vii. 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 newly independent 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 in this Program Announcement (see Section II).

**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. **Please note: the mentor’s statement is limited to one page.** 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. Applicants may have two mentors, however, one must be primary and only one mentored statement can be submitted.

Mentoring selections may include early-career researchers and/or mid-career scientists who choose to shift into Alzheimer’s and related dementia research. The applicant and proposed mentor must specify a mechanism for ensuring 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.

**REQUIRED MNIRGD benchmarks:**
- Attendance at an Association-sponsored event for new investigators at the Alzheimer’s Association’s International Conference (AAIC, formerly known as ICAD)
- Acceptance of an abstract at AAIC
- 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 (other than the MNIRGD) 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 3 NIRGD/MNIRGD awards 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 the demonstrable benchmarks listed above.

**Eligibility:** Applicants must be Assistant Professors or above at their respective institution. For individuals who are at non-academic institutions, please contact the Alzheimer’s Association at grantsapp@alz.org to verify your eligibility. Eligibility to apply for this grant competition is restricted to investigators who have less than 10 years of research experience after receipt of their terminal degree. The 10-year period applies to the date of submission of the grant application. Adjustments for career interruptions can be made. Applicant must contact the Alzheimer’s Association regarding any possible exception (grantsapp@alz.org). 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 within their application.

Specific for the NIRGD and MNIRGD grant programs, eligible applicants are faculty members who have been determined by the grantee’s institution to be underrepresented on faculty in biomedical and behavioral research on a national or institutional basis, such as individuals from racial and ethnic minority groups and individuals with disabilities. As such, you must submit a letter printed on the hiring institution letterhead, signed by an authorized institutional signature (i.e. Grants and Contracts officer) 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.

In general, postdoctoral fellows and junior faculty (below Assistant Professor) are not eligible to apply for Alzheimer’s Association grants at this time. For the New Investigators Program, there is one exception: applications for a New Investigator Research Grant (NIRG), New Investigator Research Grant to Promote Diversity (NIRGD) and Mentored New Investigator Research Grant to Promote Diversity (MNIRGD) will be accepted from postdoctoral fellows and other junior faculty members (for example: Instructor, Research Associate Scientist, etc) who can provide a letter of employment verification indicating they will have a full-time faculty position as an Assistant Professor and above by the application deadline.

The letter of employment must be uploaded to your application, printed on the hiring institution letterhead, signed by an authorized institutional signature (i.e. Grants and Contracts officer) 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. There will be no exceptions. In the event your application is funded, you will be required to provide an official letter on organizational letterhead, signed by an institutional signing official, stating you will have a full-time faculty position of an Assistant Professor and above.

Please note: If the applicant institution does not have an Assistant Professor position, the letter of employment should include sufficient information to allow the Alzheimer’s Association staff to evaluate the eligibility of the applicant.

Ineligibility: The Alzheimer’s Association will not accept new grant applications from currently funded investigators who are delinquent in submitting required reports and other deliverables on active grants. Investigators that have previous Alzheimer’s Association awards closed as ‘Incomplete’ are not eligible to apply without exception. This policy will be strictly adhered to with no exceptions.

Deadlines and award dates: Letters of Intent must be received by 5:00 PM EASTERN STANDARD TIME, February 20, 2014. 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, April 18, 2014.

Scientific and technical review will be conducted from April through June 2014. The second-level review by the Medical and Scientific Advisory Council will be conducted during June 2014. Funding will be awarded by August 30, 2014.

**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 scientific progress and financial reports are required from both the applicant and the mentor throughout the award period. **Continuation of the grant over the awarded duration is contingent upon the timely receipt of scientific progress 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 or $60,000 per year.**

**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)

**Direct 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 1.312.335.5747 or 1.312.335.5862.