Frequently Asked Questions
for
RFA-MD-17-005, NIMHD Specialized Centers of Excellence on Minority Health and Health Disparities (U54)

These questions and answers are provided to assist applicants as they prepare their applications. These FAQs should not be used as a substitute for carefully reading the FOA or application instructions.

The following are links to the NIH Guidance on instructions for completing the SF424 application and to the NIH/AHRQ Guidance for Application Submission as well as the Notice clarifying applicable appendix material.

NIH Guidance on project applications: https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/forms-d/research-forms-d.pdf, Research Instructions for NIH and other PHS Agencies (SF424 (R&R)).

NIH Guidance on Multi-project applications: https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/forms-d/multi-project-forms-d.pdf

NOT-OD-15-059 https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-15-059.html.

NOT-OD-16-129 https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-16-129.html

Eligibility

1) Can NIMHD confirm prior to submission that my institution is eligible to apply for a Center of Excellence (COE)?
   - No. NIMHD staff can answer questions you have about the eligibility requirements, but it is the responsibility of the institution to determine prior to submission if all eligibility criteria have been met.

2) What does "significant number" mean in the first eligibility criterion (i.e., "Had a significant number of members of health disparity populations enrolled as students in the institution…"?)
   - It is the responsibility of the applicant institution to provide a justification detailing how the institution meets the eligibility requirements.

3) Is there a format demonstrating how the institution meets the eligibility requirements?
   - No, there is no specified format, except that the document must be included under Other Attachments in the Research & Related Other Project Information for the Overall Component.

4) For reporting on the number of students from health disparity populations, is that for the whole university, or can it be on the part of the university applying?
   - It is based on the "applicant institution." Therefore, applicant institution-wide numbers should be included. Numbers can be also reported for the schools, divisions, or departments within the applicant institution relevant to the application.

5) Can two eligible institutions apply as a joint center?
   - No. Collaborations with academic institutions and other organizations are encouraged. However, only one institution can serve as the applicant institution.

6) Can two institutions that were funded together as a P20 previously now apply separately?
   - Yes, if both still meet eligibility requirements. The applicant institution for the previous P20 could submit a renewal or a new application. The application from the collaborating institution on the previous P20 could only submit a new submission.

7) Can the eligibility be based on success with students from health disparity populations across all participating institutions or just the applicant institution?
   - Eligibility criteria must be met by the applicant institution independently.

8) Can an institution submit more than one application for a COE if the themes are different?
   - No, only one application per institution is allowed.

9) There are several research teams that would like to submit a COE application at my institution. Can NIMHD tell us which application would be the most competitive?
   - No. It is up to the institution to determine which application to submit.

10) Can an institution be the applicant institution on one COE application and be a collaborating institution on another application?
   - Yes. However, activities that are duplicative across Centers would not be supported.

11) Is there a requirement to partner with minority institutions?
   - No.

New and Renewal Applications

12) Are renewals allowed even though the mechanism/activity code has changed from P20/P60 to U54?
   - Yes.

13) Are NIMHD Transdisciplinary Collaborative Centers (TCCs) eligible to apply as renewals?
   - No, only NIMHD P20/P60 Centers are eligible for "renewals."

14) Are previous P20/P60 COEs that have expired eligible for renewals?
   - Previous P20/P60 COEs are eligible to submit a renewal if they did <u>not</u> submit an unsuccessful renewal application since the COE was last funded. Those that submitted an unsuccessful COE renewal application must submit a new application.

15) Will new Centers be less likely to be funded since they are competing with renewal grants?
   - NIMHD has no preference for renewals over new applications or *vice versa*.

16) If an institution had a COE in the past, must the application be a renewal or can it be a new submission?

- Institutions have the option of submitting a renewal application or a new application unless they have already submitted an unsuccessful renewal application. However, if they submit a new application, they will not have an opportunity to discuss the prior accomplishments of the Center. Doing so may result in the application being withdrawn prior to review. If a previously funded institution is planning to submit a new application, it is strongly recommended that investigators consult with the scientific contact prior to submission.

17) Our proposed COE will be a departure from our institution's previous COE. We plan to submit a new application. Should we still include a Progress Report in the application?
- No, new applications should not include a Progress Report or refer to the previous grant, grant number, grant project period, or other information that would be expected in a Renewal application. See NOT-OD-15-059 (https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-15-059.html) for further guidance on what may or may not be included in New applications.

18) If two universities that had prior COEs are now collaborating on a single Center application, would this be submitted as a renewal?
- Since the applicant institution had a COE, it would have the option to submit the application as a renewal, assuming it had not previously submitted an unsuccessful renewal application, or new. It is recommended that you consult with a program official.

19) What does it mean to be a renewal vs a new application? Is a renewal reviewed differently?
- Regarding application format, a renewal is required to include a Progress Report in the Research Strategy of one or more components and a Progress Report Publication List. Reviewers will consider progress made in the previous project period of the Center in their evaluation of the application.

20) Does a renewal need to have the same research projects as the previous Center?
- No. Applicants have the option of including Research Projects that are continuations or extensions of previous Center research projects if they choose, if they fit within the thematic focus of the proposed Center.

21) Where does the Progress Report go in renewal applications?
- The Progress Report should go into the Research Strategy of one or more components of the application. The Progress Report counts towards the page limit of the particular component.
- The Progress Report should not be included in other sections of the application, including the Appendix or the Progress Report Publication List.

22) Does the progress report count toward the 6-page Overview Research Strategy or 12-page Administrative Core Research Strategy sections?
- Yes, the Progress Report counts towards the page limit in the Research Strategy section where it is included.

23) If submitting a renewal application where should we include the publication list?

- Publications should be listed in the Progress Report Publication List. This is uploaded as a separate document for applications submitted as renewals. Publications should not be included in the Appendix.

24) In the progress report publication list, can a consortium, sub-awardee or collaborating institution's list of publications from their prior P20 center be included as well as the submitting institution's?
- The Progress Report Publication List should only list publications that stemmed from the COE at the applicant institution. Publications of collaborators or other institutions that did not stem from the applicant institution's COE should not be included.

Overall Application Structure and Format

25) Can the Center have Multiple PIs?
- Yes.

26) Can Research Projects and Cores use multiple PIs, in addition to the Overall?
- Yes.

27) Can there be multiple PIs from the same institution? From a different institution?
- Yes, and Yes.

28) Can a Center PI also be an investigator in one of the Research Projects?
- Yes.

29) Is the main PI required to be the PI for the other two Cores and Research Projects as well?
- The Center PI is expected to be the PI of the Administrative Core, but does not need to be the PI of the other Cores and Research Projects.

30) Do the PIs of the Cores need to be from the applicant institution or can they be from a consortium/sub-awardee institution?
- The applicant institution's COE PI must be the PI of the Administrative Core, as stated in the FOA. PIs of Cores and Research Projects can be from other institutions or organizations.

31) Is there a minimum level of effort for PIs?
- The level of effort should correspond with the scope of work proposed, but must be measurable and not "zero percent" or "as needed."

32) Should the Cores have separate aims?
- Yes, a Specific Aims page should be submitted for each Core and Research Project.

33) Specific Aims are required for each Core and Research Project, but are they required for the entire application?
- Yes, the Specific Aims for the entire Center application are required in the Overall Component.

34) Should there be a separate references section for each Core and Research Project or a combined references section for the entire application?
   - The applicant can choose either option. Per the SF424 (R&R) application instructions for multi-component applications (see https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/forms-d/multi-project-forms-d.pdf), "Applicants have the option of including the "Bibliography & References Cited" attachment in the Overall Component, Other Components, or both."

35) Can we include Letters of Support beyond those required by the Overall and Administrative cores? And if so, are they included in the page count?
   - Yes, to the first question. They are not included in the page count of the Research Strategy.

36) In the required Letter of Support in the Overall component, is it necessary for the institutional official to indicate a monetary amount of support?
   - No. The instructions specify that the letter should identify any institutional support, which may or may not include financial support.

37) In which component do the Project Narrative and Project Summary go?
   - Per the SF424 instructions, a Project Summary is required for the Overall Component and each Research Project and Core. The Project Narrative is only required for the Overall component.

38) What is the Progress Report Publication List?
   - The Progress Report Publication List is a list of titles and complete references to all appropriate publications, manuscripts accepted for publication, patents, and other printed materials that have resulted from the project since it was last reviewed competitively. See the SF424 Application instructions for details.

39) Are there restrictions for the budget allocation among the 3 Cores?
   - There is a specified budget range for pilot projects of $150,000 to $500,000 per year direct costs, exclusive of consortium indirect costs, and an annual maximum of $500,000 total direct costs for the Research Project(s), including consortium indirect costs. Beyond those parameters, the applicant has discretion to determine the budget for Center activities.

40) Can there be additional Cores beyond the Administrative Core, Investigator Development Core, and Community Engagement and Dissemination Core?
   - No. Optional Cores are not permitted.

41) For Cores and Research Projects that have multiple PIs, is the MPI Leadership Plan required?
   - Yes.

42) Is there a limit to the number of letters of support that can be included in the application?
   - No. However, applicants are encouraged to only include letters that specify participation and involvement of personnel or organizations and/or sharing and access to resources rather than letters that indicate general endorsement of the Center application.

43) Is it necessary to include letters of support from collaborators who work at the applicant institution?
- In general, no. It is assumed by the inclusion of the biosketch that collaborators from the same institution are willing to participate in the application.

44) Can we include website URLs in the narratives?
- URLs can be included in the Biosketch, Bibliography & References Cited, and Progress Report Publication List section, as specified in the SF424 application instructions. Please note that reviewers are not obligated to click on links to view external material. URLs should not be included in other sections of the application.

45) Is the maximum annual $500K total direct costs for Research Projects separate from the $150K direct costs for Pilot Projects?
- Yes.

46) Is there a format for the Attestation of Special Maintenance of Effort?
- The following format would be acceptable, submitted as a pdf document as under Other Attachments in the Research & Related Other Project Information (Overall) section:

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION CERTIFICATION AND ACCEPTANCE: I certify that the statements herein are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also agree to comply with any resulting terms if I accept an award. I am aware that any false, fictitious. or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. Code, Title 18, Section 1001)

- With respect to authorized activities, the institution, or institutions in the consortium, as the case may be, agree to maintain expenditures of non-Federal amounts for such activities at a level that is not less than the level of such expenditures maintained by the institutions involved for the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year for which such institutions receive such an award.
- With respect to any Federal amounts received by the Center or consortium and available for carrying out authorized activities, the institutions involved agree that the institutions will, before expending the award, expend the Federal amounts obtained from sources other than the award.

_____   _____
Name and Title of Official Signing for Applicant Organization   Date

47) Does the Special Maintenance of Effort Attestation represent the first grant year or all grant years? Should we include the previous year if this is a renewal?
- The attestation would be the same whether it's a renewal or new application. It would be a special term and condition of each year's award, including non-competing continuation years.

48) Is it acceptable to include Undergraduate and Master's level students in activities of the Center?

- Yes, if they serve as personnel (e.g., compensated for services rendered) on Research Projects or Center Cores. Undergraduate and Master's level students may also participate in activities offered by the Center to promote the conduct of minority health and health disparities research within the thematic focus area, as appropriate. However, activities within the Investigator Development Core are not allowed for Undergraduate and Master's students.

49) Is the letter of intent mandatory? Is the letter of intent binding?
- No, and No. The purpose of the Letter of Intent (LOI) is to give NIMHD, particularly the Scientific Review Office, a sense of how many applications to expect and what kinds of expertise might be needed to review them. It is possible to submit an LOI and then not apply, and vice versa.

Page Limits

50) Do the Research Strategy page limits include the specific aims page?
- No, the one page Specific Aims page is separate from the Research Strategy for all application components.

51) Is the 6-page limit for the Investigator Development and Community Engagement and Dissemination Cores for both cores or for each core separately?
- Each Core has a page limit of 6 pages.

Administrative Core

52) What should be described in the Human Subjects section in the Administrative Core?
- A Protection of Human Subjects attachment should only be completed if distinct human subjects research activities take place within the Administrative Core (not just in other Center components). This could include the handling, storage, or analysis of data pooled across Research Projects.

53) Should Steering Committee members be named in the application?
- No. The planned roles and expertise of the Steering Committee should be described in the application, but names should not be included.

54) Steering Committee members are not named, but does this apply to project-specific advisory groups, from whom letters of support can be elicited?
- The grant instructions specify that the Management Plan should describe the composition and roles of any community advisory boards or committees. It is preferred that names not be included, unless individuals have served on already established boards or committees in prior grant cycles that will be continuing for the proposed Center.

55) In terms of the career enhancement activities requirement for the Administrative Core, there are different descriptions of this requirement in the background section and the application instructions regarding potential participants.

- The guidance in the RFA instructions for the Administrative Core in Section IV.2 is more precise about NIMHD's expectations for these activities: "Describe activities the center will offer to promote the conduct of minority health and health disparities research within the thematic focus area for investigators at the applicant and collaborating institutions." These activities are expected to be offered to investigators at the applicant institution but may include those from collaborating institutions.

56) Can there be a Community Advisory Board?
- Yes

57) Can you describe what kind of or level of evaluation is appropriate for the administrative core?
- Please refer to the Administrative Core application instructions. Beyond those directions, applicants have flexibility in how they structure and conduct the evaluation of the COE.

<u>Research Projects</u>

58) In what Core should the Research Projects be placed?
- The Research Projects are not included within a Core. They are a separate application component. The Component Type is 'Project'.

59) Does the overall PI need to be involved in each Research Project?
- No.

60) Is the page limit of 12 pages for each Research Project or for all Research Projects together?
- The page limit is 12 pages for each Research Project.

61) Are there different page limits depending on the scope of the Research Projects (e.g., R01 level vs. R21 level)?
- No, the page limit for each Research Project is 12 pages. This is a page <u>limit</u>, not the number of pages <u>required</u>. Projects that are smaller in scope may not require as many pages as larger projects.

62) Do all Research Projects have to be conducted simultaneously or can the start dates be staggered?
- The start dates can be staggered, but all Research Projects must be fully described in the application.

63) Projects are intended to demonstrate impact. What does 'impact' mean?
- An objective of the NIMHD COE is to support research producing findings that "can be translated into sustainable community and system-level changes that promote health equity." This objective is reflected in the review criteria for the Approach Section of the Overall component.

64) Are human behavioral experiments also eligible provided they use multi-level, multi-domain approach?

- Yes, the FOA is flexible regarding research approaches and designs, as long as they are consistent with the expectations specified in the FOA.

65) Do the Research Projects necessarily need to be community-based or community-engaged?
- Per the FOA, projects are "expected to engage collaborators from relevant organizations and stakeholders as appropriate, which may include but are not limited to academic institutions, clinicians, health systems, state and local public health agencies, school systems, community-based organizations, and faith-based organizations." It is up to the applicant to determine what types of organizations and stakeholders are the most appropriate for the Research Project.

66) What is the expected length of a Research Project?
- There is no required minimum project period (the maximum project period is 5 years). The scope of the proposed project(s) should determine the length.

67) Does each Research Project need to have its own sections (e.g., human subjects, budget, etc.), or are these sections all one document for the whole grant?
- Some sections or documents are required to be included for each Research Project or Core if applicable (like budget and human subjects), while for others (e.g., Equipment, Bibliography & References Cited), the applicant has the option to include the attachment in the Overall Component, other components, or both. See "Multi - Project Instructions For NIH And Other PHS Agencies, SF424 (R&R) Application Packages," on the NIH website, "How to Apply – Application Guide" (https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/forms-d/multi-project-forms-d.pdf).

68) How related must Research Projects be? Do they have to use the same data sources? Or same populations? Can they just draw from conceptual framework?
- All research projects must be related to the thematic focus of the Center. Synergy is expected across Research Projects if more than one is proposed, but there is not one single strategy to demonstrate synergy. As stated in the Background section of the FOA, "Examples of synergy include **but are not limited to** [emphasis added] the pooling of data across studies; sharing of resources, tools, or data analytic strategies; or the testing of different components of the same conceptual or theoretical models."

69) Can the PI of the Research Project be an established investigator with prior R01 funding?
- Yes.

70) Is there a preference for intervention studies vs. observational studies vs. policy studies for the research projects?
- No. Applicants should propose study designs that best address the particular research questions.

71) Is inclusion of a non-health disparity population allowed for comparison with health disparity groups?
- Yes, inclusion is not limited to health disparity populations.

72) What is the importance of interdisciplinarity compared to other criteria (e.g. multilevel, multidomain, being intervention or observational)?
- If specific elements are mentioned in the FOA application instructions and review criteria for the Research Projects, this indicates that these elements are important to address in the Research Strategy for the project. It should not be assumed that specified elements are more or less important than any other specified elements.

Investigator Development Core

73) Should individual pilot projects be described in the application?
- No. The application should describe the Pilot Project Program (soliciting, selecting, supporting, and monitoring pilot projects), not individual pilot projects, which should be selected after the Center is awarded.

74) Can salary support for post-docs be included in pilot projects? Other Cores?
- Salary support for post-docs is an allowable cost within any Center component for those engaged as personnel (as compensation for services rendered) on research projects or other Center activities. Stipends and fellowships, which are associated with training programs, are not allowed in this RFA.

75) Can we fund more than 3 pilots in any given year?
- Yes, up to 10 pilot projects can be funded per year.

76) 3 new pilot projects/year for 5 years implies a total of 15 pilots over five years... Is this accurate?
- Correct, there should be a minimum of 15 new pilot projects funded over the Center's project period.

77) Can pilot projects be funded for more than one year?
- Yes, as long as at least 3 new pilot projects are funded each year.

78) Can the pilot funds be structured so that multi-year pilots are required to submit a 2nd year competitive renewal?
- Yes, the applicant has flexibility regarding the selection and funding of pilot projects. However, renewal pilot projects would not count towards the requirement of funding at least 3 new pilot projects per year.

79) The only way you could do three new pilots for $150k is if you only do 1 year pilots, correct?
- That is correct, but $150,000 direct costs is the minimum amount for pilot projects, exclusive of consortium indirect costs. Applicants can propose spending up to $500,000 direct costs on pilot projects annually, exclusive of consortium indirect costs.

80) The RFA specifies at least $150,000 direct costs per year be allocated to pilot projects. Can we assume then that we can allocate more than $150,000 direct costs annually to the pilots?
- Yes, up to $500,000 direct costs annually, plus applicable consortium indirect costs.

81) Within the minimum $150,000 direct costs per year amount for pilots, is there a minimum expected individual pilot project amount?
   - If $150,000 direct costs were budgeted for pilot projects per year, the range for individual pilots could be from $15,000 (corresponding to 10 pilots) to $50,000 (corresponding to 3 pilots) per year, plus consortium indirect costs.

82) Can the pilot investigators' career plans be considered in selecting pilot projects, or should evaluation be based only on scientific value of proposed pilot project?
   - It is up to the applicant to determine selection criteria for the pilot projects.

83) Are new pilot projects expected each year, including year 01?
   - Yes, but none of them are to be included in this competing application. They should be submitted to the NIMHD post-award.

84) Can investigators from other institutions be PIs of pilot projects?
   - No, only investigators from the applicant institution are eligible to receive pilot awards.

85) Since we are submitting as multiple PIs, can investigators from both of institutions receive pilot awards?
   - No, even with MPI applications, only one institution is considered the applicant institution, and only investigators from the applicant institution are eligible for pilot awards.

86) Can pilot projects have Multiple PIs?
   - Yes.

87) Since pilot awards can only be awarded to post-docs and faculty at the applicant institution, can we have MPIs from subcontracted institutions collaborate on these pilot awards?
   - Personnel from other institutions can be included as collaborators if their involvement is justified scientifically, but they should not be included merely as a vehicle to provide career development opportunities to those investigators.

88) Are "new" investigators eligible for pilot projects if they are not still "early career"?
   - No, the FOA specifies that early stage investigators according to the NIH definition are eligible (see https://grants.nih.gov/policy/new_investigators/index.htm#definition).

89) Can project personnel apply for pilot funds?
   - There is no prohibition against this. However, the applicant should consider how providing pilot funds to investigators already involved in the Center maximizes the overall objective of building a diverse research workforce in the thematic area.

90) We want to encourage investigators from underrepresented minority groups to apply for pilot funds. Can we restrict pilot funding to investigators from those groups?
   - No. Eligibility cannot be based on race/ethnicity. See https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-15-053.html for more information.

91) Are early stage/junior researchers who are NOT tenure track faculty eligible for pilot projects? (e.g. research faculty, research staff)?
- Yes, if this is specified in the eligibility criteria determined by the applicant institution.

92) Can pilot PIs be part time junior faculty?
- Yes.

93) Do pilot project recipients have to be US citizens?
- No. NIH requires the applicant to determine that individuals' visas will allow them to remain in this country long enough for them to conduct the pilot project, but NIH does not provide guidance on or assess the different types of visas. NIH expects recipient organizations to have policies, consistently applied regardless of the source of funds, to address this area.

94) Does all the $150,000 direct costs for the Investigator Development Core have to be awarded as pilots or can some of that award amount be used for other Core activities?
- The $150,000 annual minimum is specifically to support pilot projects. The budget for other Investigator Development Core activities (i.e., administering the pilot project program) is not included in that minimum amount and has no specified minimum or maximum.

95) Can pilot projects involve secondary data analysis rather than new data collection?
- Yes. Primary data collection and secondary data analysis are both acceptable.

96) Do pilot projects need to be focused in the US?
- Yes, as the focus of the COE needs to be on US health disparity populations. It is possible that pilot projects may involve the use of existing foreign data for comparison, but foreign components are not allowed.

97) Can funds be used to pay for teaching release time for eligible junior faculty who are working in an approved pilot project?
- Yes.

98) Can a collaborating institution administer the pilot projects?
- This is not prohibited by the FOA, but the applicant should consider why this arrangement is preferable to administration by the applicant institution.

99) As a cooperative agreement, does NIMHD expect to have a role in reviewing pilot projects?
- The NIMHD Project Scientist of the COE may play a role in the review of applications in accordance with the roles and responsibilities described in the RFA. The NIMHD Program Official and Grants Management Specialist will be involved in reviewing and approving pilot projects that involve human subjects or live vertebrate animals prior to their initiation because the NIMHD's prior approval of them is required.

100) Would it be acceptable to require PIs of pilot projects to get mentorship on their projects from a subcontracted institution?

- Applicants are free to determine what mentorship pilot project PIs will receive. There is no requirement that mentors be from the applicant institution.

Community Engagement Core

101) Does the Community Engagement and Dissemination Core have more of an emphasis on community dissemination than community engagement?
- This core does have a greater emphasis on community dissemination, as it is expected that all Research Projects and Pilot Projects will also contain community or stakeholder engagement elements. Please refer to the instructions for the Research Strategy and the Review Criteria for this core regarding what kinds of activities reviewers will be assessing.

Other Questions

102) Will a new investigator who is a PI of a Center research project (but not of the entire program) retain new investigator status when applying for R01 grants?
- Serving as the PI or MPI on a Center Core or Research Project will not change an investigator's new investigator status.

103) May we recruit and support new post-doctoral scholars from Center funds?
- Eligible post-doctoral scholars may be compensated for services rendered as PIs of approved pilot projects. Moreover, post-doctoral scholars may be compensated for services rendered as personnel on Center Cores and Research Projects. Supporting a post-doctoral program with training 'slots', stipends or fellowships, as might be done with an NRSA T or F award, is not allowable under this FOA.

104) For post-doc fellows, is it possible to cover tuition remission if they are getting a degree specific to health equity?
- Tuition remission may be allowable as a form of compensation for services rendered to the grant-supported project in specific situations, but it is not allowable as educational assistance (e.g., not as a scholarship, fellowship, stipend or student aid cost). See the NIH Grants Policy Statement at Page IIA-69, available at https://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/nihgps/nihgps.pdf.

105) Are dissertation costs an allowable expense?
- No. Pilot project eligibility is limited to eligible post-doctoral fellows, junior faculty and other early stage investigators. However, funded COEs can apply to support the dissertation research of pre-doctoral students from underrepresented backgrounds through Diversity Supplements submitted after the COE is awarded.

106) Will this FOA be released again next year?
- There is not a specific plan, at this time, to re-issue the FOA next year. Investigators interested in submitting a Center grant application are encouraged to submit under this announcement rather than waiting for future announcements.

107) How will geographic location factor into making funding decisions?
- NIMHD is interested broad representation of regions across the US among funded COEs rather than having a high concentration of awards in single cities or states. Geographic representation will therefore be one of multiple factors than will be considered in making funding decisions.

108) How much weight will prior experience with cooperative agreements carry?
- Reviewers will evaluate the overall experience of expertise of Center personnel. Experience with cooperative agreements (as distinguished from grants, contracts, or other funding mechanisms) is not a requirement.

109) Will cross-institutional collaboration be promoted after award?
- COE PIs are expected to attend an annual, in-person NIMHD COE grantees meeting. Other communication and collaboration across COEs is encouraged but not required in the FOA.

110) How will the center grant be reviewed and scored -- as a whole? or will each component (each research project, and each core) be scored independently?
- Each application will be discussed as a whole. Reviewers will provide an overall impact score to reflect their assessment of the entire application. This Impact-Overall score will appear on the face page of the summary statement. Additionally, during the discussion, reviewers will provide an impact score to reflect their assessment of each component. These component scores will be captured within the summary statement.