



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

National Institute on Aging's (NIA) mission is to improve the health and well-being of older people through basic, 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 basic 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](mailto:DABquery@nia.nih.gov).

**Division of Behavioral and Social Research (DBSR)** supports basic 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](mailto: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](mailto: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 basic, clinical, and epidemiological studies of Alzheimer's disease and other neurodegenerative diseases associated with aging. NIA is legislatively designated as the lead Federal agency on Alzheimer's research. For more information, contact: [DNquery@nia.nih.gov](mailto: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](mailto:DEAquery@nia.nih.gov)  
Phone: 1-301-496-9322

## NIA Opportunities for New Investigators

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. NIA also hosts a 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](http://www.nia.nih.gov/research).

The following is a selection of grants and training that might 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 5 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/nia-new-and-early-stage-investigators](http://www.nia.nih.gov/research/dea/nia-new-and-early-stage-investigators).

**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-14-013.html> (K08) and <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-AG-14-014.html> (K23).

**Predocutorial 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 Predocutorial 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](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](http://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](http://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](http://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-14-010.html>.

**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](http://www.nia.nih.gov/research/dea/funding-policies). If you are not sure whether you are considered a

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new or early-stage investigator, see NIH's definition at [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/new\\_investigators/index.htm](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, including 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/2013/butler-williams-scholars-program-2014](http://www.nia.nih.gov/about/events/2013/butler-williams-scholars-program-2014).

**NIA's Intramural Research Program**, located in Baltimore, Maryland, offers a variety of 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](http://www.grc.nia.nih.gov/training).

## **Federal Support for Funding Aging Research Outside of NIA**

**Administration for Community Living (ACL)**, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), 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](http://acl.gov/Funding_Opportunities).

**Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)**, part of HHS, has a mission to improve the quality, safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of health care for all Americans. See [www.ahrq.gov](http://www.ahrq.gov).

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Healthy Aging Initiative** hosts the Prevention Research Centers Healthy Aging Research Network to assist in developing a national research and dissemination agenda related to the public health aspects of healthy aging. See [www.cdc.gov/aging/han](http://www.cdc.gov/aging/han). Additionally, CDC, part of HHS, in partnership with The Atlantic Philanthropies foundation, supports a Health and Aging Policy Fellow. See [www.healthandagingpolicy.org](http://www.healthandagingpolicy.org).

**Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)**, part of HHS, administers the Medicare program and monitors State Medicaid programs. 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](http://www.cms.gov).

**Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Aging Initiative** is a Federal effort to protect the environmental health of older people. As part of this Initiative, the EPA funds a variety of related projects, listed online, at [www.epa.gov/aging/funding.htm](http://www.epa.gov/aging/funding.htm).

### **Gerontological Society of America & American Society on Aging**

The Gerontological Society of America (GSA) and American Society on Aging (ASA) are two membership organizations with a focus on aging research. Each hosts an annual professional meeting and offers a variety of training resources and information-sharing opportunities. Both 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/Students](http://www.geron.org/Students). Learn more about ASA's The Students and Emerging Professionals Group at [www.asaging.org/students-and-emerging-professionals-step-group](http://www.asaging.org/students-and-emerging-professionals-step-group).

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**For more information about health and aging, contact:**

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Gaithersburg, MD 20898-8057  
1-800-222-2225 (toll-free)  
1-800-222-4225 (TTY/toll-free)  
[www.nia.nih.gov](http://www.nia.nih.gov)  
[www.nia.nih.gov/espanol](http://www.nia.nih.gov/espanol)

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