



U.S. DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES



National Institute
on Aging

Finding Your Way— Resources for Early Career Researchers *Tips from the National Institute on Aging*

Entry of new investigators into the ranks of independent, NIH-funded researchers is essential to the health of this country's biomedical research enterprise...

From the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Statement of Commitment to New and Early Stage Investigators

The National Institute on Aging's (NIA) mission is to improve the health and well-being of older people through biological, clinical, and social and behavioral research. Part of this mission is to train and develop scientists who one day may become leaders in the field of aging research.

NIA supports four divisions of extramural research. The division that most closely matches your research interest may be able to offer guidance about funding and training opportunities specific to your area of expertise.

Division of Aging Biology (DAB) focuses on understanding molecular, genetic, cellular, and physiological mechanisms underlying the processes of aging and age-related changes in humans and in animal models. For more information, contact: DABquery@nia.nih.gov.

Division of Behavioral and Social Research (DBSR) supports research on aging at the individual and population levels. DBSR examines how people change over the adult life course and the societal impact of changing age demographics. For more information, contact: DBSRquery@nia.nih.gov.

Division of Geriatrics and Clinical Gerontology (DGCG) investigates factors contributing to health and disease in older people and over the course of the human lifespan. This includes looking at aging's relationship to health outcomes and funding clinical trials. For more information, contact: DGCGquery@nia.nih.gov.

Division of Neuroscience (DN) seeks to understand the neural and behavioral processes associated with the aging nervous system. DN also supports biological, clinical, and epidemiological studies of Alzheimer's disease and other neurodegenerative diseases associated with aging. NIA is legislatively designated as the lead Federal agency for Alzheimer's research. For more information, contact: DNquery@nia.nih.gov.

Contact **Division of Extramural Activities (DEA)** for general information about research supported by NIA and answers to your grant-related questions. If it is unclear what division to contact regarding your research interest, DEA can help direct you to the right NIA program area.

Email: DEAquery@nia.nih.gov
Phone: 1-301-496-9322

NIA Career Development and Training Opportunities

NIA has several programs to support predoctoral and postdoctoral fellows and clinically trained individuals interested in studying aging processes, age-related diseases, and the special problems and needs of older people. The Institute also hosts an annual professional development workshop that teaches skills critical for becoming a successful, federally funded scientist. The research and funding section of NIA's website has the most current information about opportunities and application deadlines: www.nia.nih.gov/research.

The following selection of grants and training opportunities may be of particular interest to early career scientists.

Funding opportunities

The **NIH Office of Extramural Research (OER)** has complete information on the grants process, including application forms and information on grant policies. OER's website includes the NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts, a searchable database of all of NIH's Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs), Requests for Applications (RFAs), and Policy Notices: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/oer.htm>.

Mentored Career Development Awards (K-awards) are available for junior to mid-career faculty with a health professional doctorate who are interested in basic, clinical, and translational research, in areas related to the NIA mission. K-awards can also support postdoctoral fellows within 4 years of their doctorate and junior faculty who are developing or expanding their research program in the area of aging and geriatrics. See www.nia.nih.gov/research/dea/research-career-development-awards.

Paul B. Beeson Career Development Award Program (K08 and K23) supports career development of clinically trained faculty who are committed to basic, patient-oriented, or translational aging research. The program is co-sponsored by NIA with the John A. Hartford Foundation and the American Federation for Aging Research. See <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-AG-15-016.html> (K08) and <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-AG-15-017.html> (K23).

Predocctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowship Awards (F-awards, also known as National Research Service Awards, or NRSA) support individual predoctoral (F30, F31) and postdoctoral (F32) projects for those working on a research or health professional doctorate. Fellowships provide a stipend, tuition and fees, and training-related expenses. The NIA F30 award supports students in combined MD-PhD programs. Additional NRSA awards include the Individual Predocctoral Fellowships to Promote Diversity in Health-Related Research (F31) and the NRSA for Senior Fellows (F33). See http://grants.nih.gov/training/F_files_nrsa.htm. In addition, NIA's Aging Research Dissertation Awards to Increase Diversity (R36) support individuals completing their doctoral work. See <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-13-152.html>.

Institutional Training Grants (T-awards) are awarded to institutions to support annual or short-term (summer) research and training opportunities for predoctoral, postdoctoral, or medical students. See www.nia.nih.gov/research/dea/research-training-and-career-award-support.

Tutorials on grant writing

"All About Grants" tutorials help investigators plan and write grant applications and manage their awards. See www.niaid.nih.gov/researchfunding/grant/pages/aag.aspx.

Medical Student Training in Aging Research (MSTAR) Program (T35) encourages medical students, particularly those interested in research, to consider a career in academic geriatrics. NIA partners with the American Federation for Aging Research and several foundations to offer 8- to 12-week MSTAR Program scholarships to first and second year medical students, providing hands-on and didactic research training in aging and geriatrics. See www.afar.org/research/funding/mstar.

Grants for Early Medical/Surgical Specialists' Transition to Aging Research (GEMSSTAR) (R03) provide a first independent research award to physicians who have recently completed training in their medical or surgical sub-specialty and who wish to pursue research in aging-related aspects of their sub-specialty. Competitive applicants must secure additional support to pursue a professional development plan in order to receive the R03 award. See <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-AG-15-007.html> and www.nia.nih.gov/research/dgcb/grants-early-medical-surgical-specialists-transition-aging-research-gemsstar.

Research Project Grants (R01) support projects performed by an independent investigator (or investigators) in an area representing his/her (their) specific interests and competencies. Providing R01 support to new and early-stage investigators is one of NIA's highest priorities. NIA, like many other NIH Institutes, provides an advantage in the funding line for new and early-stage investigator R01 applications relative to established investigator applications. NIA policies in support of new and early-stage investigators can be found at www.nia.nih.gov/research/dea/funding-policies. If you are not sure whether you

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are considered a new or early-stage investigator, see NIH's definition at http://grants.nih.gov/grants/new_investigators/index.htm.

Training opportunity

NIA Butler-Williams Scholars Program, formerly the Summer Institute on Aging Research, is an intensive week-long program to provide fellows and junior faculty with an introduction to many aspects of aging research. Scholars learn from the Institute's scientists and grantees about NIA's research priorities, as well as topics such as designing effective research projects, applying for funding, and addressing challenges related to the conduct of rigorous aging health disparities research. The program brings together researchers from underrepresented groups and those interested in research on aging and health disparities. See www.nia.nih.gov/about/events/2014/butler-williams-scholars-program-2015.

NIA's Intramural Research Program, located in Baltimore, Maryland, offers laboratory, clinical, and epidemiological research experiences for postbaccalaureate and postdoctoral candidates interested in aging, ranging from summer internships to multiyear fellowships. Fellows attend NIA scientific seminars and can compete in the annual NIH-wide Fellows Award for Research Excellence. See www.grc.nia.nih.gov/training.

Other Federal Funding for Health Research

Depending on your research interest, you may find funding opportunities from other Institutes and Centers at NIH, as well as from various components of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Many funding opportunities offered through the Federal Government can be found at www.grants.gov.

- Learn about Institutes and Centers at NIH: www.nih.gov/icd
- Learn about Operating Divisions at HHS: www.hhs.gov/about/foa/opdivs

Here are some examples of other funding and training opportunities at HHS:

Administration for Community Living (ACL) supports projects to develop a comprehensive, coordinated, and cost-effective system of home- and community-based services helping older people maintain their health and independence. See http://acl.gov/Funding_Opportunities.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) supports Prevention Research Centers, a network that conducts applied public health research, www.cdc.gov/prc. Also, in partnership with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, The Atlantic Philanthropies, the John A. Hartford Foundation, the Gerontological Society of America and its National Hartford Centers for Gerontological Nursing Excellence, and the Veterans Health Administration, CDC helps support the Health and Aging Policy Fellows Program, www.healthandagingpolicy.org.

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) offers researchers and other healthcare professionals a broad range of quantitative information on their programs, including estimates of future Medicare and Medicaid spending or enrollment, current spending, and claims data. CMS also conducts demonstration projects to explore alternative policies of healthcare coverage and delivery. See www.cms.gov.

Gerontological Society of America, American Society on Aging, and The American Geriatrics Society

The Gerontological Society of America (GSA), American Society on Aging (ASA), and The American Geriatrics Society are three membership organizations with a focus on aging research and geriatric care. Each hosts an annual professional meeting and offers a variety of training resources and information-sharing opportunities. They have special student memberships and a section dedicated to providing professional development for students and early career professionals in aging.

Learn more about GSA's Emerging Scholar and Professional Organization at www.geron.org/44-membership/emerging-scholar-and-professional-organization.

Learn more about ASA's The Students and Emerging Professionals Group at www.asaging.org/students-and-emerging-professionals-step-group.

Learn more about AGS's student and resident e-membership at www.americangeriatrics.org/join/member_benefits/benefits_for_students_residents_fellows_in_training.

For more information about health and aging, contact:

National Institute on Aging Information Center
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