

Instructions to Reviewers for Preparing the Note on Recruitment and Retention Plan to Enhance Diversity

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In preparing the note on the recruitment and retention plan to enhance diversity please focus on racial and ethnic groups considered to be underrepresented in biomedical research: African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, Alaskan Natives, Hawaiian Natives, and natives of the U.S. Pacific Islands.¹,

NIH now also requires plans for the recruitment and retention of individuals with disabilities², and from disadvantaged backgrounds³, and you must comment on these aspects as well. Initially, the emphasis for these groups will be on the plans for recruitment and retention, with less emphasis on results.

Achievements

Give the number of students from underrepresented groups who were appointed to the training grant during the past funding period.

If the training program goes beyond the training grant, give the number of underrepresented students who participated in the parent program but were supported via other mechanisms.

The admissions and completion data for individuals from underrepresented groups (numbers of applicants, offers, matriculations, and graduations/program completions) should be specified and compared to the corresponding numbers for all students/fellows.

For new applications, information from pre-existing and relevant departmental training programs is helpful.

Efforts and Activities

Give a brief description of:

1. past, ongoing, or proposed recruitment activities undertaken specifically by this training grant program to enhance diversity of the trainee pool;
2. past, ongoing, and/or proposed institutional recruitment activities that contribute to a diverse pool of candidates for this training program;
3. past, ongoing, and/or proposed retention activities that support students or fellows from diverse backgrounds once they are enrolled and increase their completion rates.

If achievements have been limited during the previous award period, it is especially important to indicate whether the past experience has been incorporated into the formulation of the plan for the next award period and if promising new recruitment or retention activities are planned.

Conclusion

Rate the Recruitment and Retention Plans to Enhance Diversity as "Acceptable" or "Unacceptable" and justify your rating (for Acceptable ratings, the relative merit of the recruitment plans and efforts (e.g., marginal or commendable) may be indicated in your written comments).

For renewal applications, achievements may be considered in assigning priority score.

¹ It is recognized, however, that under-representation can vary from setting to setting, and individuals from racial or ethnic groups that can be convincingly demonstrated to be underrepresented by the applicant institution should be considered as well.

² Individuals with disabilities are defined as those with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

³ For graduate and postdoctoral research training programs, individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds are defined as those who come from a family with an annual income below established low-income thresholds. Thresholds are based on family size; published by the U.S. Bureau of the Census; adjusted annually for changes in the Consumer Price Index; and adjusted by the Secretary for use in all health professions programs. These income levels are periodically published at <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/index.shtml>. For individuals from low income backgrounds, the institution must be able to demonstrate that such candidates have qualified for Federal disadvantaged assistance or they have received any of the following student loans: Health Professional Student Loans (HPSL), Loans for Disadvantaged Student Program, or they have received scholarships from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under the Scholarship for Individuals with Exceptional Financial Need.

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