

NIH Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH)



NIH EXCEPTIONAL RESEARCH SCIENTIST AWARD

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#ResearchForWomen

CONCEPT CLEARANCE

Concept Clearance: New

Title: NIH Exceptional Research Scientist Award

Objective/Purpose: To encourage development of stable research career opportunities for exceptional non-tenured scientists positioned to make outstanding contributions to NIH-funded biomedical, clinical, behavioral, or social science related research programs

Funds Available and Anticipated Number of Awards: Contingent upon NIH appropriations

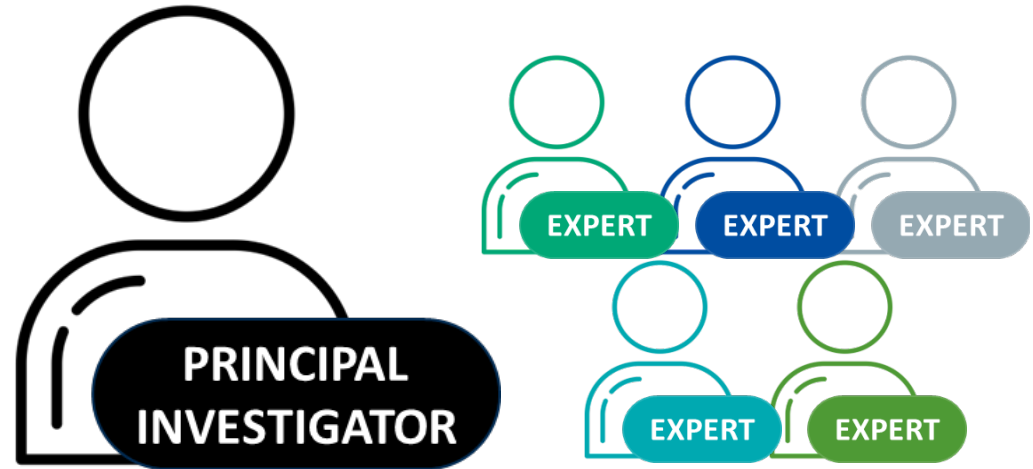
Award Project Period: 5 years

Committee Action: Vote for approval of the concept for NIH Exceptional Research Scientist Award

BACKGROUND: RESEARCH SCIENTISTS ARE AN INCREASINGLY VITAL PART OF THE RESEARCH ENTERPRISE



TEAM  SCIENCE



Increased impact and innovation

Enhanced productivity

Improved problem-solving

Growing need for research scientists as science becomes increasingly reliant on teams and core facilities

Exceptional research scientists provide continuity, stability and detailed scientific knowledge beyond that of trainee or technician

Support for non-tenure, non-traditional PI roles is needed to attract and retain exceptional research scientists

NIH STRATEGIC PLAN FOR RESEARCH ON THE HEALTH OF WOMEN GOAL 3: TRAINING & EDUCATION

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Strategic Goal 3:

Foster women scientists' career development and promote scientific workforce training and education that advances the health of women and the science of sex and gender influences.

Objective 3:

Support and develop programs to recruit, support, retain, facilitate re-entry of, and advance women at all stages of their research careers, from early career to leadership positions, especially mid-career scientists.



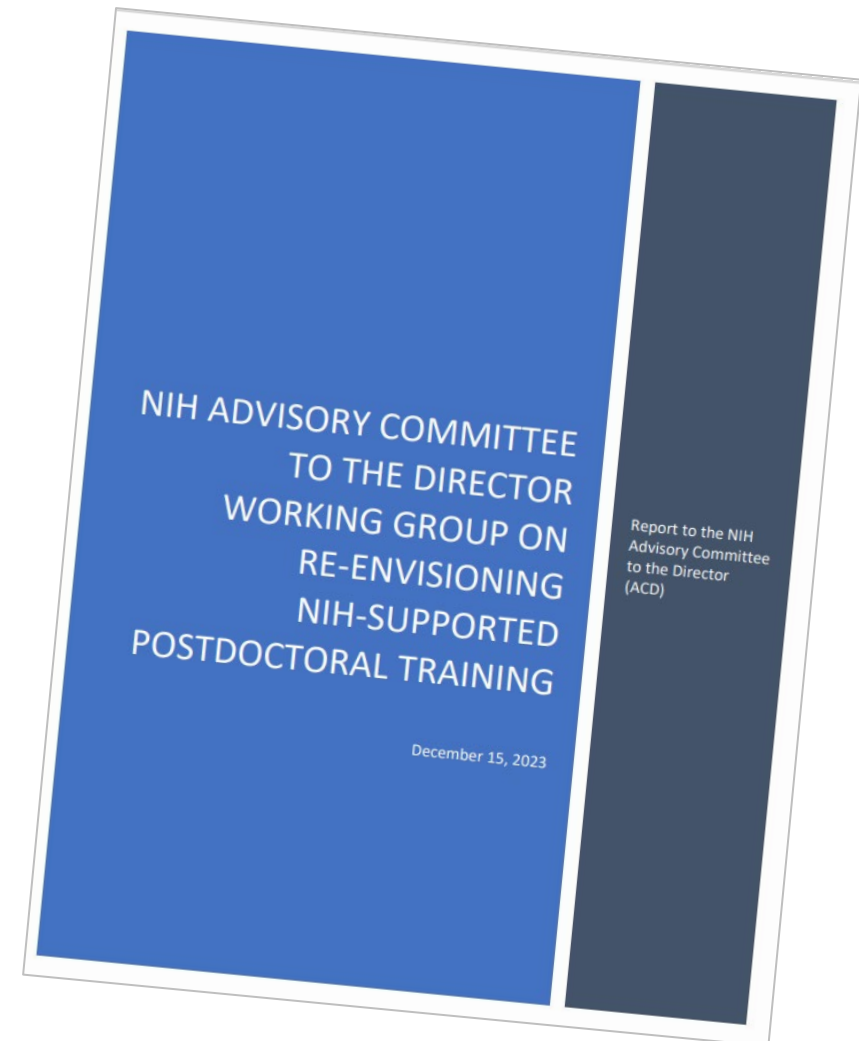
NIH ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE DIRECTOR WORKING GROUP ON RE-ENVISIONING NIH-SUPPORTED POSTDOCTORAL TRAINING: RECOMMENDATION 3

RECOMMENDATION 3.1: INCREASE SUPPORT FOR A RESEARCH PROFESSIONAL CAREER TRACK

Fostering a robust research professional career track would improve the sustainability and health of the biomedical system by:

- Expanding academic job pool
- Retaining talented scientists in academic research
- Maintaining institutional knowledge
- Providing mentorship and training
- Building research enterprises and capacity

These positions do not currently provide individuals with either the recognition nor independent funding needed to attract and retain the best scientists



PURPOSE

Improve sustainability and health of biomedical system

Support exceptional research scientists (non-tenured, non-traditional PIs)

Enhance professional standing and recognition of exceptional research scientists

Provide autonomy, career development opportunities and career continuity

Laboratory Scientists

Core Scientists

Clinician Scientists

Salary

Travel Funds

Protected Time

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Application must specify research programs, collaborations, role and importance of applicant's participation to advancing NIH-funded research programs

Applicant must demonstrate relevant scientific skills, expertise and success

Applicant must be full-time non-tenured research scientist, non-traditional PI

Application must include a career development plan with institutional letter of commitment and supporting letters of recommendation

Relevant Publications

Conference Proceedings

Awards

OTHER PROGRAMS SUPPORTING RESEARCH PROFESSIONALS

National Cancer Institute Research Specialist Award provides salary and travel support for:

- Laboratory Scientists ([PAR-23-242](#))
 - Core Scientists ([PAR-23-243](#))
 - Clinician Scientists ([PAR-24-274](#))
- Created in 2016, clinician scientists added in 2021
 - 19% award rate (similar to R01), 150+ awards made

Elizabeth Bartom, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics
Feinberg School of Medicine
Northwestern University

Frequently, researchers want to quickly get the answer to a specific question, and are less interested in investing in more general solutions. Having the R50 Research Specialist Award gave me more independence to say, "Let's devote some time to setting up a computational infrastructure that we can use to answer any question, not just the question that you started out with." That empowered me to create a computational system that many scientists across my university are now using for their studies.



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NIH Research Software Engineer (RSE) Award provides salary and travel support for:

- Research Software Engineers ([RFA-OD-24-011](#))
- Launched in 2024 by Office of Data Science Strategy

COUNCIL ACTION

Council vote for Approval of the concept NIH Exceptional Research Scientist Award