

This webinar is being recorded.

Q&A Webinar

June 29, 2020 @ 1 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

Panelists

Ravi Basavappa, 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

Ellie Murcia, M.Ed.

Program Specialist
Office of the Director

The Common Fund (in the NIH Office of the Director)

Current Programs:



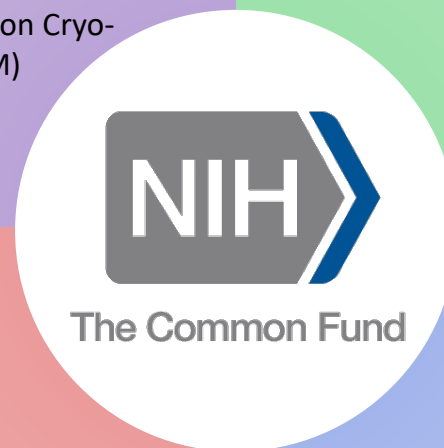
The Common Fund

Data/Tools/Methods

- Big Data to Knowledge (BD2K)
- Gabriella Miller Kids First
- Genotype-Tissue Expression (GTEx)
- Glycoscience
- Human BioMolecular Atlas Program (HuBMAP)
- Illuminating the Druggable Genome (IDG)
- Knockout Mouse Phenotyping (KOMP)
- Library of Integrated Network-Based Cellular Signatures (LINCS)
- Metabolomics
- Regenerative Medicine Program (RMP)
- Science of Behavior Change (SOBS)
- Somatic Cell Genome Editing (SCGE)
- Stimulating Peripheral Activity to Relieve Conditions (SPARC)
- Transformative High Resolution Cryo-Electron Microscopy (CryoEM)

New Types of Clinical Partnerships

- Acute to Chronic Pain Signatures (A2CPS)
- Global Health
- HCS Research Collaboratory
- Undiagnosed Diseases Network (UDN)



New Paradigms

- 4D Nucleome (4DN)
- Extracellular RNA Communication (exRNA)
- Molecular Transducers of Physical Activity Consortium (MoTrPAC)

Transformative Workforce Support

- Enhancing the Diversity of the NIH-Funded Workforce (DPC/BUILD)
- High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program
 - Pioneer Award
 - New Innovator Award
 - Transformative Research Award
 - Early Independence Award
- Strengthening the Biomedical Research Workforce (BEST)

The Common Fund (in the NIH Office of the Director)

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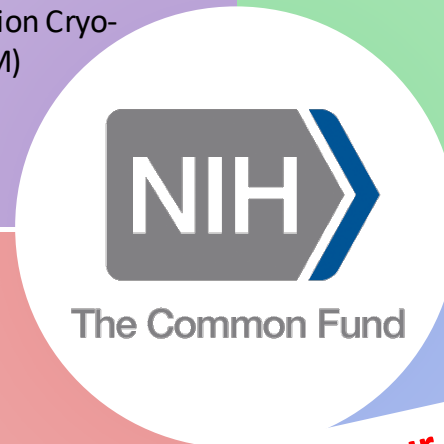
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- Molecular Transducers of Physical Activity (MTPA)

Translational and Career Development Workforce Support

- Diversity of the NIH-Funded Workforce (DPC/BUILD)
- Research Career Development Program (RCDD)
- Research Career Award
- New Innovator Award
- Transformative Research Award
- Early Independence Award
- Strengthening the Biomedical Research Workforce (BEST)

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

The Common Fund (in the NIH Office of the Director)

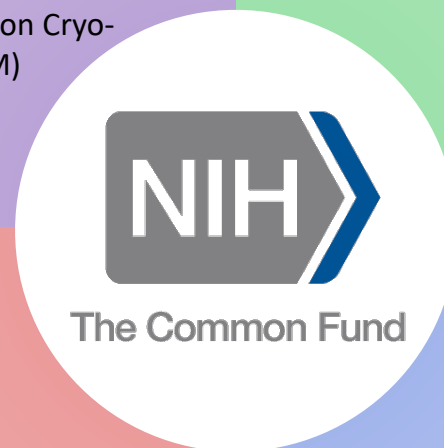
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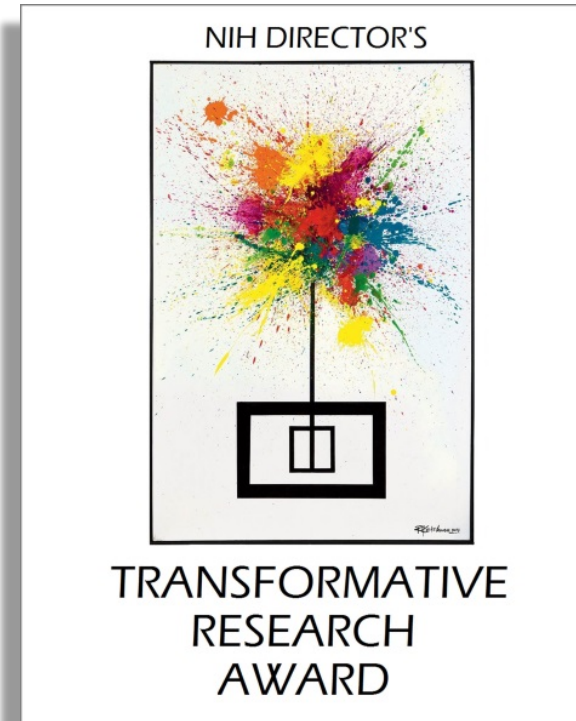
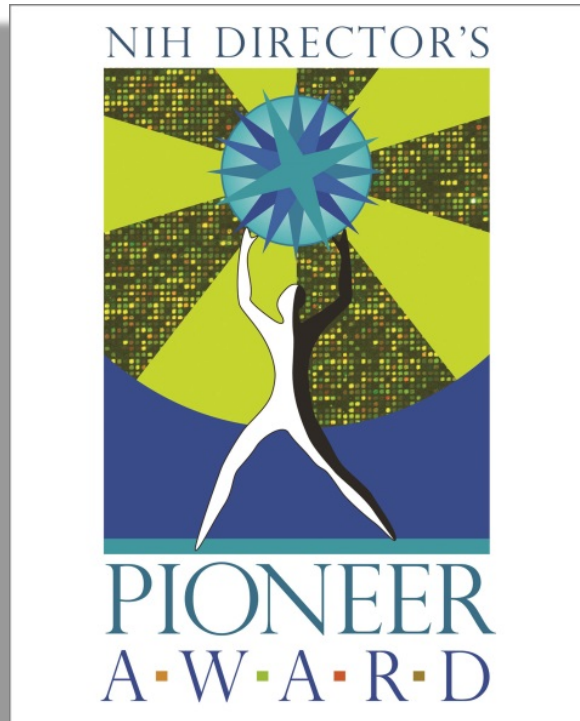
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- Enhancing the Diversity of the NIH-Funded Workforce (DPC/BUILD)
- High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program
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High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program



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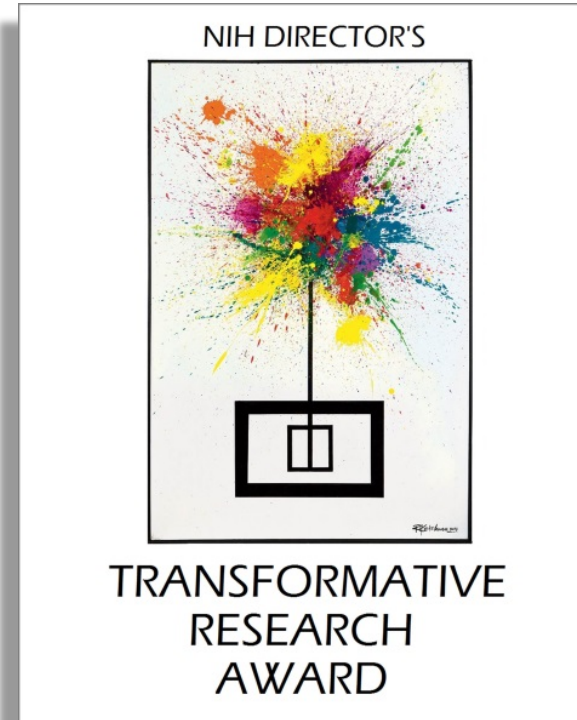
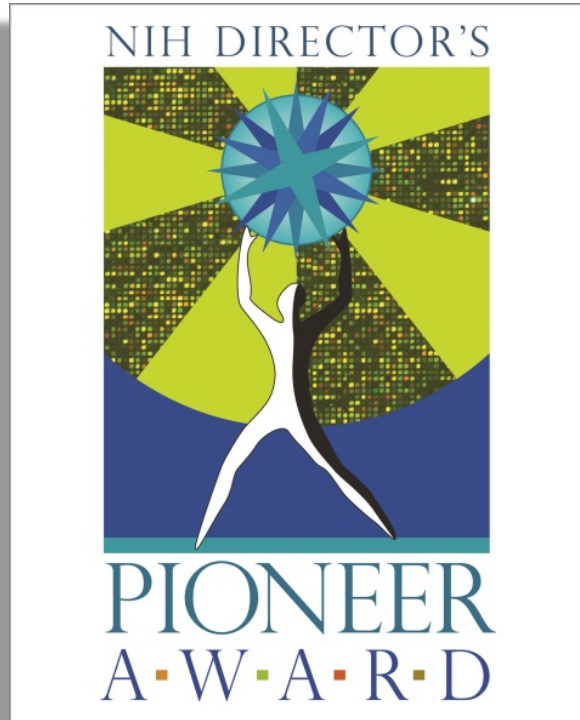


Annual funding opportunities

High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program



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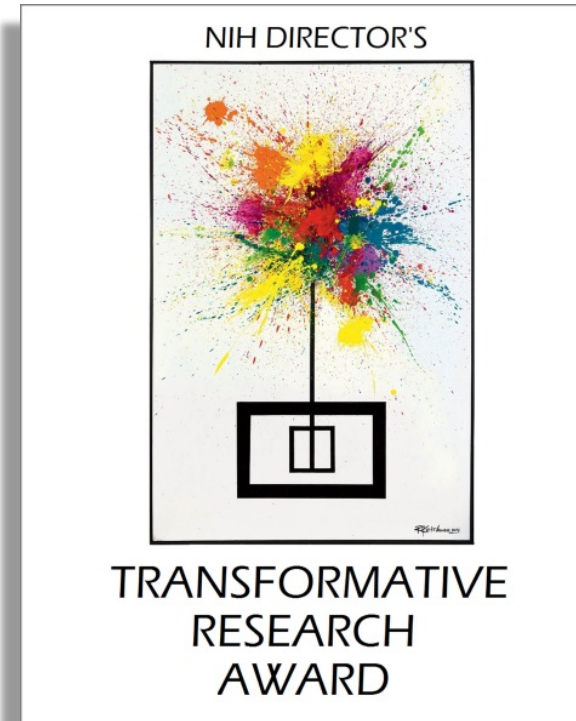
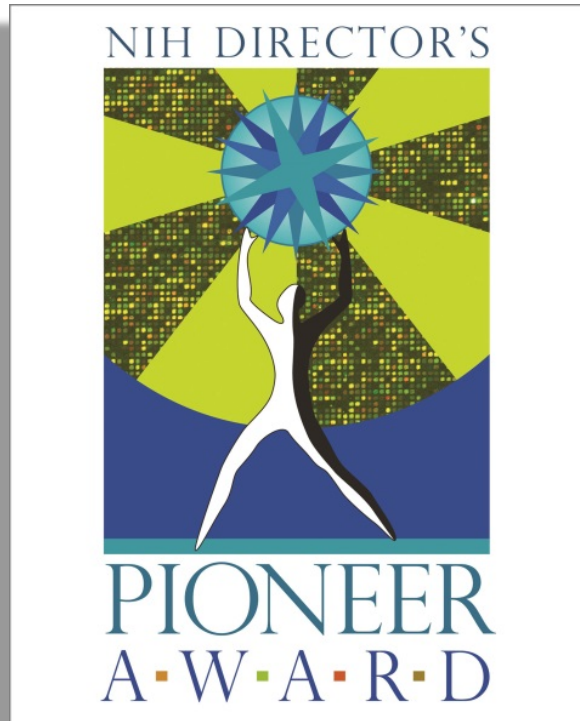


High-risk, high-impact ideas

High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program



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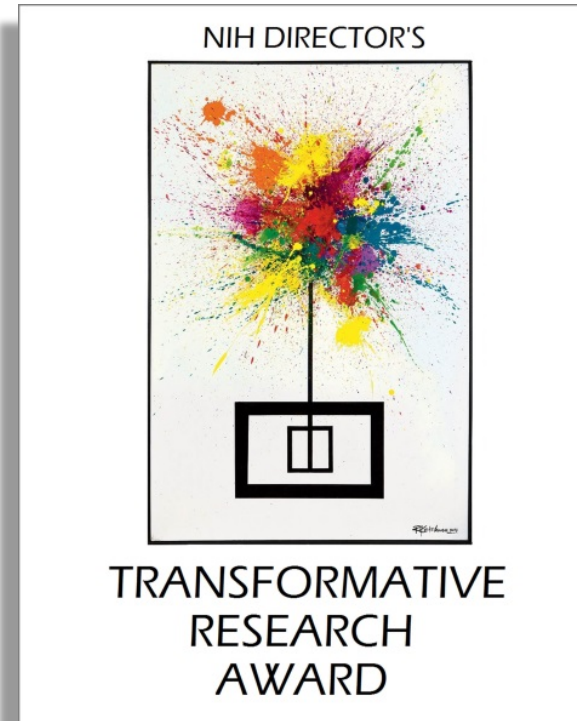
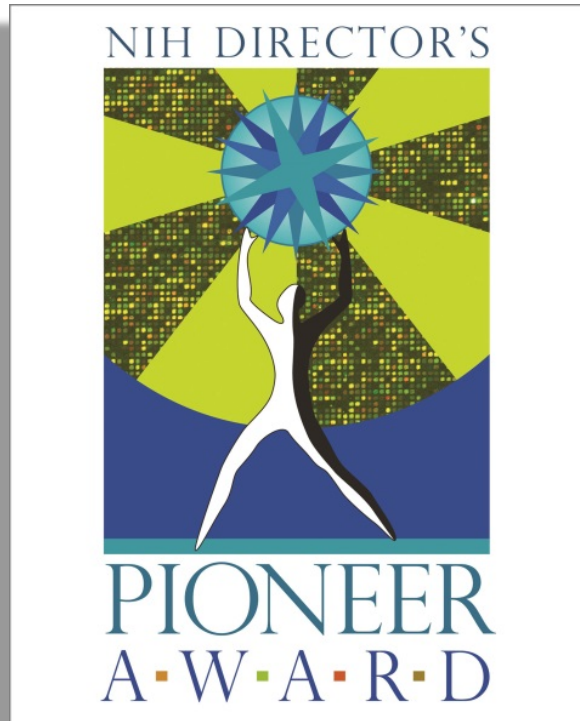


No preliminary data or detailed experimental plan required

High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program



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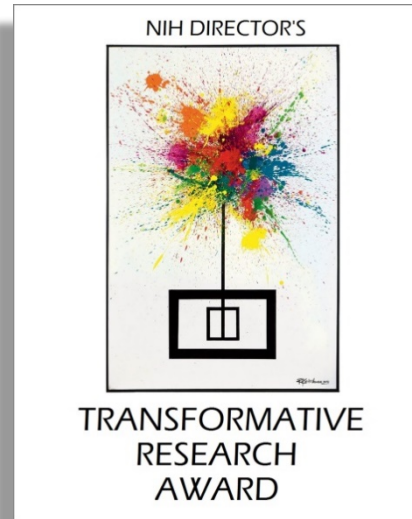
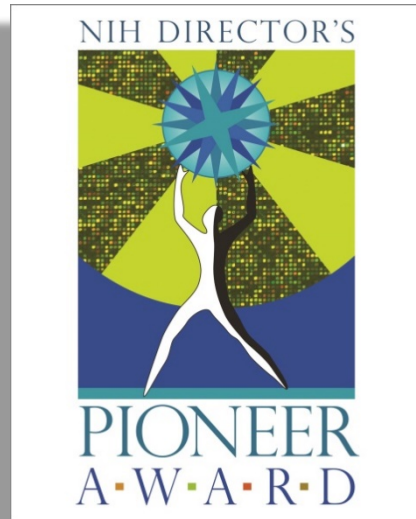


Any topic relevant to NIH mission

High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program



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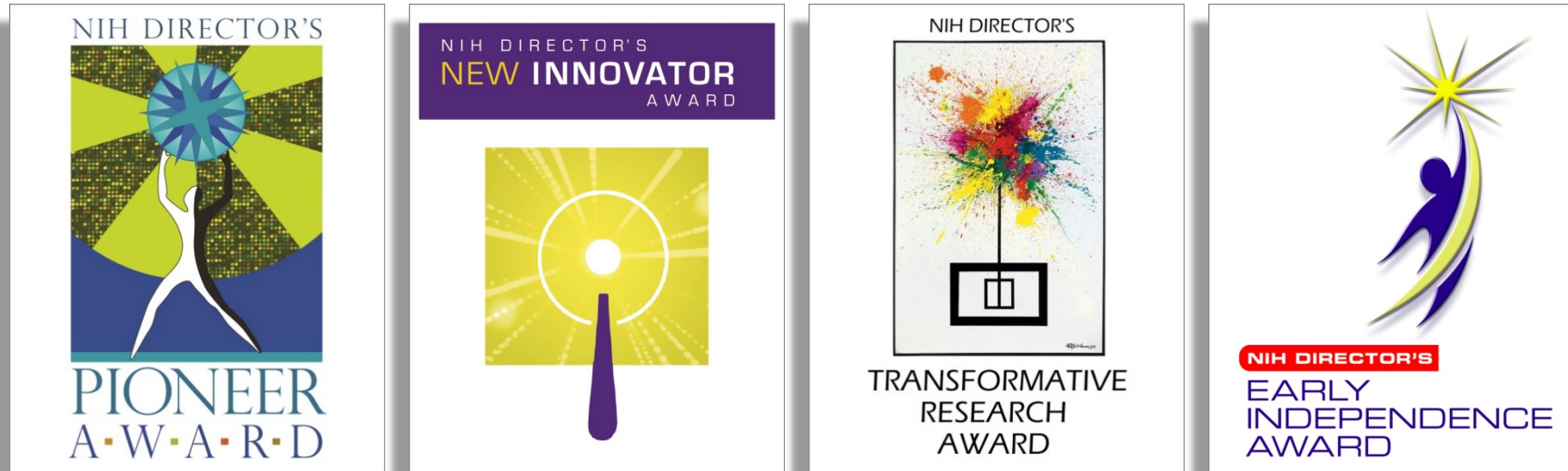


Any topic relevant to NIH mission, including:
behavioral, social, biomedical, applied, and formal sciences,
and basic, translational, or clinical research

High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program



The Common Fund



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

High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program



The Common Fund

Chair

James M. Anderson, MD, PhD
OD

Program Leader

Ravi Basavappa, PhD
OSC/DPCPSI/OD

Members

Kristin Abraham, PhD
NIDDK

Vernon Anderson, PhD
NIGMS

Hugh Auchincloss, MD
NIAID

David Balshaw, PhD
NIEHS

Abraham P. Bautista, PhD
NIAAA

Eugene Carstea, PhD
CSR

Robert H Carter, MD
NIAMS

Jennifer Collins, MR
NIEHS

Christine Colvis, PhD
NCATS

Judith A. Cooper, PhD
NIDCD

**Milton Corn, MD, FACP,
FACMI**
NLM

Cindy D. Davis, PhD
Office of Dietary
Supplements/DPCPSI/OD

Emmeline Edwards, PhD
NCCIH

Zeynep Erim, PhD
NIBIB

Rene Etcheberrigaray, MD
NIA

Valerie Florance, PhD
NLM

Gabriel Hidalgo
NIDCR

Christine Hunter, PhD, ABPP
OBSSR/DPCPSI/OD

Raymond Jacobson, PhD
CSR

Flora Katz, PhD
FIC

Karen Kellton
OSC/DPCPSI/OD

Anthony Kirilusha, PhD
NIAMS

Susan Koester, PhD
NIMH

Rajiv Kumar, PhD
CSR

James Li, PhD
CSR

Roger Little, PhD
NIDA

James Mack, PhD
CSR

Judy A. Mietz, PhD
NCI

Becky Miller, PhD
OSC/DPCPSI/OD

Brett Miller, PhD
NICHD

Daniel Miller, PhD
NINDS

Michael Morse
OSC/DPCPSI/OD

Ellie Murcia, MEd
OSC/DPCPSI/OD

Srikanth Ranganathan, PhD
CSR

Diana (Dede) Rutberg, MBA
NIDCR

Suzanne Ryan, PhD
CSR

John Satterlee, PhD
NIDA

Carol Shreffler, PhD
NIEHS

Lillian Shum, PhD
NIDCR

Darren Sledjeski, PhD
NIDCR

Heidi J. Sofia, PhD
NHGRI

Michael A. Steinmetz, PhD
NEI

**Nathaniel Stinson, Jr., PhD,
MD**
NIMHD

Edmund Talley, PhD
NINDS

**Stephanie Johnson Webb,
PhD**
NHLBI

Tasmeen Weik, DrPH, MPH
CSR

Elizabeth L. Wilder, PhD
OSC/DPCPSI/OD



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

- Started in 2011
- Complete terminal research degree or clinical training between June 1, 2019 and September 30, 2021
- 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
- No preliminary data required
- Awards up to \$250,000 per year for 5 years

Application – DP5



The Common Fund

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
Research Effort	80% for first 2 years
Letters of Reference	3-5 required

- Important section that should not be overlooked
- Tailor to candidate and avoid overuse of boilerplate language
- Provide context for reviewers
- Use 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

- 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

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. 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)

Funding Opportunity Announcements



The Common Fund

Standard (RFA RM20-014) – any topic of relevance to the NIH mission is welcome

COVID-19 – related (RFA RM20-021) – must be relevant to SARS-CoV-2 prevention, preparation, or response

- Includes behavioral/social science research, research on health disparities, novel therapeutics, and any other related topics.

Both have the same receipt date (September 4, 2020) and will use the same review process with the same study section.



NIH Director's Early Independence Award (DP5) Review Procedures

2020-2021

Suzanne Ryan, Ph.D
Scientific Review Officer
Center for Scientific Review
National Institutes of Health



Review Stages

- ▶ Receipt of applications:
September 4, 2020
- ▶ Stage 1 Review by Subject Matter Experts:
October-December, 2020
- ▶ Editorial Board consideration:
January-February, 2021
- ▶ Discussion and final score by Editorial Board:
March, 2021
- ▶ Recommendation by Council of Councils, NIH:
May, 2021




General Review Considerations

- ▶ The Principal Investigator is at a very early stage of research career and will devote “almost exclusive effort”.
- ▶ 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**

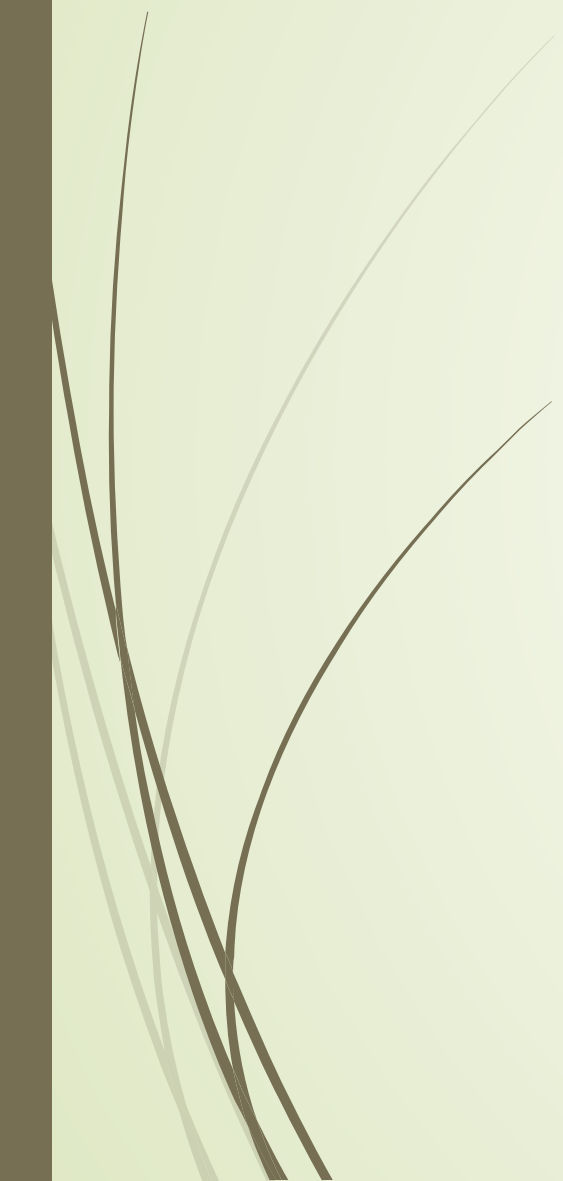


Scoring and Critiques

- Overall impact score (1-9, 1 being the best).
- Five criteria (1 to 9 scale):
 - Significance
 - **Investigator**
 - Innovation
 - Approach
 - **Environment**



Stage 1 Review

- ▶ All applications will be reviewed in one Special Emphasis Panel.
 - ▶ All CSR IRGs (Integrated Review Groups) will participate in assigning expert reviewers to applications based on appropriate biomedical and biobehavioral science areas.
 - ▶ Each application is assigned to 3 “mail” reviewers who are “Subject Matter Experts” to provide full written critiques and scores.
 - ▶ Focus is on the science.
- 



Editorial Board Review

- ▶ Board includes senior scientists with broad expertise.
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ Board meets in March in Washington, DC to discuss approximately top 50% of applications.
 - ▶ 3-4 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 an independent research career?
- ▶ 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

- ▶ Discussed applicants receive scores within 3-5 business days.
 - ▶ ERA Commons will show whether or not application was discussed/scored.
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ 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):**

- ▶ **Non-COVID-19**-related research proposals should apply to funding opportunity announcement [RFA-RM-20-014](#).

- ▶ **COVID-19**-related research proposals should apply to funding opportunity announcement [RFA-RM-20-021](#).

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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