Academic Research Enhancement Award (AREA) Program

Erica Brown, PhD
Director, NIH AREA Program
National Institutes of Health

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Overview

• Background information on AREA program
• Applying for an AREA grant
• Funding for the AREA program
• Strategies for successfully competing for AREA funding
BACKGROUND INFORMATION
Purpose of the AREA Program

Support *small-scale research projects* in the biomedical and behavioral sciences conducted by *faculty and students* in educational institutions that have *not been major recipients* of NIH research grant funds.
Goals of AREA Program

- Support meritorious research
- Expose students to research
- Strengthen the research environment of the institution
UNIQUE ASPECTS OF AREA GRANT APPLICATIONS
Applying for an AREA Grant…

• Funded through the R15 grant mechanism
  – Program Announcement (PA) Number: **PA-12-006**

• Receipt dates
  – AIDS-related research deadlines: May 7, September 7, and January 7
  – Standard application deadlines: February 25, June 25, and October 25

• All NIH ICs participate in the AREA program except FIC, NIMHD, and NCATS
Applying for an AREA Grant…

• Project period is limited up to 3 years
• Direct cost limited to $300,000 over entire project period
• Multiple PIs are allowed
• Research Strategy limited to 12 pages
• Grants are renewable
Eligibility criteria only apply to the applicant institution and the PI of grant applications!
Eligible Institutions

- Institutions offering baccalaureate or advanced degrees in biomedical or behavioral sciences
- Receives less than $6 million per year in NIH support (averaged over 7 years)
- Applicants should consult the list of ineligible institutions on the AREA Program website
  - [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/area.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/area.htm)
- Ineligible institutions may serve as collaborator/consultant on an AREA grant
Eligible Individuals

- Any individual with the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to carry out the proposed research
  - Primary appointment at AREA eligible institution
- PI can not have an active NIH research grant
  - May be a collaborator on an active NIH grant held by another PI
- PI may not be awarded more than one AREA grant at a time
Special Submission Requirements

• A profile of available and former students at the institution (Facilities and Other Resources)
  – Demographics
  – Number who are enrolled in baccalaureate and doctoral degree programs (if applicable)
  – Number who have obtained advanced degrees in the health-related sciences

• A description of the special characteristics of the institution that make it appropriate for an AREA grant (Facilities and Other Resources)
• A brief description of the resources available at other proposed research sites *(Facilities and Other Resources)*

• A statement of institutional support for the proposed research project *(Facilities and Other Resources)*

• Evidence of the PI’s experience in supervising students on a research project *(Biosketch)*
  – Summary in Personal Statement
  – Highlight publications that involved students
A Special Note about the Budget

- Unlike most NIH grants, funds for all project years are awarded upfront (project start date).
- Include the total requested budget for all years of the proposed project in Budget Period 1.
  - For example, if applying for a 3-year grant, request all funds in year 1.
- If the direct costs for all years is $250,000 or less, use the Modular Budget format.
- If the direct costs for all years is more than $250,000, use the R&R Detailed Budget.
- Note: Progress reports still due annually.
FUNDING STATISTICS FOR AREA PROGRAM
NIH Funding Statistics for AREA Program

Excludes awards made with American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds
<table>
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<th>NIH Institutes/Centers</th>
<th>Applications Reviewed</th>
<th>Applications Awarded</th>
<th>Success Rate</th>
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STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS
Build and Sustain a Vital Research Environment

- Understand the NIH extramural research program
  - Know the guidelines, deadlines, submission & correction process, and review criteria
- Make a commitment to establishing an environment in which research can succeed
  - Start up packages for equipment and supplies
  - Credit for student involvement in research
- Consider the importance of collaborative research in establishing a successful research environment
  - Tenure decisions
• Do not pressure investigators to apply if their projects are not ready for peer review
  – Only 2 submissions allowed per project
  – Quality over quantity; submit best application

• Help investigators with the “Facilities and Other Resources” section of application
  – Profile of student body
  – Description of the institution and research environment
  – Letter of institutional commitment to research project
Strategies of Successful Investigators

• Find the NIH Institute or Center that supports your area of research
  – Research objectives of the NIH Institute and Centers
    http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/area_grant_objectives.htm
  – AREA contacts at each NIH Institute and Center

• Include a cover letter suggesting an appropriate Institute and up to three appropriate study sections
  – Study Section expertise
    http://cms.csr.nih.gov/PeerReviewMeetings/CSRIRGDescriptionNew/
  – Study Section rosters
Strategies of Successful Investigators

• Include a collaborator or consultant if you don’t have the necessary expertise or resources

• Understand the review criteria and the review criteria questions
  – Each question should be addressed in the application

• In resubmitted applications, respond thoroughly and diplomatically to all of the reviewer comments

• AREA grant is a research award, not a training award
  – Focus on hands-on research not course work
Strategies of Successful Investigators

- Address the AREA-specific programmatic goals in the application
  - Support meritorious research
    - Research should contribute to the field
    - Results should be publishable
  - Expose students to research
    - Profile of available and former students at the institution
    - Experience of the investigator in working with students
    - How students will be incorporated into the research project
    - How students will benefit from this research experience
  - Strengthen the research environment
    - The suitability of the institution for an award
    - The impact the AREA grant will have on the institution
• Help early career researchers jump start their careers by:
  – showing them how applications are reviewed at CSR
  – helping them develop skills for critical analysis of research aims, designs, and methods

• Provide less research-intensive institutions with opportunities to strengthen the grant writing skills of their faculty

• Website: www.csr.nih.gov/ECR
Early Career Reviewer Program

Requirements for Being an ECR

• Full-time faculty member or researcher
• An active independent research program
• At least 2 recent senior authored research publications
• Has not yet been a reviewer at CSR
• Prior research funding not required

Responsibilities of an ECR

• Participate in reviewer training
• Review 2 to 4 grant applications and provide written critiques
• Attend study section meeting
• Participates in no more than one study section per year and no more than twice total
Thank you…

Erica Brown, PhD
Director, NIH AREA Program
R151@mail.nih.gov

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