

## NCI Diversity Supplements Guidelines

This document applies to applications requesting research supplement funding to active National Cancer Institute (NCI) grants in response to PA-23-189. The purpose is to clarify the application process and highlight NCI-specific requirements. This document is not intended to replace the full and detailed application information in the Program Announcement:

### [Research Supplements to Promote Diversity in Health-Related Research- PA-23-189](#)

It is highly recommended that investigators reach out to the NCI Supplement Program Directors (CURESupplements@nih.gov) with any questions prior to submission. This step can provide valuable guidance and increase the chances of a successful application.

The two application receipt dates for the NCI Diversity Supplements are: October 1 – December 1 and February 1 – April 2

It's important to plan your submission accordingly to ensure your application is considered.

## 1. Enhancing Diversity

NCI Diversity Supplements support the research training of high school students through to investigator-level career stages. Supplemental awards under this announcement are limited to citizens or non-citizen nationals of the United States or to individuals who have been lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the United States (i.e., in possession of a Permanent Resident or Green card, Form I-551). This program may not be used to provide technical support to NIH-supported investigators. Each candidate may receive one diversity supplement per career level. NCI particularly encourages applications from individuals from groups identified in NIH's Notice of Interest in Diversity ([NOT-OD-20-031](#)) and consistent with the applicable Federal, State, and Local laws pursuing cancer or cancer health disparities research in the biomedical, clinical, behavioral, and social sciences, including:

- 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](#) 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. For more information on racial and ethnic categories and definitions, see [NOT-OD-15-089](#).
- 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](#).
- Individuals from financially and/or educationally disadvantaged backgrounds, particularly before graduating from high school, while residing in the United States.

Detailed eligibility criteria and diversity information may be found in the [Program Announcement](#).

## 2. ELIGIBILITY

### 2.1 Candidate

**High school and undergraduate student candidates** are expected to demonstrate **at least two years** of commitment to the supplement program. **Post-baccalaureate and post-masters individuals, and investigator candidates can apply for a maximum of two years** of support in a new supplement

application. Note: Post-baccalaureate, post-master, and post-doctoral individuals are expected to dedicate 100% effort /12 calendar months (depending on your institution), anything less will require strong justification. Investigators are required to dedicate a minimum 75% effort (9 calendar months).

***Candidates who are receiving support from a Public Health Service (PHS) agency at the time of submission are not eligible regardless of the amount of level of effort.***

This program is not designed to offer an extra or alternative form of support for individuals who already receive assistance from PHS funding mechanisms. Exceptions are graduate students and postdoctoral trainees who are supported by an institutional Kirschstein-NRSA, such as a T32, and will be ending prior to the diversity supplement start date. Applications that overlap with an institutional award or PHS funding are deemed ineligible for the diversity supplement. Additionally, candidates receiving institutional awards such as a T32 may not transfer to diversity supplement before their appointed training period is over. Applications must include the end date of the institutional award or T32 in the eligibility letter. Additionally, candidates may not be transferred to a supplement to increase the availability of funds to the parent grant for other uses. Eligible graduate students and postdoctoral fellow candidates may be supported by the parent grant for short periods after submission of the supplement application, at the recipient's risk, pending NCI decision on the supplement application. See the [Program Announcement for details](#).

For questions on eligibility, please consult your institution's sponsored research office to determine if the candidate meets the requirements.

**Note:**

- Candidates who have obtained individual research grants (e.g., K awards, R21, R00, R01 or equivalent, etc.) as the PI in the past are ineligible.
- Candidates can only receive one diversity supplement per career level. For example, a graduate student who has receive supplement support in the past cannot re-apply as a graduate student, it must be at the next career stage thus post doc.

## **2.2 Parent grant**

At the time of the supplement application, the parent grant must have at least two years of NCI support remaining. The eligible grant types are listed in the [Program Announcement](#), with the following exceptions:

- NCI does not accept the P30 as the parent grant for diversity supplement.

In addition, the following limitations apply:

- An R01 or R01-equivalent grant is allowed to support a maximum of two Diversity Supplement candidates during the project cycle. The budget requested for two supplements cannot exceed the budget of the parent award.
- An R21 or R21-equivalent grant is allowed to support a maximum of one Diversity Supplement candidate whose career level is a graduate student or more junior (thus post-baccalaureate, undergraduate, and high school).

## **2.3 Research project**

The proposed supplement project must be relevant to (contributes to, expands, or extends) the parent grant project, and the relevance needs to be explicitly explained in the application. Additionally, the project must enhance or complement the candidate's career development plan. If the parent grant has multiple research projects, the supplement project must not only be within the general scope of the parent

grant, but also be relevant to a specific project listed within the parent grant. The supplement project should not extend the scope of the parent grant.

Clinical Trials: This Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) is designed specifically for applicants proposing research that does not involve leading an independent clinical trial, a clinical trial feasibility study, or an ancillary study to a clinical trial. Applicants to this FOA are permitted to propose research experience in a clinical trial led by a mentor or co-mentor.

### 3. SALARY AND BUDGET

Please note: if awarded, **the budget period for the supplement will sync with the budget period of the parent grant during the first 12 months.** For example, as shown in Table 1, if the parent grant budget period ends on June 30 of each year, and the supplement is awarded starting March 1, then the first budget period of the supplement will be only 4 months, March 1 – June 30 of the same year, and the second budget period will be a full 12 months, July 1 – June 30 (of the following year). In addition, please note that any one budget period must be 12 months or less. Please configure your budget request accordingly. Sometimes, the program may decide to delay the supplement award for a few months because of budgetary reasons

Table 1. Example of supplement budget periods.

<b>Parent Grant Budget End Date</b>	<b>First Supplement Budget Period</b>	<b>Next Supplement Budget Periods</b>
June 30	March 1 – June 30 of the same year	July 1 – June 30 (of the following year)

For all candidates, salary and fringe benefits are allowed. F&A costs are allowed per institution policy. For budget periods that are less than 12 months, salary and fringe benefits are pro-rated; supplies and travel (with justification) are not pro-rated. Equipment purchase is not allowed unless specifically stated below. Note: Budget requests for other personnel, including statisticians, support staff, etc., are not allowed.

#### 2.1. High school students

- Salary: consistent with the institutional salary policy. Institutional salary rates for high school students which exceed the hourly minimum wage must be justified.
- Supplies and travel: not allowed.
- Encouraged to participate for at least two years.

#### 2.2. Undergraduate students

- Salary: consistent with the institutional salary policy.
- Supplies and travel: up to \$200 per month, with justification.
- Encouraged to participate for at least two years.

#### 2.3. Post-baccalaureate and post-masters degree individuals

- Salary: consistent with the institutional salary policy, but not exceeding the amount allowable for a first-year graduate student at the same institution performing comparable work. The salary will be capped at \$31,000 annually, with additional fringe.
- Supplies and travel: up to \$3,000 per year, with justification.
- Candidates are eligible to apply for a maximum of two years of support, with clear plans to apply for a doctoral degree program during those two years.

## 2.4. Graduate students

- Salary: consistent with the institutional salary policy, but the salary, fringe, and tuition together must not exceed the amount allowable for a first-year postdoctoral fellow at the same institution performing comparable work.
- Supplies and travel: up to \$4,000 per year, with justification.
- May be supported for the duration of the parent grant but typically awarded for three years or less.

## 2.5. Postdoctoral fellows

- Salary: consistent with the institutional salary policy, up to the allowable stipend amount commensurate with experience, according to the [NIH National Research Service Award policy](#)
- Supplies and travel: up to \$6,000 per year, with justification.
- May be supported for the duration of the parent grant, but no more than three years.

## 2.6. Investigators developing independent research careers

- Salary: consistent with institutional policy and the level of support provided by a NCI Career Development Award, but not to exceed \$100,000 per year, with additional fringe.
- Supplies and travel: up to \$10,000 annually, with justification.
- Allowed to apply for a maximum of two years of support.

## 2.7. Individuals with disability

- Salary, supplies, support duration, and travel: consistent with career levels as detailed above.
- Equipment: reasonable accommodations necessary for the individual to complete the proposed research training, consistent with the type of disability and the nature of the research, with justification.

## 4. APPLICATION CONTENT

Applicants should refer to the [Program Announcement](#) for information on what to include in a diversity supplement request. Work with your business office to ensure the correct forms are used. See below for further details and clarification on the information that NCI requires.

### 3.1. Principal Investigator (PI)

The PI of the parent grant is the PI of the supplement.

### 3.2. Biosketch

The application must include an up-to-date [NIH biosketch](#) of all involved personnel, including the PI, co-mentors, and the candidate. Biosketches may be up to five pages each.

### 3.3. Statement of eligibility and diversity

This document must be signed by an institutional or authorized signing official to establish the candidate's eligibility for support under this program. An SO or AOR is typically someone in the sponsored research office.

The statement must include:

- Name, title, and signatures of the PI in addition to the SO, and/or AOR.
  - Note: For multi-PI projects, the contact PI of the parent grant must sign the eligibility letter.
- Clearly indicate the U.S. citizenship or permanent residency status of the candidate.
- The candidate's intended academic/career level during the requested supplement support.
- Explicit information on the nature of the candidate's disability, circumstances, background, or characteristics that enhance the diversity of the cancer research workforce under this program.

A statement regarding the candidate's public health services (PHS) funding status such as PHS-sponsored research grant support. Any PHS funding must be indicated with the start and end dates of the grant(s) as applicable. If the candidate has not received any current or previous PHS support, please include a statement stating so. Should a candidate have an active institutional Kirschstein-NRSA, add the specific date in which the award will end.

### **3.4. For candidates who are investigators**

- The application must include a letter from the institution about the candidate's position, including the candidate's title, the duration of this position, a brief description of their responsibilities, and the extent of institutional commitment.

### **3.5. Personal statement of the candidate**

The application must include a signed personal statement of up to one page describing the candidate's career goals, both immediate and long-term. Candidates are strongly encouraged to develop and submit career-level-appropriate grant applications during or by the end of the proposed funding period.

The personal statement may be included as part A of an NIH biosketch or as a separate document.

### **3.6. Transcripts**

Transcripts of the most recent education stage are required for high school, undergraduate, post-baccalaureate, and post-masters.

### **3.7. Qualification of mentor(s)**

- If there is more than one mentor, clearly define each mentor's role and relationship to the candidate.
- Clearly describe each mentor's mentoring track record, including individuals previously mentored and their current positions, if applicable, especially the current status of any previous diversity supplement candidates.
- If the primary mentor is relatively junior, it may be helpful to include an experienced co-mentor.
- The primary mentor does not need to be the PI of the parent grant; this can be an MPI or other key personnel. However, the PI of the parent grant must be in concurrence with the supplement application.

### **3.8. Research, mentoring, and career development plan:**

A description of up to six pages that includes the following items is required:

- **Research plan:**
  - A summary or abstract and specific aims of the funded parent grant or project.
  - A description of the specific research project proposed for the supplement candidate, including relevancy to the parent grant or project, research design and aims, methods and techniques, and how the proposed experience will enhance the candidate's research potential.
    - The proposed supplement research plan must be relevant to the parent grant. For multi-component grants, the supplement must be associated with a specific research project listed in the parent grant.
- **Mentoring and career development plan:**
  - A candidate-specific career development plan consistent with the goals of the candidate's personal statement.
  - A description of career skills to be gained during the supplement experience and career-stage

appropriate benchmarks to be reached, including, but not limited to, abstract and publication submissions, oral presentations, and grants submissions.

- A detailed plan that will help the candidate transition to the next education or career stage.
- A description of planned individual meetings (such as frequency) between the candidate and each mentor.
- A timeline detailing the specific activities and benchmarks pertaining to the candidate's research goals and career development.

### **3.9. In the case of multiple institutions**

A letter of support signed by a designated institution official from each institution is required. The mentoring and career development plan must clearly indicate the logistics of communications and the impact of multiple locations on the candidate's research and career progress. If awarded, the supplement award is provided to the institute where the parent grant resides. The PI of the parent grant is ultimately responsible for the supplement.

### **3.10. Extras**

Letters of recommendation and/or support for the candidate are not required but may be included.

## **5. APPLICATION SUBMISSION**

Please follow the instructions in the [Program Announcement](#).

All supplement applications **must be** submitted electronically. It is suggested that the [NCI Supplement Program Director](#) be notified once the application is submitted.

## **6. REVIEW AND AWARD**

Supplement applications are reviewed internally at NCI based on scientific merit and training potential. For applications submitted between October 1 and December 1, funding recommendations are anticipated in March; for applications submitted between February 1 and March 31, funding recommendations are anticipated in June.

## **7. POST AWARD PROCEDURES**

### **6.1. Supplement progress reports**

#### **6.1.1. Annual supplement progress reports**

- Annual supplement progress reports are due at least once per 12 months. Once awarded, supplements will align with the parent grant's budget periods.
- **Annual supplement progress reports must be submitted each year when the parent grant progress report is submitted through the RPPR.**
- **Recipients are strongly encouraged to generate progress reports via CareerTrac to facilitate progress report generation and program analysis.**
  - The generated pdf file of the progress report should be attached to section G.1 of the parent grant RPPR. If the supplement progress report submission is late, it should be submitted to the NCI supplement program director with institution approval.

#### **6.1.2. Final supplement progress reports**

Final supplement progress reports are due within 120 days of the supplement's completion. PIs are strongly encouraged to generate the final supplement progress report through CareerTrac in the same fashion as the annual progress reports. They should be attached to section G.1 of the parent grant RPPR. If late, they may be sent to the NCI supplement program director with institution approval.

### 6.1.3. Additional progress reports

In addition to annual supplement progress reports, NCI may request interim progress reports during a budget period to help ensure candidates' progress along their chosen trajectory.

### 6.2. Early Termination of Supplement Awards

The PI is strongly encouraged to notify NCI **about a supplement award termination as soon as possible**. The termination must be reported in the next RPPR of the parent grant, and a final supplement progress report, as described in 6.1.2, must be submitted. Unobligated funds at the time of termination will be returned to NCI. Diversity supplements *cannot* be transferred from one candidate to another.

### 6.3. Changes in Supplement Awards

A Diversity Supplement is specific to the parent grant and the candidate. If either change, the supplement must be terminated. If the parent grant PI or candidate changes institutions, the PI and the candidate should contact the [NCI Supplement Program Director](#) to discuss options.

Any changes to the proposed research need a prior approval, the PI and the candidate should contact the NCI parent grant program director and the NCI Supplement Program Director at [CUREsupplements@nih.gov](mailto:CUREsupplements@nih.gov).

## 8. EXTENSIONS

### 7.1. Cost extensions

Cost extension requests may be made only under extenuating circumstances, provided adequate time remains on the parent grant. An application for a cost extension is **not** permissible when the parent grant is on a no-cost extension. If approved, cost extensions are awarded for a maximum of one year. Support for a cost extension is not guaranteed.

[NCI Supplement Program Director](#) must be informed of the intent to apply for a cost extension **at least six months before the end of the supplement award**. Cost extension requests must be submitted during the two application receipt periods for new supplement applications.

A cost extension application must include the following:

- Cover letter signed by PI, including time period and reason for extension.
- Face page (PHS 398), with all the required signatures.
- Updated budget and budget justification forms.
- Annual supplement progress report of the candidate during the preceding funding period, including both research and career development, as described in 6.1.1.
- A detailed description of what the candidate will be doing during the extension period.
- Updated mentoring and career development plan, including an updated timeline for research progress and career development, if applicable.

All Cost extension requests must be submitted through eRA commons.

Important considerations for the funding decision of a cost extension application include how much progress the candidate has made and how the extension may help further the candidate's career progress, which may be reflected by publications, grant submissions, or education progress.

### 7.2. No-cost extensions

No-cost extensions are allowed on NCI diversity supplements provided adequate time remains on the

parent grant. The [NIH Standard Terms of Award](#) provide the recipient with the authority to extend the final budget period of a previously approved project period one time for up to 12 months beyond the original expiration date in the Notice of Award. One-time no-cost extensions are requested via the eRA commons, as noted [here](#).

***In the case of a no-cost extension, an annual supplement progress report as described in 6.1.1 is required on or before the original supplement award end date. [Submit](#) the progress report with institution approval to the NCI Supplement Program Director.***

If a no-cost extension is associated with carryover funds, a request needs to be submitted to the NCI Supplement Program Director including the amount of carryover, the reason for the carryover, and plans for spending the carryover.

## **9. NCI PROGRAM STAFF CONTACT**

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