

Notice of NIH's Interest in Diversity

Notice Number: NOT-OD-20-031

Key Dates

Release Date: November 22, 2019

Related Announcements

[NOT-OD-18-210](#) Rescinded

[NOT-MH-20-051](#)

Issued by

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Purpose

NIH's mission is to seek fundamental knowledge about the nature and behavior of living systems and to apply that knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce illness and disability. To achieve this mission, NIH substantially invests in research to improve public health; it also devotes substantial resources to identify, develop, support and maintain the quality of its scientific resources, including human capital.

This diversity statement was informed by a literature review, the reports and deliberations of several internal NIH committees, as well as input from Institute and Center officials, program staff and external stakeholders.

Implementation Timeline

This notice is effective upon its release date and supersedes the prior Notice of Interest in Diversity ([NOT-OD-18-210](#)), and the current diversity language in existing funding opportunity announcements (FOAs).

Diversity Statement

Every facet of the United States scientific research enterprise—from basic laboratory research to clinical and translational research to policy formation—requires superior intellect, creativity and a wide range of skill sets and viewpoints. NIH's ability to help ensure that the nation remains a global leader in scientific discovery and innovation is dependent upon a pool of highly talented scientists from diverse backgrounds who will help to further NIH's mission.

Research shows that diverse teams working together and capitalizing on innovative ideas and distinct perspectives outperform homogenous teams. Scientists and trainees from diverse backgrounds and life experiences bring different perspectives, creativity, and individual enterprise to address complex scientific problems. There are many benefits that flow from a diverse NIH-supported scientific workforce, including: fostering scientific innovation, enhancing global competitiveness, contributing to robust learning environments, improving the quality of the research, advancing the likelihood that underserved or health disparity populations participate in, and benefit from health research, and enhancing public trust.

Underrepresented Populations in the U.S. Biomedical, Clinical, Behavioral and Social Sciences Research Enterprise

In spite of tremendous advancements in scientific research, information, educational and research opportunities are not equally available to all. NIH encourages institutions to diversify their student and faculty populations to enhance the participation of

individuals from groups that are underrepresented in the biomedical, clinical, behavioral and social sciences, such as:

- A. Individuals from racial and ethnic groups that have been shown by the National Science Foundation to be underrepresented in health-related sciences on a national basis (see data at <http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/showpub.cfm?TopID=2&SubID=27>) and the report *Women, Minorities, and Persons with Disabilities in Science and Engineering*). The following racial and ethnic groups have been shown to be underrepresented in biomedical research: Blacks or African Americans, Hispanics or Latinos, American Indians or Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders. In addition, it is recognized that underrepresentation can vary from setting to setting; individuals from racial or ethnic groups that can be demonstrated convincingly to be underrepresented by the grantee institution should be encouraged to participate in NIH programs to enhance diversity. For more information on racial and ethnic categories and definitions, see the OMB Revisions to the Standards for Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity (<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-1997-10-30/html/97-28653.htm>).
- B. Individuals with disabilities, who are defined as those with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, as described in the *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended*. See NSF data at, <https://www.nsf.gov/statistics/2017/nsf17310/static/data/tab7-5.pdf>.
- C. Individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, defined as those who meet two or more of the following criteria:
1. Were or currently are homeless, as defined by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Definition: <https://nche.ed.gov/mckinney-vento/>);
 2. Were or currently are in the foster care system, as defined by the Administration for Children and Families (Definition: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/focus-areas/foster-care/>);
 3. Were eligible for the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program for two or more years (Definition: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/income-eligibility-guidelines/>);
 4. Have/had no parents or legal guardians who completed a bachelor's degree (see <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2018/2018009.pdf>);
 5. Were or currently are eligible for Federal Pell grants (Definition: <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/fpg/eligibility.html>);
 6. Received support from the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) as a parent or child (Definition: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-eligibility-requirements>).
 7. Grew up in one of the following areas: a) a U.S. rural area, as designated by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Rural Health Grants Eligibility Analyzer (<https://data.hrsa.gov/tools/rural-health>), or b) a Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services-designated Low-Income and Health Professional Shortage Areas (qualifying zipcodes are included in the file). Only one of the two possibilities in #7 can be used as a criterion for the disadvantaged background definition.

Students from low socioeconomic (SES) status backgrounds have been shown to obtain bachelor's and advanced degrees at significantly lower rates than students from middle and high SES groups (see https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_tva.asp), and are subsequently less likely to be represented in biomedical research. For background see Department of Education data at, <https://nces.ed.gov/>; https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_tva.asp; <https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/advancing-diversity-inclusion.pdf>.

- D. Literature shows that women from the above backgrounds (categories A, B, and C) face particular challenges at the graduate level and beyond in scientific fields. (See, e.g., From the NIH: A Systems Approach to Increasing the Diversity of Biomedical Research Workforce <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5008902/>).

Women have been shown to be underrepresented in doctorate-granting research institutions at senior faculty levels in most biomedical-relevant disciplines, and may also be underrepresented at other faculty levels in some scientific disciplines (See data from the National Science Foundation National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics: Women, Minorities, and Persons with Disabilities in Science and Engineering, special report available

at <https://www.nsf.gov/statistics/2017/nsf17310/>, especially Table 9-23, describing science, engineering, and health doctorate holders employed in universities and 4-year colleges, by broad occupation, sex, years since doctorate, and faculty rank).

Upon review of NSF data, and scientific discipline or field related data, NIH encourages institutions to consider women for faculty-level, diversity-targeted programs to address faculty recruitment, appointment, retention or advancement.

Inquiries

Please direct all inquiries to:

Division of Biomedical Research Workforce

Office of Extramural Research

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