

This webinar is being recorded.

# Q&A Webinar

June 28, 2021 @ 11:30 AM 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



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[commonfund.nih.gov/earlyindependence](https://commonfund.nih.gov/earlyindependence)

[earlyindependence@od.nih.gov](mailto:earlyindependence@od.nih.gov)

# 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

Abraham Bautista, Ph.D.

Director Office of Extramural Activities  
National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

Makyba Charles-Ayinde, Ph.D.

Health Science Policy Analyst  
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

- Bridge to Artificial Intelligence (Bridge2AI)
- Cellular Senescence Network (SenNet)
- Gabriella Miller Kids First
- Genotype-Tissue Expression (GTEx)
- Glycoscience
- Human BioMolecular Atlas Program (HuBMAP)
- Illuminating the Druggable Genome (IDG)
- Knockout Mouse Phenotyping (KOMP)
- Metabolomics
- Protein Capture Reagents
- Library of Integrated Network-Based Cellular Signatures (LINCS)
- Science of Behavior Change (SOBC)
- Somatic Cell Genome Editing (SCGE)
- Stimulating Peripheral Activity to Relieve Conditions (SPARC)
- Transformative High Resolution Cryo-Electron Microscopy (CryoEM)

### New Paradigms

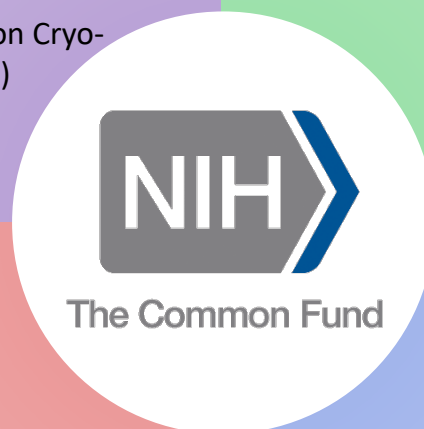
- 4D Nucleome (4DN)
- Extracellular RNA Communication (exRNA)
- Molecular Transducers of Physical Activity Consortium (MoTrPAC)

### New Types of Clinical Partnerships

- Acute to Chronic Pain Signatures (A2CPS)
- Global Health
- Harnessing Data Science for Health Discovery and Innovation in Africa (DS-I Africa)
- HCS Research Collaboratory
- Nutrition for Precision Health, powered by the All of Us Research program
- Undiagnosed Diseases Network (UDN)

### Transformative Workforce Support

- Enhancing the Diversity of the NIH-Funded Workforce (DPC/BUILD)
- Faculty Institutional Recruitment for Sustainable Transformation (FIRST)
- High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program
  - Pioneer Award
  - New Innovator Award
  - Transformative Research Award
  - Early Independence Award
- Transformative Research to Address Health Disparities and Advance Health Equity



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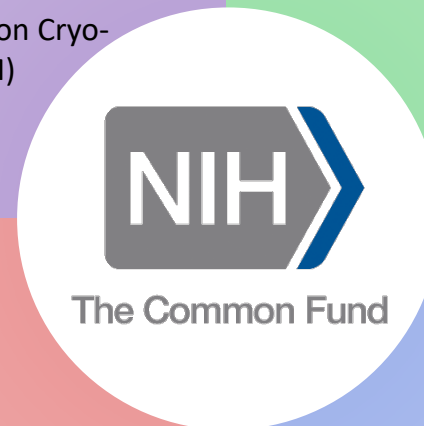
**CF programs may be useful for your research:  
FOAs, access to high-end instruments, databases,  
reagents, protocols, ....**

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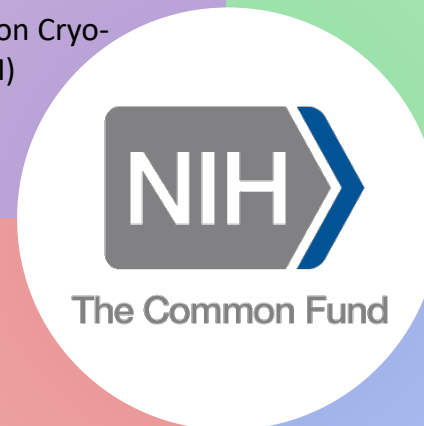
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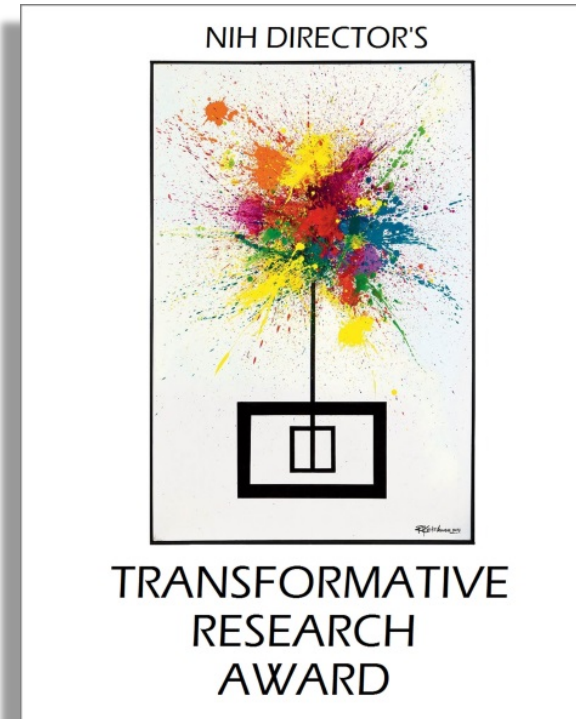
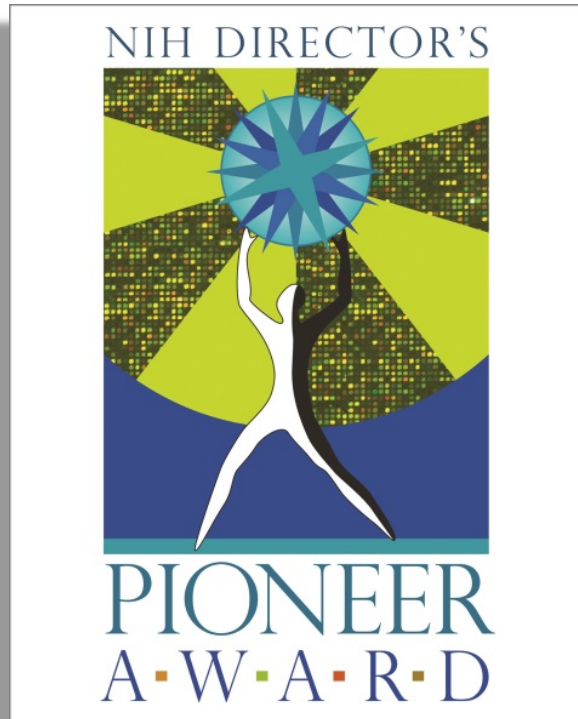
- Enhancing the Diversity of the NIH-Funded Workforce (DPC/BUILD)
- Faculty Institutional Recruitment for Sustainable Transformation (FIRST)
- **High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program**
  - Pioneer Award
  - New Innovator Award
  - Transformative Research Award
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# High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program



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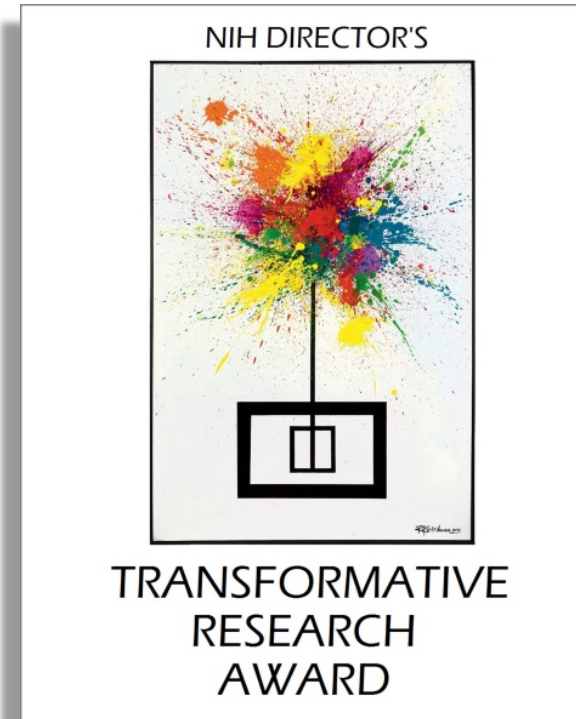
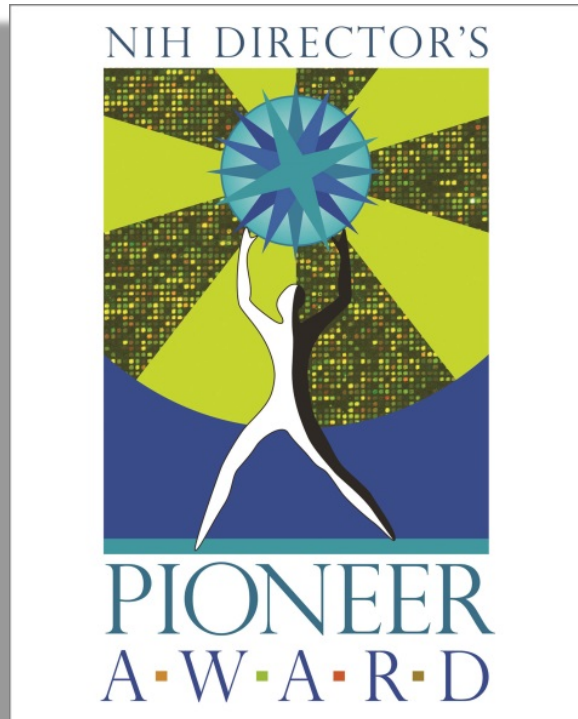


## Annual funding opportunities

# High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program



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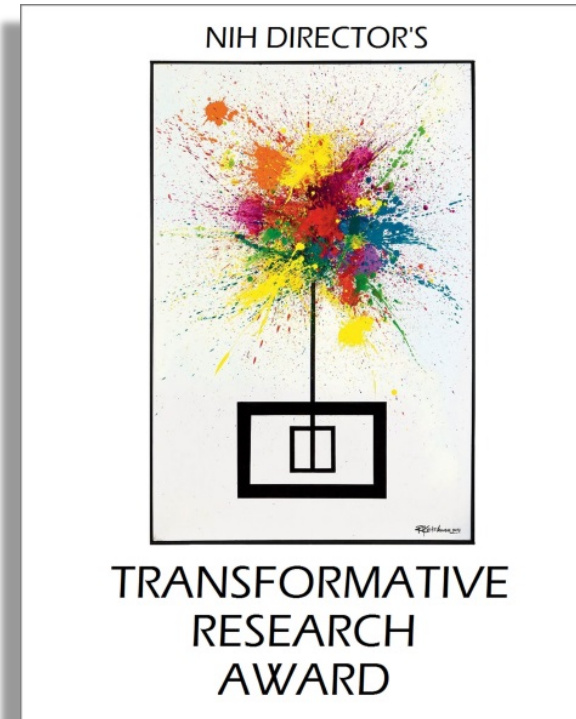
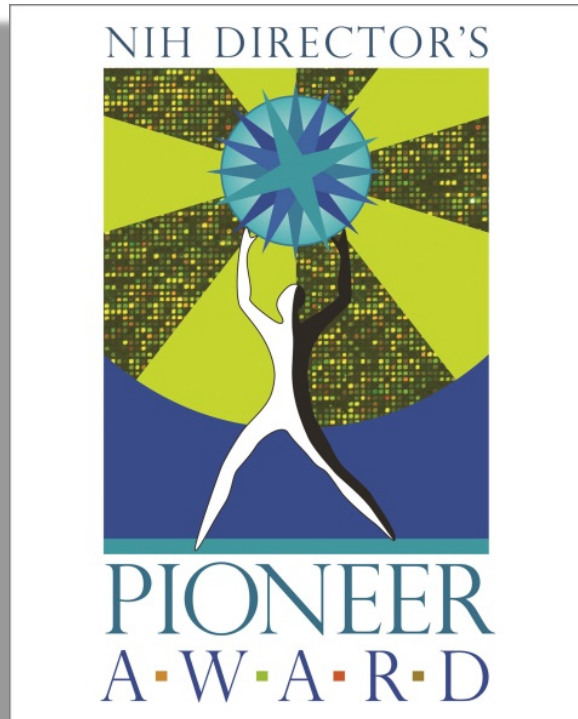
High-risk, high-impact ideas



# High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program



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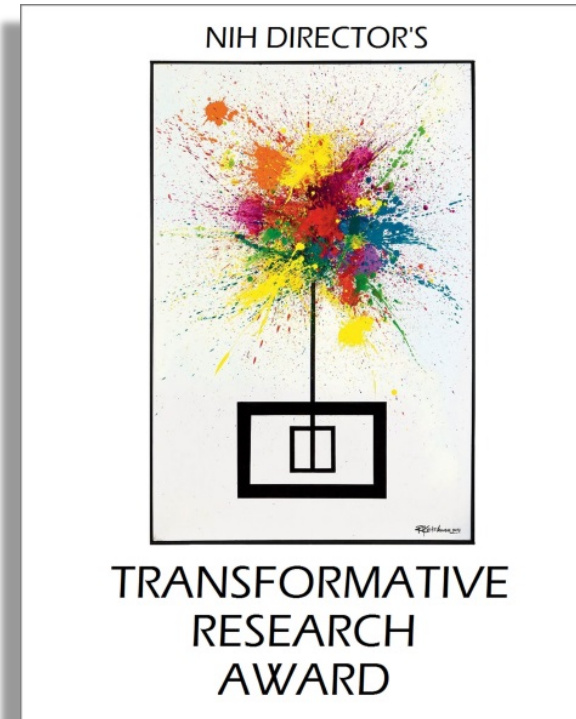
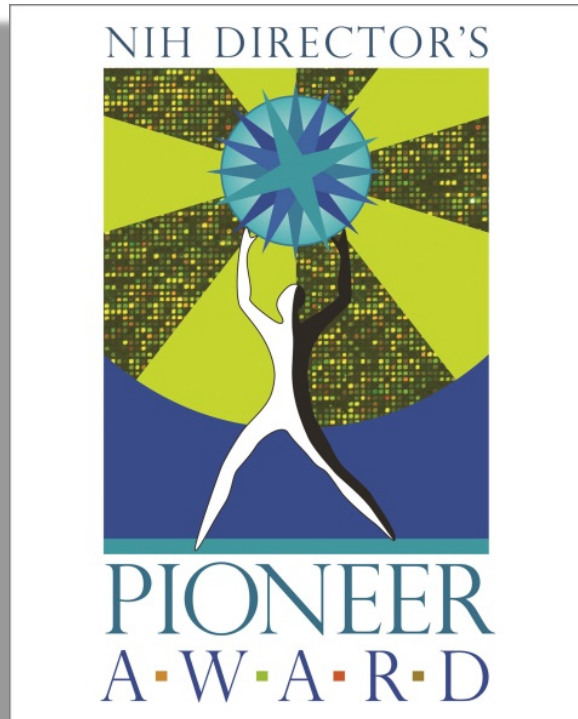
No preliminary data required or detailed  
experimental plan required



# High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program



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*Any topic relevant to NIH mission*

# High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program



The Common Fund

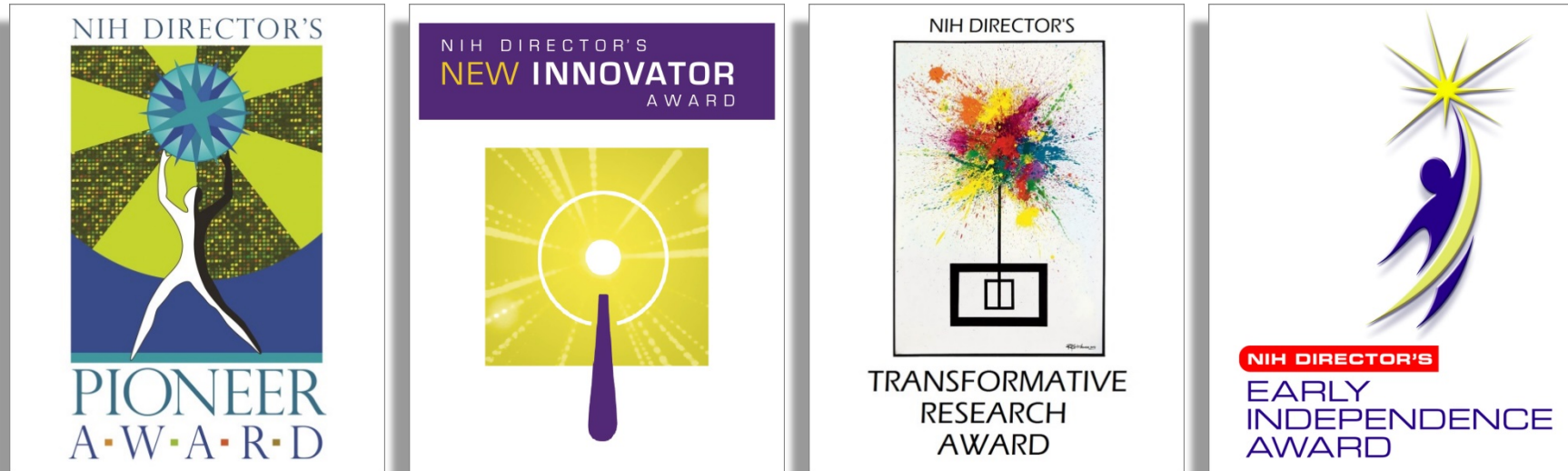


*Any* topic relevant to NIH mission, including:  
behavioral, social, biomedical, applied, and formal sciences,  
and basic, translational, or clinical research

# High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program



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

# High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program



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## Chair

**James M. Anderson, MD, PhD**  
OD

## Program Leader

**Ravi Basavappa, PhD**  
OSC/DPCPSI/OD

## Members

**Kristin Abraham, PhD**  
NIDDK

**Hugh Auchincloss, MD**  
NIAID

**David Balshaw, PhD**  
NIEHS

**Abraham P. Bautista, PhD**  
NIAAA

**Eugene Carstea, PhD**  
CSR

**Robert H Carter, MD**  
NIAMS

**Makyba Charles-Ayinde, PhD**  
OSC/DPCPSI/OD

**Jennifer Collins, MR**  
NIEHS

**Christine Colvis, PhD**  
NCATS

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

**Emmeline Edwards, PhD**  
NCCIH

**Zeynep Erim, PhD**  
NIBIB

**Rene Etcheberrigaray, MD**  
NIA

**Lia Fleming, MPH**  
CSR

**Valerie Florance, PhD**  
NLM

**Nancy Freeman, PhD**  
NIDCR

**Gabriel Hidalgo**  
NIDCR

**Christine Hunter, PhD, ABPP**  
OBSSR/DPCPSI/OD

**Raymond Jacobson, PhD**  
CSR

**Flora Katz, PhD**  
FIC

**Anthony Kirilusha, PhD**  
NIAMS

**Susan Koester, PhD**  
NIMH

**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

**David Miller, PhD**  
NCI

**Michael Morse**  
OSC/DPCPSI/OD

**Ellie Murcia, MEd**  
OSC/DPCPSI/OD

**Imoh Okon, PhD**  
CSR

**Steven Pittenger**  
NCATS

**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**  
NIGMS

**Heidi J. Sofia, PhD**  
NHGRI

**Barbara Sorkin**  
ODS/DPCPSI/OD

**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



# High-Risk, High-Reward Research Program



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

- Complete terminal research degree or clinical training between June 1, 2020 and September 30, 2022
- 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
- Award remains in the Office of the Director



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# Application – DP5



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<b>Application Limit</b>	2 applications per institution
<b>Research Strategy Essay</b>	12 pages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scientific challenge and significance</li><li>• Innovativeness of approach</li><li>• Investigator's qualifications</li><li>• Plans for development</li></ul>
<b>Facilities &amp; Other Resources</b>	Institutional support detailed
<b>Budget Information</b>	Modular budget
<b>Letters of Collaboration</b>	Should be included
<b>Biosketch</b>	Only PI's is allowed
<b>Research Effort</b>	80% for first 2 years
<b>Letters of Reference</b>	3-5 required

# Facilities & Other Resources (Institution)



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- 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

- 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

- 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)

## **DP5 Review Procedures**

**2021-2022**

**Suzanne Ryan, Ph.D**  
**Scientific Review Officer**  
**Center for Scientific Review**  
**National Institutes of Health**  
**[ryansj@csr.nih.gov](mailto:ryansj@csr.nih.gov)**

## Review Stages

- Receipt of applications:  
[September 3, 2021](#)
- Stage 1 Review by Subject Matter Experts:  
[October-December, 2021](#)
- Editorial Board consideration:  
[January-February, 2022](#)
- Discussion and final score by Editorial Board:  
[March, 2022](#)
- Recommendation by Council of Councils, NIH:  
[May, 2022](#)



## 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

- 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 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 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.
- 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 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

- 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.
- 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.

# Early Independence Award



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## Resources

- **Early Independence Award Web site**  
<http://commonfund.nih.gov/earlyindependence/index.aspx>
- **Request for Application (RFA)**  
Funding opportunity announcement [RFA-RM-21-018](#)
- **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*



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*Budget*



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*Letters of Reference*



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*Review*



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Thank you for attending.

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For additional questions, email us at  
[earlyindependence@od.nih.gov](mailto:earlyindependence@od.nih.gov).



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