iii. 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 1-2 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 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:** Please note, individuals applying to the MNIRGD program will be accepted from applicants with full time positions at their respective institution, including senior postdoctoral fellows (minimum 3yrs), instructors, and above.
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 official (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.

**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, September 24, 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, October 30, 2014.

Scientific and technical review will be conducted from November – January 30, 2015. The second-level review by the Medical and Scientific Advisory Council will be conducted during January 2015. Funding will be awarded by January 30, 2015.

**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” (Available Resources & Budget Justification) 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.

**Other allowable costs include:**
- Purchase and care of laboratory animals
- Small pieces of laboratory equipment and laboratory supplies
- Computer software if used strictly for data collection
- Salary for the principal investigator, scientific (including postdoctoral fellows) and technical staff (including laboratory technicians and administrative support directly related to the funded grant)
- Support for travel to scientific and professional meetings not to exceed $1,000 per year

**Direct Costs not allowed under this award include:**
- Computer hardware or standard software (e.g. Microsoft Office)
- Construction or renovation costs
- Tuition
- Rent for laboratory/office space

**For more information:** Contact grantsapp@alz.org or call 1.312.335.5747 or 1.312.335.5862.