

## Notice of NIH's Interest in Diversity

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Notice Number: NOT-OD-15-053

### Key Dates

**Release Date:** January 12, 2015

### Related Announcements

[NOT-OD-15-089](#)

### 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.

The purpose of this notice is to provide an updated diversity statement that describes NIH's interest in the diversity of the NIH-funded workforce. 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; however, existing funding opportunity announcements (FOA) with diversity statement language will continue to use existing language for the duration of the FOA.

## 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 researchers, 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 identified as 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.
- 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, [http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/wmpd/2013/pdf/tab7-5\\_updated\\_2014\\_10.pdf](http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/wmpd/2013/pdf/tab7-5_updated_2014_10.pdf).
- C. Individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, defined as:
  1. Individuals who come from a family with an annual income below established low-income thresholds. These 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. The Secretary periodically publishes these income levels at <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/index.shtml>.
  2. Individuals who come from an educational environment such as that found in certain rural or inner-city environments that has demonstrably and directly inhibited the individual from obtaining the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to develop and participate in a research career.

The disadvantaged background category (C1 and C2) is applicable to programs focused on high school and undergraduate candidates.

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., Inside the Double Bind, A Synthesis of Empirical Research on Undergraduate and Graduate Women of Color in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics <http://her.hepg.org/content/t022245n7x4752v2/fulltext.pdf>).

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 <http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/wmpd/2013/sex.cfm>, especially the table describing science, engineering, and health doctorate holders employed in universities and 4-year colleges, by broad occupation, sex, years since doctorate, and faculty rank (Table 9-23 of Special Report NSF 13-304 from 2013).)

Upon review of NSF data, and scientific discipline or field related data, NIH institutes, centers, and offices may include women as eligible candidates in faculty-level, diversity-targeted programs to address faculty recruitment, appointment, retention or advancement. This option is not available for funding opportunities that do not directly provide structured opportunities for advancement (i.e., Diversity Supplement).

## Inquiries

Please direct all inquiries to:

Lisa Evans, JD  
Scientific Workforce Diversity Officer  
Office of Extramural Programs  
Email: [evansl@od.nih.gov](mailto:evansl@od.nih.gov)