat among various institutes and centers; be sure to consult the customized instructions available online (see below). Most applications will include:

- Education, training & career development plan OR Research, mentoring, & career development plan
- Statement of the PI's mentoring track record
- PI and candidate biosketches
- Statement of candidate's career goals
- Statement of candidate eligibility
- Transcripts
- Budget
- Budget justification

Customized instructions

Below are instruction summaries for a number of NIH institutes and centers. These instructions were pulled from institute/center-specific [webpages](#).

- [National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences \(NCATS\)](#)
- [NCATS Diversity Supplement Summary](#)
- [National Institute of Aging \(NIA\)](#)
- [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism \(NIAAA\)](#)
- [National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases \(NIAID\)](#)
- [National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases \(NIAMS\)](#)
- [National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering \(NIBIB\)](#)
- [National Cancer Institute \(NCI\)](#)
- [The Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development \(NICHD\)](#)
- [National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders \(NIDCD\)](#)
- [National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health \(NCCIH\)](#)
- [National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research \(NIDCR\)](#)
- [National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases \(NIDDK\)](#)
- [National Institute on Drug Abuse \(NIDA\)](#)
- [National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences \(NIEHS\)](#)
- [National Eye Institute \(NEI\)](#)
- [National Institute of General Medical Sciences \(NIGMS\)](#)
- [National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute \(NHLBI\)](#)
- [National Human Genome Research Institute](#)
- [National Institute of Mental Health \(NIMH\)](#)
- [National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities \(NIMHD\)](#)
- [National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke \(NINDS\)](#)
- [National Institute of Nursing Research \(NINR\)](#)
- [National Library of Medicine \(NLM\)](#)
- [Division of Program Coordination, Planning and Strategic Initiatives, Office of Research Infrastructure Programs \(ORIP\)](#)
- [Office of Strategic Coordination \(Common Fund\)](#)

FAQs

Below are frequently asked questions received from faculty and students interested in NIH diversity supplement funding. For additional information, please see the NIH RFA ([PA-21-071](#)).

Who is eligible for a diversity supplement award?

Parent awards: The PI must have an active NIH award that has at least one year left before it is due for a competitive renewal at the time of the start of the supplement.

Trainees: The trainee named in the diversity supplement application must identify as belonging to a race or ethnicity that is underrepresented (see above). Alternately, if the individual comes from a financially disadvantaged background or has a disability, he or she may also qualify. *Importantly, most NIH Institutes do not allow a trainee to be listed as a diversity supplement candidate if he or she is already listed as personnel in the budget section of your parent award.* Ideally, the candidate should be a new member of your team who has not received any salary support from the parent grant.

What types of positions can be funded?

This depends on the institute to which you are applying. Most institutes fund undergraduates, post-baccalaureates, and graduate students; some will also fund postdocs and investigators developing independent research careers. Note: Graduate students or postdoctoral trainees who are supported by an Institutional NRSA may not be transferred to supplemental support before completing their appointed period of training.

What are the most important parts of the application?

The goal of the diversity supplement program is to increase career advancement opportunities in science for individuals who identify as belonging to an underrepresented or disadvantaged group. Therefore, the most important part of the application is the training plan, in which you outline the trainee's background and career goals and describe specifically how this experience will enhance his or her professional development. Evidence of your mentoring abilities—particularly in relation to underrepresented minorities—can also be useful; such evidence could include a description of your mentoring philosophy, trainee outcomes, and/or other mentoring-related activities (such as trainings, etc.).

What budgetary provisions are permissible in a diversity supplement?

For fellows: The NIH will provide support for salary and fringe benefits to enable a candidate to participate as a postdoctoral research associate on the parent project. The requested annual salary must be in accordance with the salary structure of the grantee institution, consistent with the level of effort needed to complete the project. (Of note, supplements will pay more than what a trainee might receive from fellowships such as an F30 or F31, which require the institution to

cover a good bit of the cost.) Requested salary may not exceed the maximum allowable NRSA stipend level for postdoctoral fellows (see: <https://grants.nih.gov/training/nrsa.htm>). The supplement budget may include up to \$6,000 per year to support supplies and travel for the candidate.

For faculty: The requested salary and fringe benefits for an investigator should be consistent with the level of support provided by NIH Career Development Awards, and be consistent with the salary structure of the grantee institution. Effort devoted to the project is expected to be 75% effort. Salary is capped by NIH at \$75,000 plus fringe benefits. Additional funds of up to \$10,000 per year may be requested for supplies and travel for the candidate. Equipment may be purchased but requires prior approval of the NIH awarding component.

What are the odds of success?

Diversity supplement applications have good odds at being funded. You increase those odds by:

- Identifying a candidate who is clearly eligible
- Getting the program officers' approval ahead of time
- Writing a convincing mentoring statement
- Responding diligently to any requests from NIH after you have submitted the grant

How long does the application process take?

Generally speaking, application preparation can take about 12 weeks, and NIH review can extend another 12 weeks.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Office of Sponsored Programs at grants@uthscsa.edu.