This webinar is being recorded.

Q&A Webinar

June 29, 2020 @ 1 PM EDT

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

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:

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

New Types of Clinical Partnerships
- Acute to Chronic Pain Signatures (A2CPS)
- Global Health
- HCS Research Collaboratory
- Undiagnosed Diseases Network (UDN)

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

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High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program

Annual funding opportunities

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High-risk, high-impact ideas
No preliminary data or detailed experimental plan required
High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program

Any topic relevant to NIH mission
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

Encourages applications from investigators with diverse backgrounds and from the full spectrum of eligible institutions
High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program

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
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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
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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

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Lillian Shum, PhD
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Darren Sledjeski, PhD
NIDCR
Heidi J. Sofia, PhD
NHGRI
Michael A. Steinmetz, PhD
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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

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Slide 12
High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program

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

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Application Limit</strong></th>
<th>2 applications per institution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Strategy Essay</strong></td>
<td>12 pages:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Scientific challenge and significance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Innovativeness of approach</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Investigator’s qualifications</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Plans for development</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Facilities &amp; Other Resources</strong></td>
<td>Institutional support detailed</td>
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<td><strong>Budget Information</strong></td>
<td>Modular budget</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Letters of Collaboration</strong></td>
<td>Should be included</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Research Effort</strong></td>
<td>80% for first 2 years</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Letters of Reference</strong></td>
<td>3-5 required</td>
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Facilities & Other Resources (Institution)

• 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
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
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
Research Strategy Essay

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

**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**
  

- **Request for Application (RFA):**
  - **Non-COVID-19**-related research proposals should apply to funding opportunity announcement [RFA-RM-20-014](http://commonfund.nih.gov/earlyindependence/index.aspx).
  - **COVID-19**-related research proposals should apply to funding opportunity announcement [RFA-RM-20-021](http://commonfund.nih.gov/earlyindependence/index.aspx).

**Review Contacts:**

Suzanne Ryan, PhD ([ryansj@csr.nih.gov](mailto:ryansj@csr.nih.gov))
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Institutions

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Eligibility

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Application & Submission

commonfund.nih.gov/earlyindependence
Q&A Webinar
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Budget

commonfund.nih.gov/earlyindependence
Q&A Webinar

June 29, 2020 @ 1 PM EDT

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

Letters of Reference

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Q&A Webinar

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Review

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