

Program Insights Newsletter- February 14, 2014

Is your institution considering an application for one of the three initiatives (BUILD, NRMN and CEC) in the NIH's "Enhancing the Diversity of the NIH-Funded Workforce" program? Do you still have questions about putting together a good application? We want to help! Starting this week, and continuing until the application deadline April 2, 2014, NIH staff will be sharing important information and useful tips in the new "Program Insights" electronic newsletter. These short emails will help explain the scope and requirements of the program so you can better formulate your proposal and prepare your application.

Many of the topics will be based on questions NIH has received following the [technical assistance webinar](#). We'll also provide insight into grantsmanship best practices and tips for writing a focused application.

After the first two newsletters, the email will be sent only to the Diversity email list, so if you wish to continue to receive the updates directly to your inbox, make sure to sign-up for that list at: <http://commonfund.nih.gov/diversityregister>.

Our first tip is about **innovation**. All three initiatives aim to support novel and innovative approaches. For example, innovation is key to the BUILD initiative. The BUILD FOA specifically defines innovation in [the Purpose/Objective section](#). For a little more insight, consider:

Innovation:

The BUILD initiative is looking to move **beyond** existing programs, offering the **flexibility** to innovate and try new ideas to transform biomedical training and mentoring at an institution. These awards are not simply to add more students to an already funded program. However, promising practices and principles derived from the literature or pilot programs may be leveraged to inform applicants' approaches and/or expansion of existing efforts in **novel** ways.

The proposed programs should be tailored to the unique needs and strengths of the Primary Applicant and any relevant Partner Institutions. Recognizing that the needs and strengths of institutions vary, NIH expects there are many different and creative approaches that will be successful in individual contexts. Working together as a Consortium, BUILD, NRMN, and CEC awardees will disseminate successful approaches nationwide, so that other institutions can identify, adapt, and implement approaches that will work best in their particular environment. It is important to describe in your application how the success of the proposed program will transform biomedical training for future scientists. Find more application requirements in the [BUILD Funding Opportunity Announcement](#).

If you're starting to formulate your application, here are a few questions to help focus your ideas, and potentially help brainstorm an outline for a strong proposal.

Making a Plan - Good Ideas:

BUILD and NRMN

- Is the approach novel? Does it build upon or expand beyond current programs/approaches (supported by the literature) without directly replicating them?
- Will this program improve biomedical training/mentoring for students and early career faculty researchers, especially those from underrepresented backgrounds?

- Does it have the potential to transform the research and training environment?
- Is it feasible to implement? Is it feasible to evaluate?

CEC

- Are the evaluation methods novel and/or appropriate? Will the collaboration and communication tools (website, etc.) be effective for the Diversity Program Consortium? Is there a clear plan to disseminate information, such as successful approaches, to the extramural community?
- Do personnel have the advanced expertise required for the evaluation, collaboration, and facilitation activities?
- Are the plans feasible?
- Are the evaluation methods robust in their ability to provide feedback in “real time”?

You can always find more information on the program website, <http://commonfund.nih.gov/diversity/index>. For tips on writing a good application or more background information about the grant process, try the [NIH Office of Extramural Research's website](#). There are many good resources available under the *About Grants* banner on the left side of the page.

Don't forget, you can send your questions to BUILDNRMNCEC@nih.gov. Questions that could help others better understand the FOAs or the application process may be de-identified and shared in future “Program Insights.” Program staff continues to address specific inquiries directly and the Frequently Asked Questions section of the Diversity program website is updated often (<http://commonfund.nih.gov/diversity/faq>).

The “[Enhancing the Diversity of the NIH-Funded Workforce](#)” program is funded through the NIH Common Fund, and managed by the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities in partnership with the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.