

NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
CONCEPT CLEARANCE

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Title of Initiative: Clinical Research Education and Career Development (CRECD) Program

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Objectives: The purpose of the Clinical Research Education and Career Development (CRECD) Program is to support research educational activities to enhance diversity for the research workforce in clinical and translational sciences by providing grant support to low-resource institutions that offer doctorate degrees in the health professions or in a health-related science. This is a renewal of [PAR-16-350](#).

The program's long-term goal is to develop a cadre of well-trained clinician scientists, particularly those from underrepresented groups, who fully grasp the complex issues associated with diseases that disproportionately impact minority and underserved populations that experience health disparities. Awards are intended to support clinical research education and skills development for postdoctoral scholars with clinical degrees, leading to a Master's degree in clinical research, public health, or population health, coupled with mentored experiences in clinical, translational, population health, and/or patient-oriented research on minority health and health disparities.

Background: NIH is committed to increasing and sustaining the diversity of the biomedical research workforce. Scientists and trainees from diverse backgrounds and life experiences bring different perspectives, creativity, and individual enterprise to address complex scientific problems. Reports from the Association of American Medical Colleges, the National Academy of Sciences and other stakeholders highlight the need to enhance the diversity of clinician scientists, whose small numbers are insufficient to meet the increasing needs for clinical research (<https://nces.nsf.gov/pubs/nsf19304/>, <https://www.aamc.org/data-reports>). To help meet this need, NIMHD has supported the CRECD Award program since 2011 through R25 science education grants.

The CRECD R25 award is unique as it provides support in two components, referred to as Phase I and Phase II. Phase I offers structured didactic curricula for skill development leading to a Master's degree; Phase II provides mentored research experiences. It was recognized that candidates who have completed Phase I would benefit from additional mentored clinical research experiences (with protected time for research) before they could successfully compete for external grant support.

Progress of CRECD Program: CRECD awards have collectively yielded more than 200 Scholars with MSCR or MPH degrees, over 90% of whom are from underrepresented groups—mainly African American, Hispanic/Latino, and American Indian. CRECD Scholars have continued to pursue research careers and have received funding from NIH as well as from other federal agencies, state and local agencies, industry, and private foundations. They have made significant contributions in the areas of clinical and translational research, minority health

research, and health disparities research, collectively publishing over 400 papers in peer-reviewed journals.

Scientific Need: Although NIH supports a variety of R25 science education programs, their scope is typically limited to short-term summer courses or one-year programs at predoctoral levels. Likewise, although NIH and NIMHD support several mentored career development award mechanisms such as K08 and K23, those programs do not support curriculum enhancement in low-resource minority-serving institutions and do not target clinician scientists from underrepresented groups with a focus on minority health and health disparities research.

Description of Initiative: The purpose of this initiative is to promote and support research educational activities to enhance the diversity of the clinical and translational research workforce. The program will promote the development of well-trained independent investigators who can conduct clinical and translational research in the fields of minority health and health disparities.

Awards will provide up to five years of support consisting of two components. Phase I is intended to improve existing courses by offering a structured didactic program and mentored clinical research project leading to a Master of Science in Clinical Research, Master of Public Health, or Master of Population Health degree for participants. Phase II provides up to three years of mentored research experiences in clinical research to better position scholars to become independent clinical, translational and population health investigators.