



RFA-NS-23-026: BRAIN Initiative: Research Resource Grants for Technology Integration and Dissemination (U24 – CT Not Allowed)

Webinar

Natalie Trzcinski, Program Director

Jaclyn Durkin, Health Program Specialist

Key Point

- **READ THE FUNDING OPPORTUNITY!**
<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-NS-23-026.html>
- The purpose of this webinar is to clarify the application process and **is not intended to replace the detailed information in the program announcement.**

Goals of the Funding Opportunity

- Provides support to broadly disseminate developed and validated tools and resources relevant to the goals of BRAIN Initiative for integration into neuroscience research practice
- Key considerations:
 - **Pace** of dissemination- **DISSEMINATION MUST OCCUR BY AT LEAST EARLY YEAR 2**
 - **Readiness** of resource for dissemination
 - **Broad** dissemination
- Address **compelling needs** of neuroscience researchers by providing technologies otherwise unavailable or impractical in their current form

Goals of the Funding Opportunity (cont'd)

- Engage in distribution of tools, reagents, and/or resources as well as other activities that may include:
 - User training
 - Access to existing technology platforms, specialized facilities
 - **Minor** improvements to increase the scale/efficiency of resource production, delivery
 - **Minor** adaptations to meet the needs of a user community

****Applications are NOT limited to existing BRAIN Initiative investigators or to technologies previously developed using BRAIN Initiative or NIH funds****

Features of the U24 mechanism

- **Milestone-driven** cooperative agreement
 - Requires a level of involvement from NIH staff that is higher than a typical research project (R) grant
 - After award, NIH scientific or program staff will assist, guide, coordinate, or participate in project activities
- Quantitative milestones must be proposed
- Milestone negotiation will occur prior to award
- **In order to receive subsequent years of funding, milestones must be met each year**

Nonresponsive applications

The following types of activities are **NOT responsive** to this FOA:

- Projects focused on developing novel and unproven technologies
- Projects focused solely on development of a specific technology or software
- Projects where dissemination is not planned to occur by early year 2
- Projects that support clinical trials or provide patient services
- Projects proposing repositories of brain and related bio-specimens
- Projects which propose to develop or disseminate data standards that are needed to describe experimental protocols being created by or used in the BRAIN Initiative

To confirm your project is responsive to this FOA, email [Natalie Trzcinski](#) with your Specific Aims at least one month prior to the due date

Application completeness

- Upon receipt, applications will be evaluated for completeness and compliance with application instructions
- TWO important attachments in funding opportunity:
 - Proposed Milestones and Timeline- up to 2 pages
 - Plan for Enhancing Diverse Perspectives (PEDP)- 1 page
- **Applications that do not include these two attachments will be withdrawn and not reviewed**

Milestones

Milestones should be:

- Submitted as a separate attachment
- No more than 2 pages in length
- Indicate the desired outcomes and not simply that an activity was conducted, e.g., “workshop attendance with XX users representing XX unique institutions”, NOT “workshop completed in year 1”
- Provide objective and quantitative outcomes by which to justify advancing the project
- Include the rationale for your choices for quantitative values for the success criteria

Applicants may consider [this template](#) in developing their milestone plan

A Plan for Enhancing Diverse Perspectives: Novel approach for BRAIN grant applications

“**diverse perspectives**” broadly refers to:

...the people **WHO DO** the research,

...the people **WHO PARTICIPATE** in the research as part of the study population, and

...the places **WHERE** research is done

Requires applicants to BRAIN Initiative FOAs to submit a ***Plan for Enhancing Diverse Perspectives*** (PEDP) as part of the application

A Plan for Enhancing Diverse Perspectives

- In the **research strategy**, applicants should integrate strategies to advance the scientific and technical merit of the proposed project through the inclusion of diverse perspectives **and** submit a **1-page summary** of these plans in the form of a PEDP
- The plan will be part of the **scored application** and will be considered when funding decisions are made
- PEDP considerations will be included in each of the scored review criteria (Significance, Innovation, Investigators, Approach, and Environment). Reviewers are asked to consider the strengths and weaknesses associated with each of the review criteria and weigh them appropriately.

A Plan for Enhancing Diverse Perspectives

Key Elements to be included in a PEDP (Applicant-defined):

- **Summary** of strategies (and their rationales) to advance the scientific and technical merit through expanded inclusivity
- **Timeline, milestones**, and **benchmarks** for the PEDP
- **Approaches** to assessing **progress** towards meeting the PEDP defined goals
- <https://braininitiative.nih.gov/about/pedp-key-elements-and-examples>

Other Highlights:

- The PEDP **will vary** depending on the content and structure of the scientific aims, the expertise required, the environment, and performance site(s).
- Applications may include **allowable costs** associated with PEDP implementation.

“Broad Dissemination”

- **Users:**
 - Should span many unique labs and institutions
 - Should represent diverse perspectives
 - Letters of support should demonstrate the applicant has considered diverse perspectives from the end user community
 - Should NOT be concentrated in a single geographic region
 - Are NOT limited to investigators with BRAIN Initiative funding
- A discussion of **technology evolution** should be included in the research strategy, in order to justify the requested length of support
 - Is there evidence, based on the history of this technology and the speed that it is evolving, that the proposed resource **will remain relevant, cutting edge, and highly desirable by the user community over the entire period of support?**

Common questions

- Cost structures and sustainability
 - Sustainability- how will the resource continue to be disseminated following NIH funding?
 - Cost offsets via user fees are **not required**, but they should be considered as part of the project plan, because they provide potential mechanisms for efficient resource allocation and for resource sustainability
- What are key points to consider with a scientific steering committee?
 - Do not need to name specific members, but type of expertise and how the SSG will guide the project
- What is the allowed budget?
 - Application budgets are not limited but need to reflect the actual needs of the proposed project. The NIH anticipates providing \$10M per year to fund an estimated 10 to 20 awards.

Common questions (cont'd)

- What resources are currently funded by this mechanism?
 - See <https://braininitiative.nih.gov/research/dissemination/u24-program> for a list of currently funded resources
- My technology applies to a niche group of users, is this allowed?
 - Yes, although you should justify the impact and unmet opportunity of providing the services at smaller scales and demonstrate the resource will be broadly disseminated to the entire community

For more commonly asked questions, please visit:

<https://braininitiative.nih.gov/research/dissemination/u24-faqs>

Useful Resources

- [BRAIN Initiative Dissemination Program Page](#)
- [U24 Program Page](#)
 - [U24 FAQs](#)
 - [Milestone Template](#)
 - [List of funded U24 projects](#)
- [PEDP guidance material](#)
 - For more information on the PEDP, please see the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) and the [Key Elements and Examples](#).
 - Can also email BRAINInitiative_PEDP@nih.gov

Further Questions?

Contact us at: natalie.trzcinski@nih.gov and
jaclyn.durkin@nih.gov

Application due dates: February 14, 2024 and October 11,
2024