

Tips for NIMHD Loan Repayment Program Applications CLINICAL RESEARCH FOR PERSONS FROM DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS (L32) and MINORITY HEALTH AND HEALTH DISPARITIES RESEARCH (L60)
New (Type 1) and Renewal (Type 2) Applications

Review Criteria:

The primary consideration is to assess the potential of the applicant to pursue a career in clinical research. The review panel shall not consider the merit of the already funded research of the applicant or the mentor but does evaluate how the applicant talks about research that demonstrates that they are knowledgeable about the research process. The points below are designed to assist the applicant in understanding what may have driven a reviewer's score on a particular review criteria. Think about these points in terms of how you have or you may need to address each point to improve the quality of your application

A. Potential of the applicant to pursue a career in health disparities or clinical research

1. Appropriateness of the applicant's previous training and experience to prepare for a health disparities or clinical research career
 - Show doctoral level training and experience as hands-on investigator having held positions as research associate, project manager, and PI.
 - Show preparation for a health disparities or clinical research career through training such as coursework, work on research projects, work with mentors, publications, etc.
 - Describe hands-on investigator held positions as research associate, project manager or PI, including what you contributed to the projects specifically.
 - Present case for training/preparedness for specific skills needed to complete proposed work.
 - Address all aspects of the bio-sketch form concretely giving evidence of scientific contributions and accomplishments.
 - Ensure that work and experience that is described elsewhere in the application is aligned with bio-sketch.
 - If you have a limited number of first authored peer reviewed publications in health disparities or on clinical research, explain what you plan to do to increase publications and scientific focus on health disparities or clinical research.
 - Describe other markers of productivity such as grant applications and presentations.
 - Attend carefully to formatting of application or parts of the application as this is a demonstration of professionalism.

2. Appropriateness of the proposed research activities during the LRP award period to foster a career in health disparity or clinical research. The research is not evaluated on its scientific merits per se, but as a vehicle to help the applicant pursue a clinical research career.
 - Show detailed research plan for the two-year period – including completing the research, publication and grant proposals.

- Whether mentored or independent, include a mentorship or career development plan with adequate specific details of objectives and/or outcomes.
 - Describe in detail the mentorship needed to oversee/guide new skill development (i.e., working with new population, new research skill, etc).
 - Include a description of the research plan with milestones leading to expanding health disparity or clinical research career development.
 - Describe additional training i.e. seminars, workshops, etc. to enhance health disparities or clinical research career development.
 - Discuss short and long-term career development plan to become an independently funded health disparities or clinical researcher in concrete terms, with a timeline for milestones, interaction with mentors if appropriate, which includes publications and grant proposals.
3. Commitment to a health disparities or clinical research career, as reflected by the personal statement of long-term career goals and plan to achieve those goals
- The short and long-term goals should reflect an intention to become an independent NIH funded health disparities or clinical researcher, what has been done in the past and is currently being done and what one plans to do to reach that goal.
 - If you describe more than one project, be sure to show how they are related to or build on each other. Too many research activities may make the applicant seem scattered, disjointed and unfocused.
 - Provide evidence for continuing commitment to a health disparities or clinical research career after the award period.
 - Discuss how various research activities contribute to building a health disparities or clinical research career.
4. Strength of the reference letters (recommendations) attesting to the applicant's potential for a successful career in clinical research
- Letters should contain a concrete expression of confidence from mentor in applicant's commitment to a health disparities or clinical research career.
 - Letters should describe how mentors will work with the applicant to support career development.
 - Letters of support should show detailed knowledge of the applicant's work and discuss potential impact of applicant's health disparities or clinical research on the field.
 - Letters of support that are brief, lukewarm, and lacking evidence of mentors' detailed knowledge of the applicant hurt the application.
5. **For renewal applications (also known as type 2 applications)**, progress under the previous project period is an additional evaluation criterion:
- a. Assessment of the renewal applicant's research accomplishments during the previous LRP support period.
- Describe research accomplishments, including publications, grant proposals, presentations as well as roles in research projects funded to PI mentor.
 - Explain a lack of or low publication record. Explain any significant, disciplinary or life situations it may reflect and a plan to address the publication record.
 - Describe manuscripts submitted: to whom, outcome if known (in review, revise and resubmit, approved for publication, publication date).
 - Describe grant proposals submitted: to whom, outcome if known (in review, reviewed and scored, pending funding, funded, unfunded).

- Provide a clear description of research accomplishments during the prior funding period.
 - Provide a detailed discussion of how applicant's research direction is distinct from the mentors'.
- b. Assessment of the renewal applicant's development as an independent investigator
- Describe activities to obtain independent funding.
 - Describe scientific contributions and dissemination in publications or presentations.
 - Include information about progress toward an academic or other research position.
 - Mention all publications and grant proposals submitted and their status showing movement towards becoming an independent NIH funded researcher.

B. Quality of the overall environment to prepare the applicant for a health disparity or clinical research career

6. Quality and availability of appropriate scientific mentors and colleagues to help achieve or enhance the applicant's research independence, including the mentors' record in mentoring researchers, funding history and research productivity
- While not required, it is highly recommended, if applicable, that a mentorship team comprising at least 1 NIH funded researcher and 1 scholar with a record of research in health disparity or clinical research to mentor career development in those areas.
 - Mention the mentorship record of the members of the mentorship team.
 - Describe the plan/schedule for regular research meetings with colleagues.
 - Describe the mentors' record of research productivity (grant funding, publication, mentee success at becoming independent investigators).
 - Describe the university or institution provided activities, infrastructure or other support.
 - Provide a description of how applicant will work with scientific mentors, i.e. schedule meeting times, concrete outcomes.
 - Discuss how members of mentorship team complement each other to address the skills applicant needs to develop for a career as an independent NIH funded researcher.
 - Mentors can be located at other universities or organizations; however, each applicant must have a supervisor at their university.
7. Quality and appropriateness of institutional resources and facilities
- Discuss institutional resources to provide applicant with a supportive research environment to develop an independent research career.
 - Describe both local and extended research network to support development of an independent research career.