

TRI-DDEI Strategies for Training and Advancing under-represented Researchers (STARs) Program Request for Applications

Background

Research shows that diverse teams working together and capitalizing on innovative ideas and distinct perspectives outperform homogenous teams.¹ Scientists and trainees from diverse backgrounds and life experiences bring different perspectives, creativity, and individual enterprise to address complex scientific problems. Benefits that flow from a diverse scientific workforce include fostering scientific innovation, enhancing global and national competitiveness, contributing to robust learning environments for our students, improving research quality, advancing the likelihood that underserved populations participate in, and benefit from health research.^{2:3} For example, underrepresented minority (URM) patients are more likely to choose a URM physician and are more satisfied with their care when a URM physician leads it.^{1:4} In spite of advanced research, minority faculty still have inequitable access to information, professional development and research resources.^{5:6} The problem is not unique to UAMS, it is a societal problem across institutions and funding agencies.⁶ Grant award probability of African American principal investigators (PIs) still remains at 55% that of White PIs with similar academic achievement.⁷ A structured research-mentoring program could help strengthen the research acumen of minority faculty, provide a community of belonging and real support to ensure their success in becoming independent investigators.⁸

The TRI-DDEI STARs Program

The TRI-DDEI STARs program aims to build a peer support community of URM faculty in Biomedical, Clinical, Behavioral and Social Sciences Research to support career development and research success. This will be done by:

- Establishing of a structured peer support group who engage in a 3-month program of grant training and development.⁹ This model addresses issues of isolation often felt by URM faculty in academic settings.⁶ It also provides and encourages the development of innovative research ideas in a safe environment. This peer support group can also help improve confidence and self-efficacy in clinical and translational research development and execution by under-represented faculty.
- Providing practical research skill development and grantsmanship.
- Offering access to research mentors and research support services, i.e. IRB protocol development, recruitment, etc.
- Supplying \$10,000 in funding as a TRI DEI Equity, Diversity, and Grantsmanship Expertise (EDGE) research project.

In addition, the STARs Program aims to promote applications to the TRI Pilot Studies and other funding opportunities, allowing scholars to build their proposal with TRI mentors and apply for follow on funding to build upon their EDGE funding. STARs scholars will be expected to apply for follow on funding within 12 months of completing the STARs didactics.

Eligibility

1. Eligible participants should have a terminal degree; must be full-time faculty at UAMS, UAMS-NW, ACH/ACRI, or CAVHS who hold non-temporary positions at the rank of Instructor, Assistant Professor, or Associate Professor; and must be a US citizen or permanent resident.
2. Faculty must meet the **NIH definition of under representation in Biomedical, Clinical, Behavioral and Social Sciences Research**, as follows:
 - Individuals with disabilities, who are defined as those with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, as described in the [Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended](#).

- Individuals from the following racial and ethnic groups: Blacks or African Americans, Hispanics or Latinos, American Indians or Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders.
- Individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds defined as those who meet two or more of the following criteria (<https://diversity.nih.gov/about-us/population-underrepresented>):
 - Were homeless, as defined by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act;
 - Were in the foster care system, as defined by the Administration for Children and Families;
 - Were eligible for the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program for two or more years;
 - Have/had no parents or legal guardians who completed a bachelor's degree (first-generation college graduate);
 - Were eligible for Federal Pell grants;
 - Received support from the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) as a child;
 - Grew up in one of the following areas:
 - a U.S. rural area, as designated by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Rural Health Grants Eligibility Analyzer, or
 - a Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services-designated Low-Income and Health Professional Shortage Areas

Use of funds

Broad range of research activities, including but not limited to, consultant fees, supplies, software, transcribing and analyzing existing data, data collection, publication fees, participant incentives and other activities to prepare for applying for extramural funding. **Funds must be expended within one year of the award date.**

Award amount: \$10,000

Application Process

The application will include

- Faculty demographics
- Self-reported eligibility that applicant is from a URM group as defined above
- Application research summary letter (no more than 2 pages) that must contain the following:
 - Research questions to be addressed and/or specific aims
 - Project summary
 - How your project aligns with [TRI mission](#) to develop new knowledge and approaches that will measurably address the complex health challenges of rural and underrepresented populations
- Applications are submitted online here: <https://crisredcap.uams.edu/redcap/surveys/?s=WPCJHPCAkk>

Proposal due dates:

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Deadline to Apply: | August 29, 2022 |
| Scholars Notified: | ~September 9, 2022 |
| Didactics Begin: | September 19, 2022 |
| EDGE Funding Starts: | January 2023 |
| TRI Pilot RFA Release: | January 2023 |

Join us August 4, 2022 at 11:00 AM or August 18, 2022 at 12:30 PM for an information session to answer your questions. Please register for the information session by clicking the link: <https://crisredcap.uams.edu/redcap/surveys/?s=9K4NDPYKT948KDAF>

Outcomes/End of Program Report

Each STARs Scholar is expected to

- Submit a final research proposal developed over the course of the didactic training for EDGE funding
- Submit for follow on funding to any intra- or extramural funding opportunity within 12 months of completing STARs didactics
- Submit a manuscript for publication within 18 months of completing STARs didactics. **TRI will pay publication fees for one manuscript accepted for publication.**
- Participate in pre- and post-surveys on grant writing self-assessments

- Provide feedback to the program

Program Structure and Schedule

| Phase 1 – didactics, proposal development | Phase 2 – Project execution and dissemination |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The basics of grantsmanship – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identification of the knowledge gap and strategy to fill it ○ Formulating a central hypothesis <input type="checkbox"/> Developing the specific aims and impact sections <input type="checkbox"/> Writing the significance and innovation sections <input type="checkbox"/> Writing the research plan <input type="checkbox"/> Future studies and creating a powerful title for your proposal | <input type="checkbox"/> EDGE Project execution <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly WIPs/check in <input type="checkbox"/> Outputs** <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Abstract submission ○ Final paper ○ Submit for TRI pilot award or other mechanism |

| Date (maybe subject to change) | Program Activity | Deliverable/assignment |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| ~Sept 2 | STARs Scholars Selected | Project summary and application due Aug 29 |
| ~Sept 9 | Awardees announced | Notice of selection sent to awardees and kickoff of didactics announced |
| Sept 14 afternoon | Didactic Kickoff/Overview of Program | Homework: 250-word abstract of future proposal |
| Sept 20 afternoon | Basics of grantsmanship, specifics of the TRI pilot grant, identification of the knowledge gap and strategy to fill it, formulation of central hypothesis | Homework: ~1-page justification for your hypothesis, single-sentence hypothesis, Specific Aims and impact drafts |
| Oct 4 afternoon | Discussions of the Hypotheses, Specific Aims and Impact sections. How to write Significance and Innovation sections | Homework: Finalizing Specific Aims and Impact; writing Significance and Innovation sections (0.5 page) |
| Oct 21 afternoon | Discussion of Specific Aims and Impact page, Significance and Innovation sections. How to write Approach section: basics. How to peer-review | Homework: Writing first Aim/half of Approach section (~1 page); Internal group peer-review of the Specific Aims page |
| Nov 1 afternoon | Discussion of the 1 st Aim/half of Approach sections. How to write Pitfalls and Alternative Approaches in the Approach section | Homework: Finalizing the Approach section (~1.25 pages) |
| Nov 15 afternoon | Discussion of the Approach sections. How to write Future Studies and create a powerful title for your proposal | Homework: Future studies, Plan for extramural funding (~.25 page), and Title |
| Nov 29 afternoon | Discussion of Future Studies, Extramural Plan and Title | Internal group peer-review of the entire proposal |
| Dec 14 afternoon | Final class discussion/review of final proposal and presentation of TRI pilot RFA | Final proposal for EDGE funding |

References

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- (2) Kandler A, Laland KN. An investigation of the relationship between innovation and cultural diversity. *Theor Popul Biol* 2009; 76(1):59-67.
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- (4) Silver JK, Bean AC, Slocum C, Poorman JA, Tenforde A, Blauwet CA et al. Physician Workforce Disparities and Patient Care: A Narrative Review. *Health Equity* 2019; 3(1):360-377.
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