

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH TRAINING IN ARTHRITIS AND MUSCULOSKELETAL AND SKIN DISEASES

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National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases

PURPOSE

The National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS) invites applications to develop or enhance research training for individuals who conduct basic and clinical research on the tissues and diseases within its mandate. The proposed training plan may include short-term training for health professionals as well as full time predoctoral and post-doctoral positions. The purpose of this announcement is to ensure a cadre of well trained scientists interested in pursuing research careers in areas relevant to the mission of the NIAMS.

HEALTHY PEOPLE 2000

The Public Health Service (PHS) is committed to achieving the health promotion and disease prevention objectives of "Healthy People 2000," a PHS-led national activity for setting priority areas. This program announcement, Institutional Research Training Awards in Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, is related to the priority areas of chronic disabling conditions and physical activity and fitness. Potential applicants may obtain a copy of "Healthy People 2000" (Full Report: Stock No. 017-001-00474-0) or "Healthy People 2000" (Summary Report:

Stock No. 017-001-00473-1) through the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402-9325, (telephone 202-783-3238).

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Applications may be submitted by domestic, non-profit, private and public institutions to support research training programs. The applicant institution must have, or be able to develop, the staff and facilities required for the proposed program. The training program director at the institution will be responsible for the selection and appointment of trainees to receive support and for the overall direction of the program.

The individuals to be trained on a National Research Service Award (NRSA) training grant must be citizens or non-citizen nationals of the United States or have been lawfully admitted for permanent residence (i.e., in possession of the Alien Registration Receipt Card I-551 or I-151) at the time of appointment. Individuals on temporary or student visas are not eligible. NRSA research training grants may not be used to support studies leading to the M.D., D.O., D.D.S., D.V.M., or other similar health-professional degree. Individuals holding an M.S., a Ph.D, or M.D./Ph.D. or an equivalent graduate level research degree, are not eligible for short term training positions. Programs able to provide postdoctoral training to both M.D.s and Ph.D.s are encouraged. Institutions are encouraged to develop multi-year plans that provide strong research training for health professionals, while cognizant of requirements for board certification.

MECHANISM OF SUPPORT

The mechanism of support for this program announcement will be the NRSA institutional training grant (T32). Institutions may request support for predoctoral students, postdoctoral trainees, and short- term research training. Stipends will be awarded at levels commensurate with NIH policy at the time of award and may be supplemented from non-Federal sources. Training related expenses, tuition and fees, and travel expenses may also be requested for trainees, although the levels vary depending on the type of training to be supported. Postdoctoral trainees should be appointed for at least two years.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The NIAMS is committed to increasing the number of well-trained health professionals and basic scientists interested in conducting high quality research in areas of its mission and able to both compete successfully for NIH grant support and provide leadership in the areas of clinical

research. The research program of training grant applications should be related to the mission of the NIAMS.

Major areas of interest to the NIAMS, with respect to institutional awards, include:

- o Arthritis and Other Rheumatic Diseases
- o Muscle Biology and Muscle Diseases
- o Musculoskeletal Diseases and Disorders, including Orthopaedic

Research

- o Skin Biology and Skin Diseases
- o Bone Biology and Bone Diseases
- o Rheumatic Diseases in Children
- o Epidemiology of Arthritis, Bone, Muscle, and Skin Diseases
- o Multidisciplinary Approaches

Due to the complexity of the tissues and diseases, it is becoming increasingly clear that research excellence in arthritis, muscle biology, musculoskeletal disorders, bone and skin diseases requires interdisciplinary approaches. Thus, the NIAMS encourages institutions to develop training programs that support individuals in acquiring expertise in several disciplines such as molecular biology, cell biology, structural biology, biophysics, immunology, developmental biology, genetics, and epidemiology. Additionally, research training programs may be strengthened by combining or crossing traditional departmental or specialty divisions.

STUDY POPULATIONS

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION OF NIH
POLICIES CONCERNING INCLUSION OF WOMEN AND MINORITIES IN CLINICAL
RESEARCH STUDY POPULATIONS

NIH policy is that applicants for NIH clinical research grants and cooperative agreements are required to include minorities and women in study populations so that research findings can be of benefit to all persons at risk of the disease, disorder or condition under study; special emphasis must be placed on the need for inclusion of minorities and women in studies of diseases, disorders and conditions which disproportionately affect them. This policy is intended to apply to males and females of all ages. If women or minorities are excluded or inadequately represented in clinical research, particularly in proposed population-based studies, a clear compelling rationale must be provided.

The composition of the proposed study population must be described in terms of gender and racial/ethnic group. In addition, gender and racial/ethnic issues should be addressed in developing a research design and sample size appropriate for the scientific objectives of the study. This information must be included in the form PHS 398 (rev. 9/91) in Sections 1-4 of the Research Plan AND summarized in Section 5, Human Subjects. Applicants are urged to assess carefully the feasibility of including the broadest possible representation of minority groups. However, NIH recognizes that it may not be feasible or appropriate in all research projects to include representation of the full array of United States racial/ethnic minority populations (i.e., Native Americans (including American Indians or Alaskan Natives), Asian/Pacific Islanders, Blacks, Hispanics). The rationale for studies on single minority population groups must be provided.

For the purpose of this policy, clinical research is defined as human biomedical and behavioral studies of etiology, epidemiology, prevention (and preventive strategies), diagnosis, or treatment of diseases, disorders or conditions, including but not limited to clinical trials.

The usual NIH policies concerning research on human subjects also apply. Basic research or clinical studies in which human tissues cannot be identified or linked to individuals are excluded. However, every effort should be made to include human tissues from women and racial/ethnic minorities when it is important to apply the results of the study broadly, and this should be addressed by applicants.

If the required information is not contained within the application, the review will be deferred until the information is provided.

Peer reviewers will address specifically whether the research plan in the application conforms to these policies. If the representation of women or minorities in a study design is inadequate to answer the scientific question(s) addressed AND the justification for the selected study population

is inadequate, it will be considered a scientific weakness or deficiency in the study design and will be reflected in assigning the priority score to the application.

All applications for clinical research submitted to NIH are required to address these policies. NIH funding components will not award grants or cooperative agreements that do not comply with these policies.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Applications are to be submitted on the grant application form PHS 398 (rev. 9/91). Application kits are available from most institutional offices of sponsored research and may be obtained from the Office of Grants Inquiries, Division of Research Grants, National Institutes of Health, 5333 Westbard Avenue, Room 449, Bethesda, MD 20892, telephone (301) 496-7441.

Prior to preparing an application, prospective applicants should consult the "National Research Service Award Guidelines for Individual Awards - Institutional Awards," available from most grantee offices of sponsored research and from the Office of Grants Inquiries at the address listed above. Applicants should note the "Modification of Existing Review Criteria for NRSA Institutional Research Training Grants" issued in the NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts, Vol. 21, No. 11, March 20, 1992. Institutional Research Training Grant Applications may be submitted on January 10, May 10, and September 10 of each year. Applications submitted in response to this announcement must be identified by typing PA-INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH TRAINING IN NIAMS and PA-93-32 on line 2a of the face page, below the title of the project. The typed original application and five signed exact single-sided photocopies must be submitted or delivered to:

Division of Research Grants
National Institutes of Health
Westwood Building, Room 240
Bethesda, MD 20892**

Applicants from institutions that have a General Clinical Research Center (GCRC) funded by the NIH National Center for Research Resources may identify the GCRC as a resource for conducting the proposed activity. In such a case, a letter of agreement from either the GCRC program director or Principal Investigator should be included with the application.

REVIEW PROCEDURES

Upon receipt, applications will be reviewed initially by the Division of Research Grants (DRG) for completeness. Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant without further consideration.

All applications responding to this announcement that are assigned to the NIAMS will be reviewed for scientific and technical merit by the AMS initial review group (IRG), followed by a second level review by the National Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases Advisory Council. Applications not recommended for further consideration by the IRG will not undergo secondary review. Applications assigned to Institutes/Centers other than the NIAMS will undergo a similar two-level review process within the designated Institute/Center.

Review criteria used by initial review groups in reviewing NRSA Institutional Training applications are given in the booklet "National Research Service Award Guidelines for Individual Awards – Institutional Awards," dated March 20, 1992, available from the Office of Grants Inquiries at the address listed under APPLICATION PROCEDURES.

AWARD CRITERIA

Applications will compete for available funds with other approved applications. The following will be considered in making funding decisions:

- o scientific and technical merit of the application as determined by peer review,
- o availability of funds, and
- o program balance.

INQUIRIES

For further information about these awards, contact:

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For administrative and fiscal matters, contact:

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AUTHORITY AND REGULATIONS

This program is described in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance No. 93.846, Arthritis, Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases Research. Awards will be made under the authority of the Public Health Service Act, Title III, Section 301 (Public Law 78-410, as amended; 42 USC 241) and administered under PHS grants policies and Federal Regulations 42 CFR Part 52, 45 CFR Part 74 and 42 CFR Part 66. This program is not subject to the intergovernmental review requirements of Executive Order 12372 or Health Systems Agency review.

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