

Supplemental Information for Diversity Supplements to BRAIN Initiative Awards

The information below applies to applications requesting Diversity Supplements to active BRAIN Initiative awards via the NIH funding opportunity announcement, Research Supplements to Promote Diversity in Health-Related Research ([PA-16-288](#)).

Diversity supplements may be requested by Principal Investigators (PIs) of active grants who plan to serve as mentors for the candidates nominated for support. Candidates eligible for support include individuals at the high school, undergraduate, post-baccalaureate, graduate, post-graduate, and investigator career stages who come from groups that have been shown to be underrepresented in science (see [NOT-OD-15-089](#)). Such candidates include individuals from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, individuals with disabilities, and individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds (generally limited to individuals at the high school or undergraduate level).

The activities proposed in a Diversity Supplement application must both advance the objectives of the parent grant and support the research training and career advancement of the candidate.

At the time of a supplement application submission, there must be a reasonable period of time remaining on the parent grant such that the supplement could provide an optimal career development experience for the candidate. A reasonable period for a career development experience varies by level of training and must be justified in the application. Two years is generally appropriate at the career level of predoctoral students and postdoctorates. For high-school, undergraduate, and post-baccalaureate students, this period may be as short as a summer experience or one academic year.

Usually, a parent grant may support only one candidate at a time via a diversity supplement. However, investigators are encouraged to recruit more than one high-school or undergraduate student for supplemental award support. Support of more than one candidate above the high school or undergraduate level depends on the nature of the parent grant and the circumstances of the request. Note that a separate supplement request is required for each candidate, and that the merit of each application will be reviewed independently. Each request must be strongly justified and include assurances that each candidate will receive appropriate mentoring. Each training and mentoring plan must specifically address the unique needs, strengths and weaknesses of the individual candidate.

Diversity Supplement awards cannot be used to expand the scope of the parent grant. All applications are reviewed by Program staff to assess the scope of the planned activities, and their scientific merit and training potential. **Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the Program Official (PO) assigned to the parent grant and/or the Program contact listed below during initial preparation of a supplement application and prior to its submission to discuss their goals and objectives.** Critical issues to be discussed with the PO may include, but are not limited to: candidate eligibility, the research development and mentoring plan activities and objectives, and the appropriate supplement duration for the proposed candidate.

The training plan should be specific and tailored to the individual needs of the candidate. A well-delineated timeline with appropriate milestones should be in place for the duration of the supplement award period. Detailed plans for direct communication with all mentors and peers as well as learning opportunities conducted in other settings should also be described.

It is critical that applicants follow the instructions in [PA-16-288](#). A complete Diversity Supplement application will include:

1. A brief proposal describing the project and training/career experience (not to exceed 6 pages), including:

- Summary of the funded grant or project (1 page or less)
- Research Training Activities/Career Development Plan for the Candidate

Describe how the mentored research and career development activities will enhance the candidate's research potential and foster the research capabilities of the candidate. The research plan should be specific and appropriate for the individual's career stage, and should enhance the individual's research potential, while furthering the individual's ability to pursue a research career. 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. Include in this description:

1. How the proposed research and research-training activities relate to the research goals and objectives of the parent grant. The research activities proposed must be within the scope of the parent grant.
2. For candidates other than high-school students: an integrated timeline detailing the proposed research and career development activities, and describing specific milestones for both the research and career development activities consistent with the proposed supplement duration. Depending on the career stage of the candidate, this timeline may include activities such as anticipated publications; specific conferences at which presentations will be made; grant-writing workshops; and grant submissions.
3. Details of the interactions between the candidate and mentor(s), research team and professional colleagues relevant to the overall research experience. 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. For candidates at the undergraduate level and beyond, include plans to facilitate the candidate's transition to the next stage of their research career.
4. How the PI will assist the candidate in achieving the objectives and goals described in their candidate statement (part of their Biographical Sketch).

- Mentoring experience of the PI.

1. Describe the PI's experience and track record as a mentor. Include a list of representative, past trainees and their current positions. If the PI lacks experience, it may be appropriate to include an experienced co-mentor.

2. Statement of Eligibility (not to exceed 1 page). The application should include a signed statement from the PI and an Authorized Signing Official establishing the eligibility of the candidate for support under this program. The statement must include:

- Clearly presented information on citizenship

- Information on the nature of the candidate's disability, circumstances, background, or characteristics that confer eligibility under this program
 - A convincing description of how the appointment of this specific candidate will address the issue of diversity within the national scientific workforce
 - State if the candidate has received any current or previous PHS support; if the candidate has, include the grant number and inclusive dates of support.
3. A proposed budget.
 4. Candidate Biographical Sketch. As part of the candidate statement:
 - Describe the candidate's general scientific achievements and/or interests, specific research objectives, and career goals. Describe how the planned activities are related to or will facilitate achievement of their career goals.
 - Note any current source(s) of educational funding.
 - Candidates from the undergraduate through postdoctoral levels must complete the "Scholastic Performance" section. See the NIH SF424 (R&R) Application Guide for details.
 5. Biographical Sketch for each investigator who will contribute to the research mentoring
 6. Human Subjects/Vertebrate Animal documentation (if applicable).
 7. If the candidate is a student at another institution (i.e., other than the grantee institution), the application must include an appropriately signed letter from a responsible official at the institution of matriculation indicating that participation at the stated level of effort is approved and will not detract from or interfere with the student's course of studies.
 8. If any of the research is to be conducted at a site other than the grantee institution, an appropriately signed letter from the institution where the research is to be conducted must be submitted. The request must be signed by the candidate, the PI, and the appropriate Authorized Signing Official (affiliated with the candidate institution).
 9. If the request is for a supplement based on disability, the institution should indicate what, if any, reasonable accommodations the institution has supported or plans to provide along with a full description of how any additional support for accommodation that might be used. The relationship of the proposed accommodation to the proposed project must be described.

Application Review

BRAIN Initiative Program staff will review requests for diversity supplement to determine their overall merit. The administrative review criteria described below will be considered in the review process:

- The qualifications of the candidate including career goals, prior research training, research potential, and any relevant experience.
- Evidence of educational achievement and interest in science (if the candidate is a student).
- The strength of the description of how this particular appointment will promote diversity in biomedical, behavioral, or clinical research nationally.

- The plan and timeline for the proposed research and career development experiences in the supplemental request and their relationship to the parent grant.
- Evidence that the proposed experience will expand and foster the research capabilities, knowledge, and/or skills of the candidate.
- Evidence that the activities of the candidate will be an integral part of the project.
- Evidence of adequate mentoring experience and success.
- Evidence that the candidate will receive research career mentoring.