

## Richardson, Dave

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**From:** Somsy, Lorri  
**Sent:** Friday, March 06, 2009 11:12 AM  
**To:** Eva J. Pell; URC  
**Cc:** URC Assistants  
**Subject:** NIH Stimulus Funding Update

To: URC  
From: Eva J. Pell

Yesterday I sent you the news regarding the NIH Challenge grant program. Since then Alan Snyder has distilled out some of the salient elements of that programs and where we stand as of today in understanding the path forward in vying for NIH stimulus funding. At the risk of inundating you with this information I have taken Alan's document and added some additional updates.

### NSF updates

NSF has rejected nearly \$2 billion in viable proposals in recent years due to lack of funding. It plans to look at the backlog of rejected proposals and see which ones may now be funded. They are asking that no proposals be re-submitted as some were rejected for reasons other than lack of funding. The rejected proposals get first priority for stimulus money, and details for how NSF is handling those proposals should be available in the next week or two. It has not submitted a final plan to OMB yet (as of last week). Downselects for any opportunities that are limited submissions will be handled out of the Office of the Senior Vice President for Research as usual, although the timelines for the downselects may be very short.

### NIH updates **R01 Supplement Update**

A significant portion of \$7.4B devoted to research is being used for supplements to expand the scope or accelerate progress of existing research grants. Implementation varies by institute. As noted previously, institute staff are charged with spending funds quickly and productively and will often need your help in determining the best use. Some investigators have had fruitful discussions with their program officers. Others have been asked to wait for new RFAs. We can report that institutes and centers **are permitted to use stimulus funds for the following expenses** that were not previously mentioned, or mentioned with less detail:

- Research training and career development grants, including support of the first two years of a longer grant
- Supplements to U grants (in addition to R01 grants)
- Two-year funding of four-year R01 grants, with renegotiation of Aims consistent with the peer review
- Equipment under \$100,000
- Support for graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, undergraduate research experiences and summer interns

Look for announcements of upcoming forums for investigators to share questions and experiences.

### **Equipment and facilities funding**

On Thursday May 5, NIH released three new solicitations for equipment and facilities construction and renovation:

<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-RR-09-008.html> (research facilities: \$2M-15M)  
<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-RR-09-007.html> (core facilities: \$1M-10M)  
<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-09-118.html> (equip: \$600k-8M)

### **Shared Equipment.**

Now there are two equipment opportunities, the Shared Instrumentation Grant program (March 23 deadline), and the new High-End Instrumentation Grant Program (May 6 deadline, with a letter of intent due on April 6). As you know, our office has worked with the Associate Deans and Institute Directors to generate a list of big equipment needs institution wide. This has formed a foundation for identifying equipment that we will endeavor to acquire through the stimulus funding. While we are not limited in the number of submissions from the university, Peter Hudson is coordinating this NIH effort for core facilities needs at University Park, and investigators are strongly encouraged to contact him or Nigel Deighton, Director of Research Instrumentation for the Huck Institutes.

#### **Facilities.**

Both of the two new RFAs for facilities renovation and construction are limited submissions. Peter Schiffer is working with OPP, Peter Hudson, Mary Kennett and the Associate Deans to identify possible projects and establish priorities. Several possible projects have already been identified, and other ideas should be brought to Peter Schiffer's attention as soon as possible. We are aiming to find projects that will benefit as many units as possible across the campus, rather than individual units, and we also are looking for projects that the university already has decided are high priority and are advanced in planning. We expect to issue a separate memo to URC concerning these opportunities next week.

#### **Administrative and compliance processes**

The offices of Sponsored Programs and Research Protections stand ready to assist. Recognizing that the work load will be very heavy in a constricted period of time we ask that you work with your research administration office to alert them to your attention to apply and that you provided the necessary time to process your application. Please let me or anyone in the research office know if you have any questions or encounter any problems.

#### **RFAs released: NIH Challenge Grants in Health and Science Research**

Challenge Grants are a new program created specifically for use of stimulus funds. These grants provide one-time support for novel research efforts to overcome barriers in health, health-related sciences, and conduct of research, and healthcare. The NIH has defined fifteen broad "Challenge Areas," in which knowledge gaps, scientific opportunities, and needs for new technologies and research methods can be addressed using a rapid influx of funding. Within each Challenge Area, each institute and center has developed a list of specific topics of importance to its mission. **NIH expects to fund a minimum of 200 of these \$1M awards. Individual institutes may increase this number, and additional numbers may be awarded using comparative effectiveness funding.**

#### **Some program details.**

Application format: One-page Specific Aims and 12-page Research Design and Methods (no Background and Significance or Specific Aims)

Budget limit: \$500,000 per year for two years

**Application receipt date: April 27, 2009**

Anticipated start date: September 30, 2009

#### **Broad Challenge Areas.**

The following list of Challenge Areas reflects the breadth of the program. **There is opportunity here for projects that you might not have previously thought to be attractive to the NIH.** In addition to opportunities in current and emerging scientific fields, there are new opportunities relating to comparative effectiveness; ethical and methodological challenges in clinical research, personalized medicine and quality improvement; and information technology.

Behavior, Behavioral Change, and Prevention

Bioethics

Biomarker Discovery and Validation

Clinical Research

Comparative Effectiveness Research (CER)

Enabling Technologies

Enhancing Clinical Trials  
Genomics  
Health Disparities  
Information Technology for Processing Health Care Data  
Regenerative Medicine  
Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Education (STEM)  
Smart Biomaterials - Theranostics  
Stem Cells  
Translational Science

Within each of these areas, individual Institutes and Centers have developed detailed descriptions of specific research topics, including indications of their major priorities. Each Challenge Grant application must cite one of these specific topics.

**Important web resources.**

NIH Challenge Grant program home page - [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/challenge\\_award/](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/challenge_award/)

Detailed descriptions of broad Challenge Areas -

[http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/challenge\\_award/High\\_Priority\\_Topics.pdf](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/challenge_award/High_Priority_Topics.pdf)

Links to individual Institute and Center Challenge Topics -

[http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/challenge\\_award/IC\\_ChallengeWebPage.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/challenge_award/IC_ChallengeWebPage.htm)

**What you can do now.**

These Challenge Areas reflect the priorities of each NIH institute and center, the Office of the Director, and the Administration. You should look at this program as an opportunity to gain a foothold in an area that's likely to be of high priority in the next several years. Download the pdf of Challenge Area descriptions at [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/challenge\\_award/High\\_Priority\\_Topics.pdf](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/challenge_award/High_Priority_Topics.pdf) to better understand the NIH intent in each area, then explore the specific topics identified and prioritized by the individual institutes and centers.

Many of these topics call for new partnership among biological, physical, computational and social scientists, as well as scholars in the humanities. We enjoy the benefit of faculty expertise in many of these areas on campus, as well as the depth of talent at University Park. All of the institute directors and research deans work together to support collaborative teams. Please don't hesitate to ask for help in identifying collaborators. We do expect this program to be very competitive. Each team should include a PI who has significant NIH grant experience. The NIH multiple-PI option applies to the Challenge Grant program. When working on one of these proposals remember that one of the prime expectations is that the project can be completed in two years with deliverables as proposed.

The Challenge Grant program uses a new "RC1" grant mechanism with specific application format requirements. These are clearly described in the RFA.

**Comparative Effectiveness Research (CER)**

The NIH defines CER as ""a rigorous evaluation of the impact of different options that are available for treating a given medical condition for a particular set of patients. Such a study may compare similar treatments, such as competing drugs, or it may analyze very different approaches, such as surgery and drug therapy." The stimulus package includes \$400M for NIH for research in this area, and additional funding to be available directly through AHRQ. Our present understanding is that additional funding will be available beyond the current Challenge Grant announcement.

We'll continue to keep you apprised of information as we receive it.

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