

This webinar is being recorded.

Q&A Webinar

June 22, 2023 @ 1:00 PM EDT

Please submit your questions in the “Q&A” box
(scientific inquiries will not be discussed)



NIH DIRECTOR'S

**EARLY
INDEPENDENCE
AWARD**



National Institutes of Health
Office of Strategic Coordination - The Common Fund

commonfund.nih.gov/earlyindependence
earlyindependence@od.nih.gov

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Q&A Webinar

- Submit questions in the “Q&A” box
- Scientific or situationally specific questions will not be discussed (email us)
- For additional questions, contact us at EarlyIndependence@od.nih.gov
- Webinar recording & slides will be posted on website at commonfund.nih.gov/earlyindependence
- For more application guidance, see our Application & Award Guide on website (includes example applications)



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Panelists

Trish Labosky, Ph.D.

Program Leader
Office of the Director

Suzanne Ryan, Ph.D.

Scientific Review Officer
Center for Scientific Review

Becky Miller, Ph.D.

Program Officer
Office of the Director

Common Fund Programs

- 4D Nucleome (4DN)
- Acute to Chronic Pain Signatures (A2CPS)
- Bridge to Artificial Intelligence (Bridge2AI)
- Cellular Senescence Network (SenNet)
- Community Partnerships to Advance Science for Society (ComPASS)
- Enhancing the Diversity of the NIH-Funded Workforce (DPC/BUILD)
- Extracellular RNA Communication (exRNA)
- Faculty Institutional Recruitment for Sustainable Transformation (FIRST)
- Gabriella Miller Kids First
- Global Health
- Harnessing Data Science for Health Discovery and Innovation in Africa (DS-I Africa)
- HCS Research Collaboratory
- High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program
 - Pioneer Award
 - New Innovator Award
 - Transformative Research Award
 - Early Independence Award
- Human BioMolecular Atlas Program (HuBMAP)
- Human Virome Program
- Illuminating the Druggable Genome (IDG)
- Metabolomics
- Molecular Transducers of Physical Activity Consortium (MoTrPAC)
- *Nutrition for Precision Health*, powered by *All of Us* Research Program
- Somatic Cell Genome Editing (SCGE)
- Somatic Mosaicism Across Human Tissues (SMAHT)
- Stimulating Peripheral Activity to Relieve Conditions (SPARC)
- Transformative High Resolution Cryo-Electron Microscopy (CryoEM)
- Transformative Research to Address Health Disparities and Advance Health Equity
- Undiagnosed Diseases Network (UDN)

Common Fund Programs

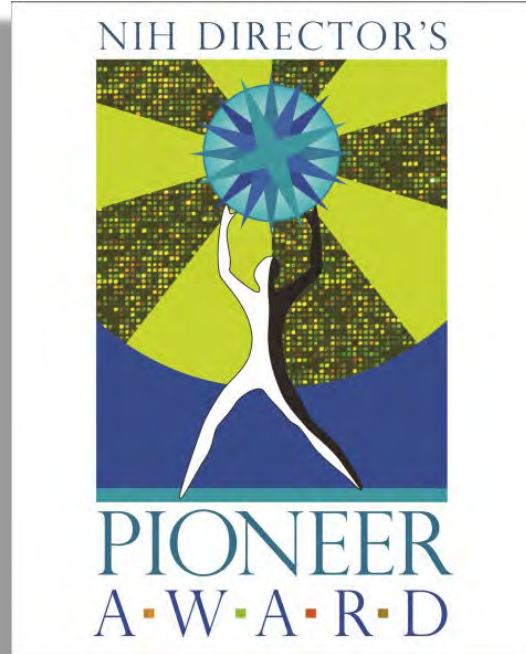
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**CF programs may be useful for your research:
funding opportunities, access to high-end
instruments, databases, reagents, protocols,**

Common Fund Programs

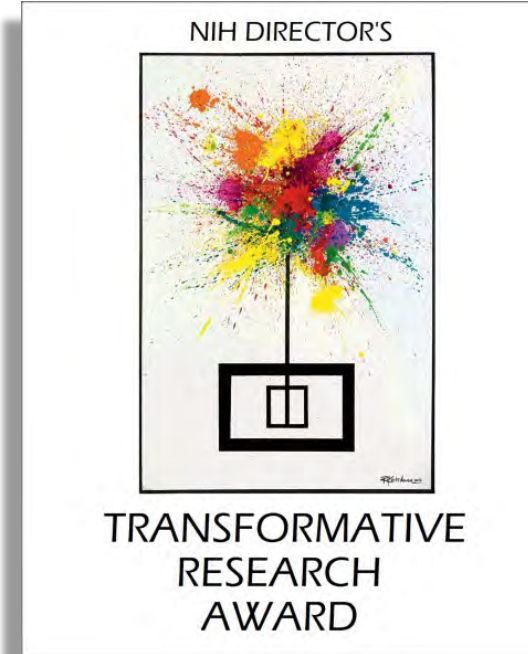
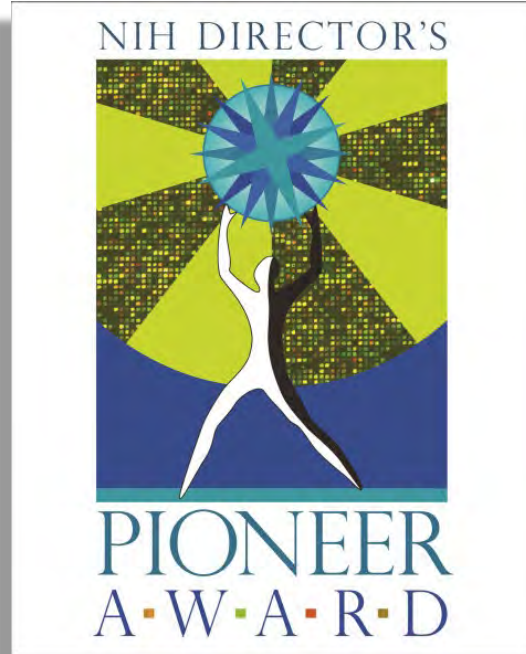
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High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program



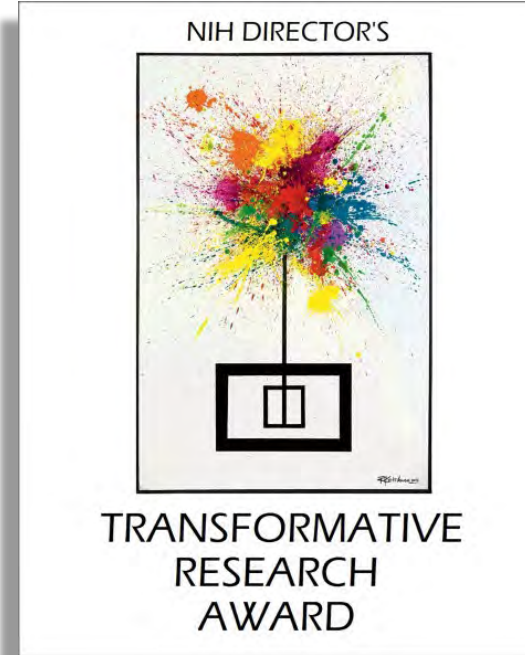
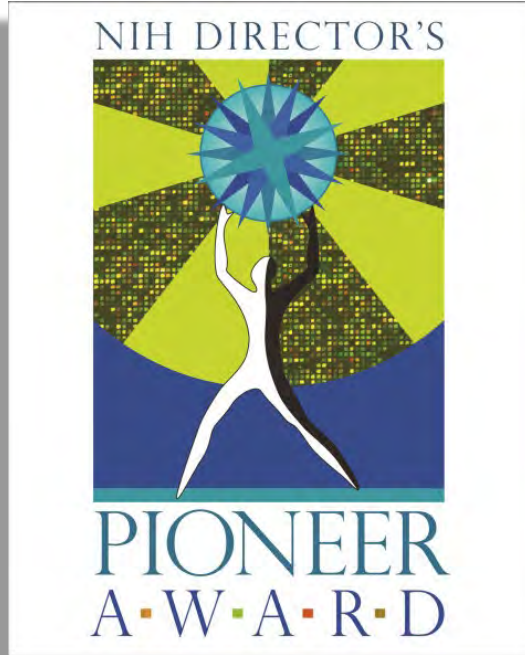
Supporting scientists at all career stages proposing outstanding high-risk, high-impact research

High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program



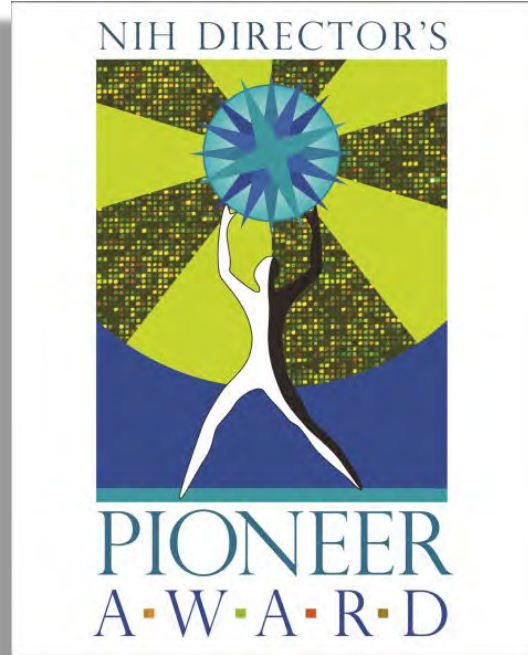
Annual funding opportunities

High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program



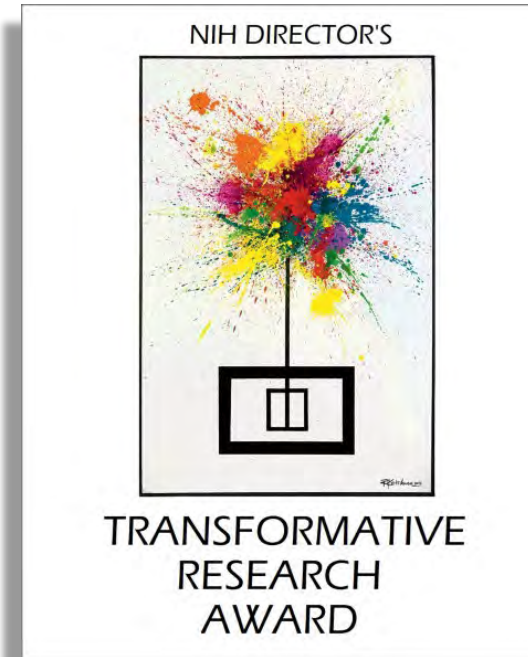
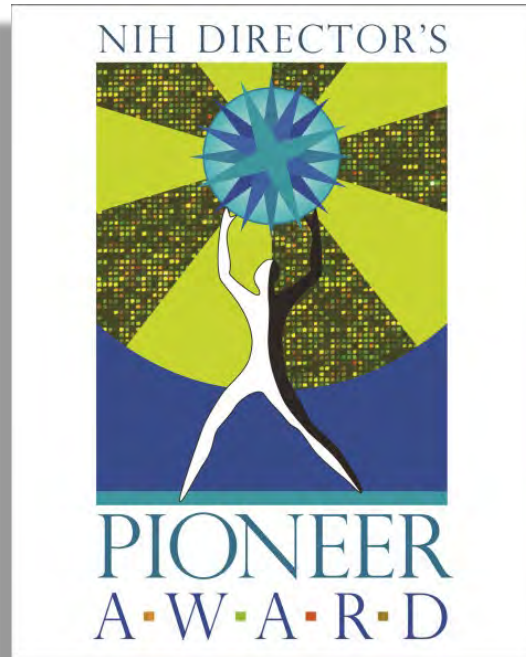
High-risk, high-impact ideas

High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program



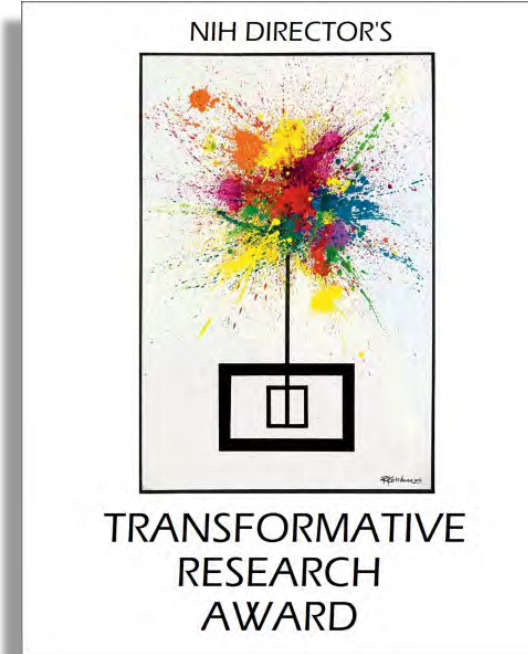
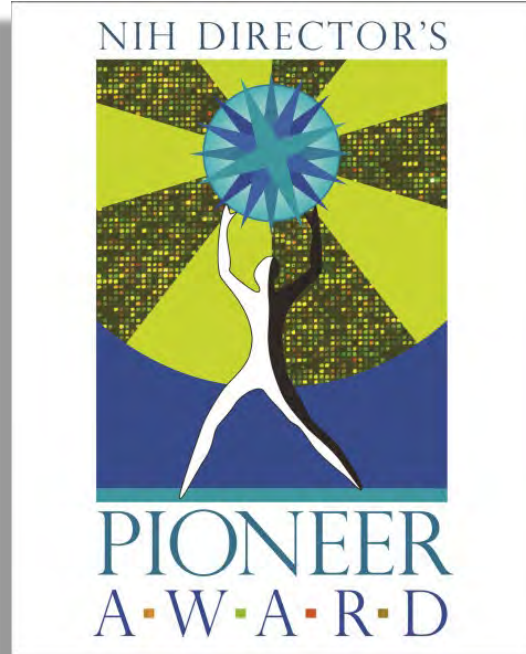
No preliminary data or detailed experimental plan required

High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program



Any topic relevant to NIH mission welcome
Behavioral, social, biomedical, applied, and formal sciences,
and basic, translational, or clinical research

High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program



Encourage applications from investigators with diverse backgrounds and from the full spectrum of eligible institutions

HRHR Working Group

Chair

Robert Eisinger (OD)

Program Leader

Trish Labosky (OD)

Members

Kristin Abraham (NIDDK)

Hugh Auchincloss (NIAID)

Geetha Bansal (FIC)

Alexey Belkin (NIAMS)

Sangeeta Bhargava (NEI)

Gene Carstea (CSR)

Jennifer Collins (NIEHS)

Christine Colvis (NCATS)

Bill Duval (NINR)

Emmeline Edwards (NCCIH)

Zeynep Erim (NIBIB)

Rene Etcheberrigaray (NIA)

Nancy Freeman (NIDCD)

Dana Greene-Schloesser (OD)

Gabriel Hidalgo (NIDCR)

Ray Jacobson (CSR)

Susan Koester (NIMH)

Trish Labosky (OD)

James Li (CSR)

Xinrui Li (CSR)

Roger Little (NIDA)

James Mack (CSR)

Becky Miller (OD)

Brett Miller (NICHD)

David Miller (NCI)

Michael Morse (OD)

Alok Mulky (CSR)

Ellie Murcia (OD)

Imoh Okon (CSR)

Richard Palmer (NLM)

Michael Pazin (NHGRI)

Steven Pittenger (NCATS)

Diana Rutberg (NIDCR)

Suzanne Ryan (CSR)

Michael Sakalian (NIGMS)

Sarita Sastry (CSR)

John Satterlee (NIDA)

Stefania Senger (CSR)

Doug Sheeley (OD)

Carol Shreffler (NIEHS)

Lillian Shum (NIDCR)

Barbara Sorkin (OD)

Cassandra Soto (CSR)

RV Srinivas (NIAAA)

Nathaniel Stinson (NIMHD)

William Tyler (NINDS)

Stephanie Webb (NHLBI)

High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program



Enables outstanding early career scientists to move rapidly into independent research positions by skipping the traditional postdoc

- Single PI applications only
- Complete terminal research degree or clinical training between June 1, 2022, and September 30, 2024
- No previous postdoc experience >12 months
- In non-independent position at time of application
- Requires independent position from host institution
- Limit of 2 applications per institution
- Commit 9.6 months each year to research for first 2 years
- Awards up to \$250,000 per year for 5 years
- Site visit in first year

DP5 Application

Application Limit	2 applications per institution
Research Strategy Essay	12 pages: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scientific challenge and significance• Innovativeness of approach• Investigator's qualifications• Plans for development
Facilities & Other Resources	Institutional support detailed
Budget Information	Modular budget
Letters of Collaboration	Should be included
Biosketch	Only PI's is allowed
Research Effort	9.6 months per year for first 2 years
Letters of Reference	3-5 required

Select Scientific Areas



- Primary (required) and secondary (optional)
 1. Behavioral and Social Science (BSS)
 2. Chemical Biology (CB)
 3. Clinical and Translational Research (CTR)
 4. Infectious Diseases and Immunology (IDI)
 5. Instrumentation and Engineering (IE)
 6. Molecular and Cellular Biology (MCB)
 7. Neuroscience (NS)
 8. High-Throughput and Integrative Biology (HIB)
 9. Bioinformatics and Computational Biology (BCB)
- Indicate on "SF424 (R&R) Cover Form" in Agency Routing Identifier

Facilities & Other Resources (Institution)

- Important section that should not be overlooked
- Tailor to candidate and avoid overuse of boilerplate language
- Provide context for reviewers
- Answer questions in the following headings:
 - ***Candidate selection process*** – process and criteria to select candidate
 - ***Position details*** – description of the position
 - ***Institutional resources commitment*** – description of the lab space, office space, facilities, supplies, equipment, administrative staff, support staff, additional funds, etc. provided by the institution
 - ***Institutional career development*** – plans to ensure independence, mentorship, integration into community, resources, other opportunities

Specific Aims

- Distillation of proposal into one page
- Use the following headings:
 - ***Research Objectives*** – describe research project and overall approach
 - ***Institutional Support*** – how will institutional support allow you to accomplish your research objectives
 - ***Early Independence Rationale*** – what qualifications, experience, and skills do you have that will allow you to accomplish your research objectives

Research Strategy Essay

Use following headings (12-page limit):

1. Rationale for omitting postdoc
2. Evidence of transition to independent position
3. Career development plan
4. Evidence of leadership
5. Host institution interactions
6. Research challenge
7. Approach
8. Innovation
9. Relationship to previous work
10. Timeline

Points to Consider

- Convince reviewers that you:
 1. Are ready for independent research
 2. Will have the resources and support needed to succeed
 3. Have a significant research topic and innovative approach to addressing it
- Make reviewers feel confident that you are ready and prepared to begin your independent research career
- Given the review process, be sure that what you write can be easily appreciated by people well outside the field (watch out for jargon) and provide context
- Though no preliminary data are required, convince reviewers that you have thought deeply about the project – identify risky aspects, how they will be mitigated, alternate approaches
- Convince reviewers that the research will be performed in a robust and rigorous manner – validate new approaches, provide estimates of numbers of human or animal subjects (if used) and why, include that sex will be considered as a biological variable (if appropriate)

Data Management & Sharing Plans

Plans should explain how scientific data generated by the research project will be managed and which scientific data and metadata will be shared

- Attach in “Other Plan(s)” section in “PHS 398 Research Plan Form”
- Not to exceed two pages in length
- Elements to include:
 - Data type
 - Related tools, software, and/or code
 - Standards
 - Data preservation, access, and associated timelines
 - Access, distribution, or reuse considerations
 - Oversight of data management and sharing
- Request & justify costs in “Additional Narrative Justification” in “Modular Budget Form”
- Budget considered by reviewers & plan reviewed by NIH program staff
- Adjustments made through Just-in-Time (JIT) process
- Becomes part of Terms & Conditions of award
- Go to sharing.nih.gov for more information & examples



DP5 Review Procedures

2023-2024

Suzanne Ryan, Ph.D
Scientific Review Officer
Center for Scientific Review
National Institutes of Health
ryansj@csr.nih.gov

Review Stages

- Receipt of applications:
September 6, 2023
- Stage 1 Review by Subject Matter Experts:
October-December, 2023
- Editorial Board consideration:
January-February, 2024
- Discussion and final scores by Editorial Board:
March, 2024
- Recommendation by Council of Councils, NIH:
May, 2024

General Review Considerations

- The Principal Investigator is at a very early stage of research career and substantial preliminary data are not required.
- Award will enable the Principal Investigator to start a productive, independent research career and have a significant impact on the field.
- **Promise of the investigator**
 - Biosketch and Letters of Reference are critical sources for evaluating the prospects and promise of the investigator.
- **Institutional support and commitment**
 - Specific details from the “facilities and other resources” section
 - Letters of support
- **Significance, innovation and approach of the science**

Scoring

- Overall impact score (1-9, 1 being the best)

- Five criteria (1 to 9 scale):
 - Significance
 - **Investigator**
 - Innovation
 - Approach
 - **Environment**

Stage 1 Review – Subject Matter Experts

- All applications will be reviewed in one Special Emphasis Panel.
- All CSR review branches will participate in assigning expert reviewers to applications based on appropriate scientific areas.
- Each application is assigned to three Stage 1 reviewers who are Subject Matter Experts; they provide full written critiques and scores.
- Focus is on the science.

Stage 2 Review - Editorial Board

- Board includes senior scientists with broad expertise.
 - Scientific areas identified by PI in application submission will be useful in assigning Editors.
- Each Editor is assigned ~12-15 applications after Stage 1 review is completed.
 - Editors review applications *and* Stage 1 critiques, and assign an overall impact score to each application, using the 1-9 scale.
 - Editors do not write critiques.
- Board meets in March to discuss approximately top 50% of applications.
 - 3 assigned reviewers present the application; all members discuss and score application.
- Editorial Board scores represent the final scores for the application.

Board Considerations

- Is the Principal Investigator an exceptional individual with the scientific creativity and intellectual sophistication to launch and accelerate a vigorous, independent research program?
- Has the host institution committed to providing the Principal Investigator scientific freedom, ample resources, collaborating faculties, and protected time to develop an independent research program?
- Who are the top outstanding applicants with the best research prospect for exerting a sustained impact to the field?

After the Review

- Applicants receive scores within 3-5 business days (in eRA Commons).
 - For discussed applications, a final score will be listed.
 - For non-discussed applications, no score will be listed; it will say “Not Discussed.”

- All applicants receive summary statements within 30 days.
 - Discussed applications receive a resume/summary of the Editorial Board discussion and critiques from the Stage 1 reviewers.
 - Non-discussed applications receive the critiques from the Stage 1 reviewers.

Tips for Applicants

- Be *very specific* in the institutional support provided.
 - Provide evidence that the position & resources are sufficient for the project.
- Letters of reference should not sound generic. Advise letter writers to comment on what makes you unique.
- How will your research advance science? Clearly articulate the significance of your science to scientists who may not be from your field.
- Set reasonable specific aims that can be accomplished within the project resources. Discuss long term goals or next steps.

Resources

- **Early Independence Award Web site**
<http://commonfund.nih.gov/earlyindependence/index.aspx>
- **Request for Application (RFA)**
Funding opportunity announcement [RFA-RM-23-007](#)
- **Review Contacts:**
Suzanne Ryan, PhD (ryansj@csr.nih.gov)

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Institutions



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Eligibility



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Application & Submission



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Budget



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Letters of Reference



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Review



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