

This webinar is being recorded.

Q&A Webinar

July 17, 2017 @ 3 PM EDT

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



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

NIH DIRECTOR'S



PIONEER
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<https://commonfund.nih.gov/pioneer>

Panelists

◆ Ravi Basavappa, Ph.D.

Program Leader
Office of Strategic Coordination
Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives
Office of the Director

◆ Becky Miller, Ph.D.

Health Specialist
Office of Strategic Coordination
Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives
Office of the Director

◆ Ellie Murcia, M.Ed.

Program Specialist
Office of Strategic Coordination
Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives
Office of the Director

◆ James Mack, Ph.D.

Scientific Review Officer
Division of Basic and Integrative Biological Sciences
Center for Scientific Review

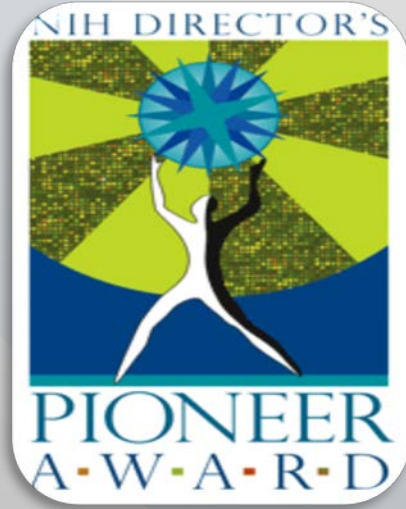
◆ Vernon Anderson, Ph.D.

Program Director
Division of Pharmacology, Physiology, and Biological
Chemistry
National Institute of General Medical Sciences

◆ Valerie Florance, Ph.D.

Associate Director for Extramural Programs
National Library of Medicine

Pioneer Award Initiative



- Started in 2004
- Any qualified investigator
- Individual scientists of exceptional creativity who propose pioneering and possibly transforming approaches to addressing major biomedical or behavioral challenges
- \$700k DC/year for five years



Fundamental characteristics of the Pioneer Award program

- Person-focused
- Allow unusual flexibility
(Pioneer awardee may change direction of research)
- Provide generous resources



To implement the Pioneer Award program, made it very distinctive from the major NIH grant Program (R01) in:

Application format:

Review:

Program administration:

NIH Director's Pioneer Award (DP1) 2018 Review Procedures

James Mack, Ph.D.
Scientific Review Officer
Center for Scientific Review
National Institutes of Health

Review Stages

- ◇ Receipt of applications:
September 2017
- ◇ Stage 1 Review by Subject Matter Experts:
October-December 2017
- ◇ Editorial Board consideration:
January-March 2018
- ◇ Interview and final score by Editorial Board:
April 2018
- ◇ Concurrence by Council of Councils:
May 2018

Stage I Review

- ◇ All the applications will be reviewed in one Special Emphasis Panel
- ◇ All CSR IRGs (Integrated Review Groups) will participate in assigning mail reviewers to applications based on appropriate biomedical and biobehavioral science areas
- ◇ Each application is assigned to 3 mail reviewers
 - ◇ 2 reviewers have expertise in broad area of the application
 - ◇ 1 reviewer has expertise outside the area

Scoring and Critiques

- ◆ Assign an overall impact score (1-9, 1 being the best)
- ◆ Use the 1 to 9 scale to score each of the five criteria:
 - Significance
 - Investigator
 - Innovation
 - Approach
 - Environment
- ◆ Emphasis will be on “investigator” and “innovation” and potential for broad impact and suitability for the Pioneer Award

Interview Panel

- ◆ A group of eminent scientists known for their broad scientific perspective will conduct a second stage review.
- ◆ Informed by first stage review results, Interview Panel selects ~25 applicants that they deem to be the most “pioneering” for interviews in Bethesda, MD

Interview Considerations

- ◆ Is the Principal Investigator an individual with a track record of exceptional scientific creativity?
- ◆ Is the proposed project bold with the potential for broad impact?
- ◆ Is the proposal suitable for the Pioneer Award versus conventional NIH funding mechanisms?

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Pioneer Award Webinar Questions

July 17, 2017

Eligibility

1. Can you explain what is meant by “pioneering?”
 - A new research direction distinct from any research currently or previously conducted by the applicant or by other investigators
 - Highly innovative, and possibly risky, approaches to address or solve exceptionally important problems in biomedical or behavioral sciences
 - A new research direction may have as its foundation the applicant’s prior work and expertise but cannot simply be an obvious extension or scaling up of a research enterprise
 - Must reflect a fundamental new insight into the solution of a problem, which may derive from the development of exceptionally innovative approaches and/or from the posing of radically unconventional hypotheses
2. Can individuals at any career stage apply?
 - Yes, but applicants must be able to show concrete evidence for their claim of innovativeness. This could be very difficult for a postdoctoral fellow who has never conducted independent research. In addition, like all NIH grants, the NIH Director’s Pioneer Awards are made to institutions on behalf of investigators. Because most institutions will only authorize grant applications from individuals who are independent investigators, this could present an administrative barrier to applying.

Application & Submission

1. Can you provide an example application to look at?
 - No, due to privacy concerns we cannot release an example application
 - Due to the innovative and creative nature of the award, it is best to tailor your application to your needs
2. How detailed should the essay be? I realize it can only be 5 pages so clearly not a lot of detail but I am wondering about how specific to be about plans (e.g., specific data sets or examples to use, detailed aims, specific collaborators listed, or more general discussion).
 - No detailed experimental plan is expected, but the reviewers should have a clear sense of what it is you want to do and why you want to do it.
 - The reviewers should be convinced that you have thought deeply about the project; identified what you think will be the major challenges.
 - Typically, applicants do not articulate specific aims, but rather have a single overarching objective that they wish to achieve.
 - Collaborators can be mentioned in the essay. They should provide complementary expertise. It should be clear, though, that you are the one who is setting the scientific agenda and that the project is very much being driven by you.
3. Should the focus in Research Strategy be a linear “project,” or should it be the development of a broad “program” that will involve various projects as the program evolves?
 - Typically, applicants frame their essay as trying to achieve an overall major objective, which may have multiple components. Broad, diffuse programs typically do not fare well in review.

4. Can I submit two applications to this funding opportunity?
 - No, you cannot submit two applications to the same funding opportunity.

Budget

1. Do I submit a budget?
 - No, only total five-year budget should be included. We do not require, and will not accept, budgetary details.
2. Can the budget include the cost of collecting data abroad (e.g., subject payment, collection, storage, processing and shipment of biosamples), or support collaborators at foreign institutions?
 - Yes, this would be considered foreign components and are allowed. Foreign components are defined by the NIH as the performance of any significant scientific element or segment of a project outside of the United States, either by the recipient or by a researcher employed by a foreign organization, whether or not grant funds are expended. Activities that would meet this definition include, but are not limited to, (1) the involvement of human subjects or animals, (2) extensive foreign travel by recipient project staff for the purpose of data collection, surveying, sampling, and similar activities, or (3) any activity of the recipient that may have an impact on U.S. foreign policy through involvement in the affairs or environment of a foreign country. Examples of other grant-related activities that may be significant are:
 - collaborations with investigators at a foreign site anticipated to result in co-authorship;
 - use of facilities or instrumentation at a foreign site; or
 - receipt of financial support or resources from a foreign entity.
 - Funds may be requested for personnel (including co-investigators, collaborators, and consultants), supplies, equipment, subcontracts, and other allowable costs. The direct and indirect costs for any subcontract must be included in your direct costs.

Letters of Reference

1. Who should I ask for a Letter of Reference?
 - Referees should be able to address the candidate's scientific, leadership, and management skills and how he/she is qualified to conduct successful independent research. It may not be best to choose referees based primarily on their official position, such as your departmental chair or institutional dean.
2. Can a referee be affiliated with the applicant?
 - Yes, anyone who can address your ability to formulate a compelling scientific vision, your record of overcoming daunting conceptual and experimental hurdles, and your capacity to successfully challenge scientific dogma is welcome to submit a letter on your behalf.
3. What is the difference between a Letter of Reference and a Letter of Support?
 - Letters of reference are typically from scientists or other people qualified to evaluate the merit of the project proposal and the applicant's qualifications to fulfill the proposed project. Letters of support are typically from outside individuals or organizations whose cooperation, assistance, or guidance is needed for the applicant to

successfully complete the project. The letter of support affirms the person or entity's commitment of promised assistance to the project.

Review

1. Who reviews my application?
2. What will reviewers focus on the most?
3. Will a subject expert review my application?
4. What should my talk focus on during the interview – the project or my qualifications?