

***Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award
Institutional Research Training Grant (T32)
HRSA-11-054***

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Purpose

What is the purpose of the Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award (NRSA) Institutional Training Grants?

The Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award (NRSA) Institutional Training Grants, also referred to as T32 grants, administered by HRSA, are awarded to eligible institutions to develop or enhance postdoctoral research training opportunities for individuals who are planning to pursue careers in primary care research. The primary objective of the HRSA administered T32 program is to prepare qualified individuals for careers that will have significant impact on the nation's primary care research agenda and to ensure that a diverse and highly trained workforce is available to assume leadership roles in the area of primary medical care research.

Who are the eligible applicants for receipt of NRSA funds?

Eligible applicants are those entities that have received a grant under title VII, section 747 of the Public Health Service (PHS) Act designed to prepare the primary health care workforce. These entities include: public or non-profit private hospitals; schools of allopathic or osteopathic medicine; schools of dentistry; approved residency programs in general or pediatric dentistry; approved advanced education programs in general or pediatric dentistry; academically affiliated physician assistant training programs; or a public or private non-profit entity doing primary medical care research.

Are there eligibility requirements for program directors?

Program Directors must be affiliated with an entity that trains primary care providers in medicine or dentistry and has received federal support as evidenced by receipt of a title VII, section 747 grant designed to prepare the primary care, and oral health workforce. Individuals with the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to organize and implement a high quality primary medical care research training program are invited to work with their institution as the director of the NRSA research training program in order to develop an application for support. Individuals from under-represented groups as well as individuals with disabilities are always encouraged to pursue leadership positions within their institutions. The NRSA research training program director at the institution will be responsible for the selection and appointment of trainees to the NRSA research training grant and for the overall direction, management, and administration of the program.

Are there trainee eligibility requirements?

Trainees appointed to the research training program must have the opportunity to carry out supervised primary medical care research with the primary objective of developing or extending their research skills and knowledge in preparation for a research career.

An individual to be trained must be a citizen or non-citizen national of the United States or have been lawfully admitted to the U.S. for permanent residence (i.e., in possession of a currently valid Alien Registration Receipt Card I-551, or some other legal verification of such status) at the time of the appointment. Non-citizen nationals are generally persons

born in outlying possessions of the United States (e.g., American Samoa and Swains Island). Individuals on temporary or student visas are not eligible.

WHAT KINDS OF DEGREES QUALIFY FOR PARTICIPATION IN NRSA?

Postdoctoral trainees must have received, as of the beginning date of the NRSA appointment, a Ph.D., M.D., D.O., D.D.S., D.M.D., or comparable doctoral degree from an accredited domestic or foreign institution. Documentation by an authorized official of the degree-granting institution certifying all degree requirements have been met prior to the beginning date of training is acceptable.

Trainees may **not** accept NRSA support for clinical training that is a part of residency training leading to certification in a medical or dental specialty or subspecialty. It is permissible and encouraged, however, for clinicians to engage in NRSA supported full-time, postdoctoral research training even when that experience is creditable toward certification by a specialty or subspecialty board.

Trainees are required to pursue their research training on a full-time basis, devoting at least 40 hours per week to the program except in cases of disability or pressing family need. Within the 40 hours per week training period, research trainees who are also clinicians must devote their time to the proposed research training and must confine clinical duties to those that are an integral part of the research training experience.

Summary of Funding

Why is the NRSA program important to the Federal Government?

The NRSA grant awards will support institutions to recruit and support postdoctoral trainees to gain experience in applying research methods to systematic analyses and evaluation of primary medical care issues. Grants are awarded to facilitate the training of primary care researchers in the problems, methods, and settings that have been, to date, inadequately pursued and utilized in the United States. The NRSA Program is seeking to recruit individuals and faculty from diverse backgrounds, who are from socially and culturally competent training programs and have committed themselves to primary care research. It is important that the trainees should have 2 years of primary care research training. The ultimate goal is to assist all Americans in gaining access to primary medical care.

The ultimate goal in awarding these grants is to increase the numbers of individuals qualified and willing to conduct research in primary medical care and thereby generate the required knowledge to assist all Americans in gaining access to primary medical care.

The primary objective of the NRSA program is to prepare qualified individuals for careers that significantly impact the nation's primary care research agenda. Within the framework of the program's longstanding commitment to excellence and projected need for investigators in particular areas of research, attention must be given to recruiting individuals with proven experience in biomedical and behavioral sciences.

Other considerations relate to the duration of training and the transition of trainees to individual support mechanisms. Studies have shown that the length of the appointment to a training grant for postdoctoral trainees with health professional degrees strongly correlates with subsequent application for and receipt of independent research support. It has also been shown that transition to independent support is related to career success in research. Training grant program directors, therefore, should limit appointments to individuals who are committed to a career in primary care research and willing to devote at least two years to research training.

How is NRSA funded?

One percent of the annual National Institutes of Health's (NIH) NRSA budget supports this program. While funding is dependent on the amount of appropriated funds for the NIH NRSA program, it is anticipated that approximately \$7,500,000 will be available to HRSA annually to fund awards with project periods of up to five years in duration starting on July 1, 2011 and ending on June 30, 2015. Because the nature and scope of the proposed research training will vary, it is anticipated that the amount per award will vary.

What is the funding period?

The funding period is five years—2011 - 2015. A well-justified budget must be presented for each of the five years.

Is there a limit on the amount of funds that can be requested for each of the five years?

Yes, there is a \$400,000 per year limit per NRSA applicant for direct and indirect costs.

TRAINEE SUPPORT

What is the training support that can be funded under NRSA?

The program funds stipends, tuition, fees and other related costs associated with research training. Other training supports are listed on pages 10 – 14 of the NRSA Guidance..

Are the stipend payments the same as last year?

At the release of this guidance and the NRSA Questions and Answers, the funding levels for FY 2011 stipend payments have not been established. If the funding levels change before grant award, the stipend payments will be adjusted to reflect the new changes.

ELIGIBLE USE OF FUNDS

What is the maximum amount of funds that can be requested?

Applicants may request no more than \$400,000 per year for each year of the 5 year project periods.

Is carry forward of grant funds beyond the 5-year period permissible?

A carry forward is permissible. However, you must have HRSA's approval for the carry forward.

APPLICATION SPECIFICS

Will special program consideration be given to applications?

Special consideration may be given to applicants that recruit individuals from groups currently under-represented in the biomedical and behavioral sciences, such as: individuals from under-represented racial and ethnic groups, individuals with disabilities, and individual from socially, culturally, economically, or educational disadvantaged back grounds that have inhibited their ability to pursue a career in primary care research.

National HIV/AIDS Strategy

The new National HIV/AIDS Strategy (NHAS) has three primary goals: 1) reducing the number of people who become infected with HIV, 2) increasing access to care and optimizing health outcomes for people living with HIV, and 3) reducing HIV-related health disparities. The NHAS states that more must be done to ensure that new prevention methods are identified and that prevention resources are more strategically deployed. Further, the NHAS recognizes the importance of getting people with HIV into care early after infection to protect their health and reduce their potential of transmitting the virus to others. HIV disproportionately affects people who have less access to prevention and treatment services and, as a result, often have poorer health outcomes. Therefore, the NHAS advocates adopting community-level approaches to reduce HIV infection in high-risk communities and reduce stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV.

To ensure success, the NHAS requires the Federal government and State, tribal and local governments to increase collaboration, efficiency, and innovation. Therefore, to the extent possible, program activities should strive to support the three primary goals of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy.

More information can be found at

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/onap/nhas>.

Developing and Submitting the Grant Application

When are the applications due?

The applications are due on March 11, 2011 at 8:00 PM EST.

What should be included in the Program Abstract?

Provide a program abstract of the application. The abstract is often distributed to provide information to the public and Congress, please prepare it so that it is clear, accurate, concise manner and without reference to other parts of the application. It must include a brief description of the proposed program including the needs to be addressed, the proposed services and the population group(s) to be served.

Please place the following at the top of the abstract.

Project Title

Applicant name

Address

Contact Phone Numbers (Voice, Fax)

E-Mail Address

Web Site Address. if applicable

The project abstract must be single-spaced and limited to one page in length.

i. Program Narrative

This section provides a comprehensive framework and description of all aspects of the proposed program. It should be succinct, self-explanatory and well organized so that reviewers can understand the proposed project.

Use the following section headers for the Narrative for your proposal:

- **INTRODUCTION**
This section should briefly describe the purpose of the proposed project.
- **NEEDS ASSESSMENT**
This section outlines the needs for primary care research and for the proposed program by the applicant organization. The target population must be described and documented in this section. Research and demographic data should be used and cited whenever possible to support the information provided. Please discuss any relevant barriers that the project hopes to overcome. This section should help reviewers understand the larger need and how this project will address the need.
- **METHODOLOGY**
Propose methods that will be used to meet each of the previously-described program requirements and expectations in this grant announcement.
- **WORK PLAN**
Describe the activities or steps that will be used to achieve each of the activities proposed in the methodology section. Use a time line that includes each activity and identifies responsible staff.

- **RESOLUTION OF CHALLENGES**

Discuss challenges that are likely to be encountered in designing and implementing the activities described in the Work Plan, and approaches that will be used to resolve such challenges.

- **EVALUATION AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT CAPACITY**

Describe current experience, skills, and knowledge, including individuals on staff, materials published, and previous work of a similar nature. Please review the evaluation plan for adequacy, and that it is sufficiently detailed to track career outcomes of trainees and determine if the program is successful. Does it include a system for tracking participants following program completion, such as publications, grant proposals and awards, and career trajectory of supported trainees?

- **ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION**

Provide information on the applicant agency's current mission and structure, scope of current activities, and an organizational chart, and describe how these all contribute to the ability of the organization to conduct the program requirements and meet program expectations. A Project Organizational Chart should be submitted as Attachment 3.

Are there review criteria?

Yes there are 4 review criteria. All should be addressed in your application?

- Criterion 1 (history of performance of faculty and trainees) = 30 pts
- Criterion 2 (primary care research focus) = 30 pts
- Criterion 3 (trainee recruitment and retention) = 25 pts
- Criterion 4 (cultural and logistics) = 15 pts

How should the applications be submitted?

Applicants submitting for this funding opportunity are *required* to submit *electronically* through Grants.gov. To submit an application electronically, please use the <http://www.Grants.gov> apply site. When using Grants.gov you will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it off-line, and then upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov site.

It is essential that your organization *immediately register* in Grants.gov and become familiar with the Grants.gov site application process. If you do not complete the registration process, you will be unable to submit an application. The registration process can take up to one month.

Refer to HRSA's *Electronic Submission User Guide*, available online at <http://www.hrsa.gov/grants/userguide.htm>, for detailed application and submission instructions. Pay particular attention to Section 2 that provides detailed information on the competitive application and submission process.

How will I know that I have completed all the required actions? Grants.gov?

To be able to successfully register in Grants.gov, it is necessary that you complete all of the following required actions:

- Obtain an organizational Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number
- Register the organization with Central Contractor Registry (CCR)
- Identify the organization's E-Business Point of Contact (E-Biz POC)
- Confirm the organization's CCR "Marketing Partner ID Number (M-PIN)" password
- Register an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR)
- Obtain a username and password from the Grants.gov Credential Provider

Applicants must submit proposals according to the instructions in the Guide and in this funding opportunity announcement in conjunction with Standard Form 424 Research and Related (SF-424 R&R). The forms contain additional general information and instructions for applications, proposal narratives, and budgets. The forms and instructions may be obtained from the following site by:

- (1) Downloading from www.grants.gov, or
- (2) Contacting the HRSA Grants Application Center at:
910 Clopper Road
Suite 155 South
Gaithersburg, MD 20878
Telephone: 877-477-2123
HRSAGAC@hrsa.gov

It is incumbent on applicants to ensure that the AOR is available to submit the application to HRSA by the published due date. HRSA will not accept submission or re-submission of incomplete, rejected, or otherwise delayed applications after the deadline. Therefore, you are urged to submit your application in advance of the deadline. If your application is rejected by Grants.gov due to errors, you must correct the application and resubmit it to Grants.gov before the deadline date and time.

How will I know if my electronic application has been successfully submitted? Applications completed online are considered formally submitted when the application has been successfully transmitted electronically by your organization's AOR through Grants.gov and has been validated by Grants.gov on or before the deadline date and time.

How can I submit an application if I can't send it electronically?

All applicants *must* submit **their applications electronically** unless they obtain a written exemption from this requirement in advance by the Director of HRSA's Division of Grants Policy. Applicants must request an exemption in writing from DGPWaivers@hrsa.gov, and provide details as to why they are technologically unable to submit electronically through the Grants.gov portal. Your email must include the HRSA announcement number for which you are seeking relief, the name, address, and telephone number of the organization and the name and telephone number of the Project

Director, as well as the Grants.gov Tracking Number (GRANTXXXX) assigned to your submission, along with a copy of the “Rejected with Errors” notification you received from Grants.gov. **HRSA and its Grants Application Center (GAC) will only accept paper applications from applicants that received prior written approval.** However, the application must still be submitted under the deadline.

What are the application format requirements?

The total size of all uploaded files may not exceed the equivalent of 50 pages when printed by HRSA, or a total file size of 10 MB. This 50-page limit includes the abstract, project and budget narratives, attachments, and letters of commitment and support. Standard OMB-approved forms are NOT included in the page limit.

Applications that exceed the specified limits (approximately 7 MB, or 50 pages when printed by HRSA) will be deemed non-responsive. Non-responsive applications will not be considered under this funding announcement.

How can I obtain help if needed?

Instructions on how to register, tutorials and FAQs are available on the Grants.gov web site at www.grants.gov. Assistance is also available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (excluding Federal holidays) from the Grants.gov help desk at support@grants.gov or by phone at 1-800-518-4726.

How can I track my applications?

It is incumbent on the applicant to track application status by using the Grants.gov tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) provided in the confirmation email from Grants.gov. More information about tracking your application can be found at <http://www07.grants.gov/applicants/resources.jsp>.

How do I formally submit my application?

Applicants submitting for this funding opportunity are **required** to submit **electronically** through Grants.gov. To submit an application electronically, please use the <http://www.Grants.gov> apply site. When using Grants.gov you will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it off-line, and then upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov site.

Instructions on how to register, tutorials and FAQs are available on the Grants.gov web site at www.grants.gov. Assistance is also available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (excluding Federal holidays) from the Grants.gov help desk at support@grants.gov or by phone at 1-800-518-4726.

How do I know when my application will be formally submitted?

application: Applications completed online are considered formally submitted when the application has been successfully transmitted electronically by your organization’s AOR

through Grants.gov and has been validated by Grants.gov on or before the deadline date and time.

Instructions on how to register, tutorials and FAQs are available on the Grants.gov web site at www.grants.gov. Assistance is also available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (excluding Federal holidays) from the Grants.gov help desk at support@grants.gov or by phone at 1-800-518-4726.

What will happen if my application is late?

The Chief Grants management Officer (CGM)) or designee may authorize an extension of published deadlines when justified by circumstances such as natural disasters (e.g., floods or hurricanes) or other disruptions of services such as a prolonged blackout. The CGMO or designee will determine the effective geographical areas.

Applications that do not meet the criteria and not submitted on time will be considered late and will not be considered in the current competition.

Review and Selection Process

How will my application be reviewed?

The Division of Independent Review is responsible for managing objective reviews within HRSA. Applications competing for federal funds receive an objective and independent review performed by a committee of experts qualified by training and experience in particular fields or disciplines related to the program being reviewed. In selecting review committee members, other factors in addition to training and experience may be considered to improve the balance of the committee, e.g., geographic distribution. Each reviewer is screened to avoid conflicts of interest and is responsible for providing an objective, unbiased evaluation based on the review criteria noted above. The committee provides expert advice on the merits of each application to program officials responsible for final selections for award.

Applications that pass the initial HRSA eligibility screening will be reviewed and rated by a panel based on the program elements and review criteria presented in relevant sections of this program announcement. The review criteria are designed to enable the review panel to assess the quality of a proposed project and determine the likelihood of its success. The criteria are closely related to each other and are considered as a whole in judging the overall quality of an application.

APPLICATION RESULTS

Will we receive the results of the application?

Each applicant will receive written notification. This notice will include the results of the peer review process and whether or not the application was selected for funding..