

NIH Update

QRAM

February 17, 2021

Prohibition on Expending NIH Grant Funds for Covered Telecommunications Equipment or Services

- OMB revised 2 CFR Part 200 to align with Section 889 of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 ([Public Law 115-232](#)) and the revision was effective for all agencies on August 13, 2020.
 - Recipients and subrecipients are prohibited from expending **grant** funds to:
 - Procure or obtain; extend or renew a contract to procure or obtain; or enter into a contract (or extend or renew a contract) to procure or obtain equipment, services, or systems that use covered telecommunications equipment or services as a substantial or essential component of any system, or as critical technology as part of any system.
- Learn more: [NOT-OD-21-041 and FAQs](#)

Requirement for Trainee Diversity Report to be Submitted Electronically

- Beginning October 30, 2020, recipients are required to submit Trainee Diversity Reports electronically
- Applies to awards that require appointments through the xTrain system, including the following:
- T15, T32, T34, T35, T37, T42, T90, TL1, TU2, TL4, TU2, K12/KL2, R25, R38, R90, RL5, RL9
- RPPRs lacking an electronically generated report will not be accepted.
- For the K12/KL2, R25, KM1 and R90, eRA will check whether an appointment has been made. If an appointment was made, NIH will require an electronically generated report. If no appointment was made the system will not be able to generate a report and a manual upload will be required.
- Learn more: NOT-OD-20-178

DHHS Salary Cap Increase 2021

- Salary limitation on direct salary for individuals under NIH grants, contracts and cooperative agreement awards has increased to the **current Executive Level II salary of \$199,300** effective January 3, 2021. This change is also applicable to the agencies under the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), including, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).
- For all federal awards subject to this increase, PIs may rebudget to accommodate the current Executive Level II salary level if adequate funds are available. Please note that no additional funds will be awarded by the federal government to cover this increase.
- **For UCI, this increase becomes effective for pay periods beginning February 1, 2021. Please note that UCOP has submitted a request to the UC Path team to update the DHHS salary cap in UC Path.**
- Learn More: NOT-OD-21-057

Notice of Legislative Mandates in Effect for FY 2021

- Provides current requirements outlined in statutory provisions that limits or conditions the use of funds on NIH grant, cooperative agreement, and contract awards for FY 2021.
- Review the notice for additional information regarding this policy update.
- Learn More: [NOT-OD-21-056](#)

Notice of Fiscal Policies in Effect for FY 2021

- Provides guidance about the NIH Fiscal Operations for Fiscal Year 2021 and implements the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021* ([Public Law 116-260](#)), signed into law on December 27, 2020.
- The following NIH fiscal policies are instituted in FY 2021:
 - **FY 2021 Funding Levels:** Non-competing continuation awards made in FY 2021 will generally be issued at the commitment level indicated on the Notice of Award. The NIH awarding Institutes/Centers (ICs) will develop and post their fiscal policies consistent with overall NIH goals and available FY 2021 funds.
 - **Next Generation Researchers Initiative Policy:** NIH will prioritize meritorious R01-equivalent applications from [Early Stage Investigator \(ESI\)](#) PD/PIs. By providing funding priority for ESIs, NIH intends to encourage funding applications that involve researchers earlier in their career in accordance with the policy established in FY 2017 and described in NIH Guide Notice [NOT-OD-17-101](#).

Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award (NRSA) Stipends, Tuition/Fees and Other Budgetary Levels Effective for Fiscal Year 2021

- This Notice supersedes NOT-OD-20-070 and establishes stipend levels for fiscal year (FY) 2021 Kirschstein-NRSA awards for undergraduate, predoctoral, and postdoctoral trainees and fellows.
- The Training Related Expenses and Institutional Allowances for predoctoral and postdoctoral trainees and fellows and the Tuition and Fees for all educational levels remain unchanged from the prior budget year.
- The budgetary categories described in this Notice apply only to Kirschstein-NRSA awards made with FY 2021 funds.
- All FY 2021 awards previously issued using [NOT-OD-20-070](#) will be revised to adjust funding to the FY 2021 levels.
- Appointments to institutional training grants that have already been awarded in FY 2021 must be amended to reflect the FY 2021 stipend levels once the training grant award has been adjusted by the awarding agency.
- Learn More: NOT-OD-21-049

Updated Guidelines for Enhancing Diversity and Creating Safe Environments in Conferences Supported by NIH Grants and Cooperative Agreements

- This Notice provides updated guidance on enhancing the diversity of conferences supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) (under the R13 and U13 activity codes) and replaces previous guidance in [NOT-OD-03-066 Guidelines For Inclusion Of Women, Minorities, And Persons With Disabilities In NIH-Supported Conference Grants](#).
- It also reiterates the expectation that organizers of NIH-supported conferences maintain inclusive, safe, and respectful environments for all attendees and provides examples of strategies to accomplish this expectation.

Updated Guidelines for Enhancing Diversity and Creating Safe Environments in Conferences Supported by NIH Grants and Cooperative Agreements (cont.)

- Conference grant applicants (R13/U13) must include plans to enhance diversity during the selection of organizing committees, speakers, other invited participants, such as session chairs and panel discussants, and attendees.
- Plans to enhance diversity will be assessed during the scientific and technical merit review of the application. Plans will be considered in the overall impact score.
- Awardees will be required to report on the effectiveness of plans to enhance diversity of underrepresented groups in annual Research Performance Progress Reports (RPPR) and the Final-RPPR.
- Learn more: NOT-OD-21-053

Notice of Changes in the Review Criteria for Applications Submitted for NIH Support for Scientific Conferences (R13 and U13)

- Changes to the review criteria for applications submitted to NIH for support of Scientific Conferences (R13 and U13) related to the implementation of guidelines announced in [NOT-OD-21-053](#) *Updated Guidelines for Enhancing Diversity and Creating Safe Environments in Conferences Supported by NIH Grants and Cooperative Agreements*.
- All changes take effect for R13/U13 applications submitted for the April 12, 2021 application due date.
- Applications submitted to NIH for support of Scientific Conferences (R13 and U13) are required to include a Diversity Plan. Reviewers will consider the Diversity Plan in determining the scientific and technical merit of the application, and in providing an overall impact score. The Diversity Plan will be evaluated as an additional review criterion and not receive a separate criterion score.

Notice of Changes in the Review Criteria for Applications Submitted for NIH Support for Scientific Conferences (R13 and U13) (cont.)

- R13/U13 applicants should describe in the Personal Statement of the Biographical Sketch senior/key persons' past experiences with enhancing diversity by increasing the participation of individuals from diverse backgrounds, including those from underrepresented groups, in biomedical sciences.
- Reviewers will be asked to evaluate:
 - Is(are) the PD(s)/PI(s) well suited for organizing and fulfilling the goals of this conference, including efforts to enhance diversity?
 - Are the qualifications and past performance of the PD(s)/PI(s) appropriate, and are they well suited for their described roles in the conference?
 - Are the key personnel and selected speakers appropriate and well suited for their described roles in the conference?
- Learn More: [NOT-OD-21-055](#)