Today’s Webinar - Participants

PRAT Program Leadership

• Desirée Salazar, Ph.D., PRAT Director
• Edgardo Falcon, Ph.D., PRAT Co-Director

PRAT Fellows and Alumni

• Philip Adams, Ph.D., NICHD
• Sofia Beas, Ph.D., NIMH
• Sofiya Hupalo, Ph.D., NINDS
• Tommy Vo, Ph.D., NCI
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Use #NIGMSPRAT
Today’s Webinar - Format

• PRAT program

• PRAT application process & review

• Hearing from PRAT fellows!

• Your questions
PRAT Program
NIGMS PRAT Program

• Competitive **three-year** postdoctoral fellowship program that provides high quality research training in the basic biomedical sciences in NIH **intramural research laboratories**, and prepares fellows for leadership positions in biomedical careers

• Provides stipend, health insurance, and travel/training allowance

• Access to extensive NIH resources – facilities, expertise, collaborations, and **office of intramural training and education**

• Structured postdoctoral program with defined training components

[https://www.nigms.nih.gov/Training/Pages/PRAT.aspx](https://www.nigms.nih.gov/Training/Pages/PRAT.aspx)
PRAT Curriculum Principles

- Leadership
- Communication
- Networking
- Mentorship
- Biomedical Ecosystem Knowledge
- Diversity
- Service
Sample of PRAT Training Activities

• Seminar series (twice per month)
  o UT Southwestern, University of Arizona, Children’s National Health System, MBL, CSU Long Beach, UC Davis, NIAID

• Professional skills development & communications training
  o Three Minute Talks
  o DISC Workshop – Understanding your Behavioral Style
  o NIH Funding Panel

• Annual Symposium – “Diversity, Equity and Scientific Excellence”
  o Keynote speakers: Namandjé Bumpus (Hopkins); Gina Poe (UCLA)
Sample of PRAT Training Activities

- Established & Early Career Scientific Leaders
  
  - Julie Funk
    University of Arizona
  
  - Arturo Zavala
    California State University, Long Beach
  
  - Michael D.L. Johnson
    University of Arizona
    2020 NIGMS Director’s Early Career Investigator Lecturer

- Annual Scientific Symposium
  
  - Namandjé Bumpus
    Johns Hopkins University
  
  - Gina Poe
    UCLA
Recent PRAT Alumni – Career Outcomes

Sample of Post-PRAT Institutions

- Yale
- USU
- University of Washington
- NIH
- FDA
- Genentech
- Pfizer
- AAAS
- Cooley

N=77 PRAT alumni (2005 – 2020)

Academia (n=29) - 38%
Government (n=24) - 31%
Industry (n=16) - 21%
Other (n=8) - 10%

https://www.nigms.nih.gov/training/PRAT/Pages/prat-alumni.aspx
PRAT Application Process & Review
NIGMS PRAT Program - Eligibility

• Citizenship - US citizens and permanent residents

• Scientific focus – All research areas supported by NIGMS

• Career stage
  o Current NIH postdocs must have started no earlier than June 1, 2020
  o Graduate students who intend to begin postdoc experience at NIH by fall 2022

We are especially interested in ensuring the applicant pool reflects the diversity of the biomedical Ph.D. talent pool.
NIGMS Research Areas

- Biological chemistry
- Biophysics
- Bioinformatics
- Cell & molecular biology
- Computational biosciences
- Developmental biology
- Genetics
- Immunology
- Neuroscience
- Pharmacology
- Physiology
- Technology development
Currently 23 PRAT Fellows at 11 ICs

- NHGRI (n=3)
- NIAMS (n=3)
- NICHD (n=3)
- NIDA (n=3)
- NCI (n=2)
- NIAID (n=2)
- NIDDK (n=2)
- NINDS (n=2)
- CC (n=1)
- NCCIH (n=1)
- NIEHS (n=1)

Identifying a Mentor

- The NIH Intramural Program has approximately 1200 investigators who can be identified by scientific focus area or by name.
- OITE webpage of postdoc positions (career services tab)
- Intramural Training Directors can also be extremely helpful in understanding training opportunities and mentors in their institutes.
PRAT Application Process

• Competitive application process - Fi2 (i= intramural) mechanism with applications submitted via grants.gov

• Read everything thoroughly
  • Specific guidance for each part of the application (e.g. length, content, due date)

• Begin or continue record of independent funding

# NIH Application Guide

## Application Form Instructions

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### Filtered Application Instructions

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# NIGMS PRAT Program – FOA

## Department of Health and Human Services
### Part 1. Overview Information

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<td>National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS)</td>
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## Related Notices


**FOA = Funding Opportunity Announcement**
Important Dates:

**Due Date** – October 4, 2021 (work with Institute Signing Official early)

Review timeframe - Feb/March 2022

Selection – May/June 2022

Starting Date – September 2022

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**Application Due Date(s)**

October 2, 2019; October 2, 2020; October 4, 2021, by 5:00 PM local time of applicant organization. All types of applications allowed for this funding opportunity announcement are due on these dates.

Applicants are encouraged to apply early to allow adequate time to make any corrections to errors found in the application during the submission process by the due date.

**AIDS Application Due Date(s)**

Not Applicable

**Scientific Merit Review**

February - March 2020; February - March 2021; February - March 2022

**Advisory Council Review**

Not Applicable for Fellowships

**Earliest Start Date**

August 2020; August 2021; August 2022

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Interacting with Institute AOR

• Application needs to be submitted by Institute where proposed work will be conducted. Each Institute has one or more designated AORs.

• Make sure you contact your AOR **early in the process**
  • Many can be found here: [https://www.nigms.nih.gov/training/PRAT/Pages/prat-faq.aspx#q7](https://www.nigms.nih.gov/training/PRAT/Pages/prat-faq.aspx#q7)
  • Contact desiree.salazar@nih.gov or edgardo.falcon@nih.gov if you need help identifying who this is

• The AOR will submit the application on your behalf and has important information you need.

• The AOR needs to create an eRA Commons account for PI and Sponsor(s)

• You will need to schedule a time to upload your grant with your AOR. Respect the AOR’s deadlines.

**AOR= Authorized Organization Representative**
Application 101

• Terminology
  • The institute where you perform the work (e.g. NIMH) is the applicant
  • You, the postdoc, are the PI (no multi-PIs)
  • Your preceptor is the sponsor (you can have multiple)

• Ensure all requirements of the FOA are met – incomplete applications are returned without review

• Demonstrate integration of research and training components, and additional training potential

• Contact AOR early in the process

AOR= Authorized Organization Representative
Leadership Statement (1 page)

- Past leadership and service activities in the scientific community, or to enhance public engagement or understanding of scientific research

- Commitment to diversity in the biomedical sciences, and your leadership, mentoring and outreach activities to enhance diversity – especially involving groups underrepresented in the biomedical research enterprise

- Planned activities during the fellowship to develop or enhance leadership skills

- The leadership statement is a required component of the PRAT application. Applications without a leadership statement will not be reviewed.
PRAT Application – Tips for Successful Review

• Fellowship Applicant
  o Tell your story
  o Clearly articulate career goal

• Sponsors, Collaborators and Consultants
  o Important to provide a detailed and tailored plan for you (e.g., mentorship, career advancement)
  o Robust training plan, mentoring and training record (as applicable)
  o If multiple mentors, explain how they’ll work together for your training
  o Use current NIH biosketch
  o Collaborators should provide letters of support (different from reference letter)
PRAT Application – Tips for Successful Review

• Research Training Plan
  - Rationale
    - Significance – literature/preliminary data supporting feasibility
    - Central hypothesis (in addition to aim specific hypotheses)
  - Approach
    - Ambitious but not unrealistic
    - Aims should be related but not interdependent
    - Discuss expected outcomes, potential challenges, and alternative strategies
    - Statistical analysis (e.g., sample size, power analysis) and attention to relevant biological variables
  - Avoid jargon, and don’t “oversell” proposal
PRAT Application – Tips for Successful Review

• Training Potential
  - Clarify training benefit (e.g., new system, techniques, or skills)
  - Can include OITE programs, FAES Courses, conferences, etc.
  - Should include PRAT program activities

• Institutional Environment and Commitment to Training
  - Why this is the best environment to conduct the proposed research training

The entire application is reviewed — a rigorous research proposal is necessary but not sufficient
Criteria for Application Withdrawal

• For any application due date, multiple applications have the same primary sponsor.

• Missing biosketch for any key personnel (PI or sponsors) or leadership statement.

• Inappropriate or incomplete letters of reference.
  ○ Three letters of reference are **required**
  ○ Key personnel on the application (e.g. your sponsor and collaborators) cannot provide reference letters.
Reference Letters

- **Electronic submission** of a letter of reference is a separate process from application submission.

- Reference letters are submitted directly through the eRA Commons and do not use Grants.gov

- This process requires that the referee be provided:
  - The PI’s (candidate’s) eRA Commons user name,
  - The PI’s first and last name as they appear on the PI’s eRA Commons account, and
  - The number assigned to this Funding Opportunity Announcement (PAR-19-286).

- **Letters can be submitted well in advance of application being submitted**—ask early.

**Letters are due 5 PM on due date. NO GRACE PERIOD**
Common Mistakes – Big Picture

• Not giving yourself enough time to:
  o Identify a mentor in the NIH Intramural Research Program
  o Work on the proposal
  o Work with the AOR on logistics of submission

• Incomplete application – letters of reference, biosketch, or leadership statement

• Forgetting to send an update if a paper is accepted between submission and review of the application

Hearing from PRAT Fellows
Philip Adams (NICHD) “Discovering RNA regulators in the Lyme disease pathogen”

Sofia Beas (NIMH) “A thalamo-striatal pathway mediating adaptive behaviors following homeostatic challenges”

Sofiya Hupalo (NINDS) “Prefrontal-hippocampal-thalamic circuit function in a SETD1A-deficient model of schizophrenia risk”

Tommy Vo (NCI) "Investigating the traffic-control mechanisms directing epigenetic gene regulation"
NIGMS PRAT Program – 2022 Recruitment

• Timeline
  o October 4, 2021 – Application deadline
  o February/March 2022 – Peer review
  o May/June 2022 – Notification
  o September 2022 – PRAT start

• PRAT home page
• PRAT Funding Opportunity Announcement
• For more information – desiree.salazar@nih.gov and edgardo.falcon@nih.gov & follow us @NIGMSTraining
Extramural NIH Training Opportunities for Postdocs

NIGMS Division of Training Workforce Development and Diversity

• F32

• IRACDA

• Research Supplements to Promote Diversity

NIH Extramural Research Training Website
Questions?
Thank you for listening & good luck with your application!