

xi. Mentored New Investigator Research Grant to Promote Diversity (MNIRGD)

Competition objectives: The Mentored New Investigator Research Grant to Promote Diversity is a three-year award intended to be a research-based and mentoring investment to help close disparities between diverse and non-diverse investigator populations. The Alzheimer's Association feels strongly that the mentoring and involvement of diverse researchers in independently funded Alzheimer's research is a pressing need. The MNIRGD is intended to enhance the capacity of diverse and non-diverse scientists to conduct basic, clinical and social/behavioral research.

The MNIRGD competition has the following general requirements:

- foster mentoring relationships between experienced researchers and those not previously funded or considered new investigators (under 10 years post degree);
- increase the presence of scientists from diverse backgrounds who are conducting research on Alzheimer's and related dementias;
- enhance the research skills and scientific visibility of junior faculty members from diverse backgrounds;
- support mentoring relationships that will establish enduring research careers of diverse scientists.

The purpose of this competition is to provide underrepresented new investigators with mentored funding that will allow them to develop preliminary or pilot data, to test procedures and to develop hypotheses. The intent is to support early-career development through mentorship that will lay the groundwork for future research grant applications to the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation and other funding agencies and groups, including future proposals to the Alzheimer's Association. All MNIRGD applications must target defined areas of focus for fiscal year 2010 (see Section II) to be considered responsive to the program announcement.

Mentor's statement required for MNIRGD: The mentor should be experienced in conducting Alzheimer's and related dementia research and in mentoring investigators. The application must include a statement from the selected mentor that includes information on his/her research qualifications and experience as a research supervisor. The application must also include information to describe the mentor's research support relevant to the applicant's research plan and the nature and extent of supervision and training that he/she will provide during the period of the award. The primary mentor must agree to provide annual evaluations of the applicant's progress for the duration of the award, as required for the yearly progress report.

Mentoring relationships may include early-career researchers and/or fostering the recruitment of mid-career scientists into Alzheimer's and related dementia research. The applicant and proposed mentor must specify a mechanism for assuring effective

mentoring. The application should contain a plan for and an evaluation strategy of the mentoring process for enhancing diversity in the professional research workforce. Specific benchmarks are outlined below and considered by the Alzheimer's Association as critical for the development of early-career investigators. A successful mentorship plan should include some of these benchmarks but should not be limited to these alone.

The mentor's statement is limited to one page.

REQUIRED MNIRGD benchmarks:

- Attendance at an Association-sponsored luncheon for mentors and new investigators at the Association's International Conference on Alzheimer's Disease (ICAD)
- Acceptance of an abstract at ICAD
- Mandatory documentation of hours spent on face-to-face mentoring
- Citation of specific exercises of mentorship such as supervision of manuscript writing and submission or grant writing and submission
- Specific instances of the facilitation of networking, introductions to colleagues and/or inclusion in discussions at scientific meetings
- Submission of a proposal to an Alzheimer's Association grant program or submission of a grant proposal to the National Institutes of Health or National Science Foundation

SUGGESTED MNIRGD benchmark (not required)

- Submission of an application to the National Institute on Aging's Summer Institute

Funding and award period: The Alzheimer's Association anticipates funding up to five NIRGD/MNIRGD awards total under this competition. Each MNIRGD award is limited to \$170,000. A total of \$150,000 will be awarded for costs related to the proposed research for up to three years (direct and indirect costs). Requests in any given year may not exceed \$60,000 (direct and indirect costs). Indirect costs are capped at 10 percent (rent for laboratory/office space is expected to be covered by indirect costs paid to the institution). The Principal Investigator must commit to a 50 percent effort toward the proposed project over the funding period.

The remaining funds, \$10,000 to the applicant and \$10,000 to the primary mentor, will be awarded upon successful completion of the three-year program. These additional funds are to be applied to sustaining ongoing research in the Alzheimer's field and will be awarded through the applicant's and mentor's institutions. Successful completion of the program includes, but is not limited to, reaching all of demonstrable benchmarks listed above.

Eligibility: Eligibility for this grant competition is restricted to investigators who have less than 10 years of research experience after receipt of their terminal degree. **Eligible applicants are faculty members who have been determined by the grantee institution to be underrepresented on faculty in biomedical and behavioral research on a national or institutional basis, such as individuals from racial and**

ethnic groups and individuals with disabilities. As such, you must submit a letter from your department chair that states you have been determined by your institution to be underrepresented in the above areas. Nationally underrepresented groups in biomedical research careers include but are not limited to African Americans, Hispanic Americans, American Indians/Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.

Young investigators currently funded through other mentored awards (federal or other) are ineligible to apply for this award.

The 10-year period applies to the date of submission of the grant application. Adjustments for career interruptions can be made. These would include, but are not limited to, family leave, military service and major illness or injury. It is the responsibility of the applicant to point out and document such interruptions. In general, **postdoctoral fellows are not eligible to apply for an MNIRGD grant.** The only exception is the special case in which an applicant can provide a letter indicating they will have a full-time faculty position, such as an assistant professorship, by the application deadline. The letter of employment must be on hiring institution letterhead and must indicate that the position will be activated by the grant award date. If the anticipated position is not activated by the award date for any reason, any offer of funding will be withdrawn.

***Deadlines and award dates:* Letters of intent must be received by 5:00 PM EASTERN STANDARD TIME, December 1, 2009.** Letters of intent will not be accepted after this date. No exceptions will be made.

Applications must be received by 5:00 PM EASTERN STANDARD TIME, January 7, 2010. Scientific and technical review will be conducted from February through May 2010.

The second-level review by the Medical and Scientific Advisory Council will be conducted during June 2010. Funding will be awarded by July 2010.

Mechanism of award, reporting requirements and allowable costs: The mechanism of the award is the individual research grant. The maximum allowable duration is three years. Annual progress and financial reports are required. **Continuation of the grant over the awarded duration is contingent upon the timely receipt of scientific and financial reports as well as a mentor's report outlining progress toward meeting MNIRGD benchmarks.**

Budget: A "budget summary" for the proposed research project is required and must be submitted with the application and within the allowable page limits. However, if the application is to be awarded, a more detailed budget will be required and must be approved before the disbursement of funds. **Your budget must not exceed the maximum amount of the award (\$150,000 for MNIRGD).**

Allowable costs under this award:

- It is required that most of the funds awarded under this program be used for direct research support.

Allowable costs under this award include:

- Purchase and care of laboratory animals
- Small pieces of laboratory equipment and laboratory supplies
- Computer equipment if used strictly for data collection
- Travel (up to 1,000 per year)
- Salary for the principal investigator, scientific (including post-doctoral fellows) and technical staff (including laboratory technicians and administrative support related directly to the funded project)

Costs not allowed under this award include:

- Tuition
- Computer hardware or software for investigators
- Rent for laboratory/office space
- Construction or renovation costs

For more information: Contact grantsapp@alz.org or call (312) 335-5747.