

# ORDE "KNOW YOUR AGENCY" SERIES: NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON MINORITY HEALTH AND HEALTH DISPARITIES

Agency Site: <http://www.nimhd.nih.gov>

## OVERVIEW

The National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). NIMHD's mission is "to lead scientific research to improve minority health and health disparities" (Source: *About NIMHD web page*). To meet this mission, the Institute supports external and internal research initiatives. NIMHD also serves as an information source for both the medical community and the US public.

The Institute's function dates back to 1990 and the formation of the Office of Minority Programs within the NIH Office of the Director. In 1993, it became the Office of Minority Programs, and in 2000 was elevated to the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities. The National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities became the official designation in 2010 as part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

## *Specific Interests*

NIMHD has identified three research interest areas to advance minority health and address health disparities: 1) Clinical and Health Services Research, 2) Integrative Biological and Behavioral Research, and 3) Community Health and Population Sciences. The Institute has also developed a Research Framework Model incorporating factors to be considered when studying minority health and health disparities. This initial model has been modified for specific health disparity populations as well ([see Dr. Manson's edition specific to Native Americans](#)).

## *Approach*

NIMHD supports external research efforts, providing research funding to universities, medical institutions, non-profit, and for-profit organizations. NIMHD advertises specific interests using requests for applications (RFAs), program announcements, and general program descriptions. Internal research efforts are focused on three disease areas associated with significant health disparities: cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and cancer.

NIH just published the "[Minority Health and Health Disparities Strategic Plan 2021-2025](#)", outlining a variety of specific goals including emphasizing health promotion,

increasing intervention research, improving methodology research, training up the next generation of minority health and health disparities researchers, ensuring representation of minority and other health disparity populations in NIH-funded research, and many others.

## AGENCY ORGANIZATION

Within the structure of NIH, NIMHD has its own Director. The Director, with their leadership team, sets the vision for the Institute and deploys budget resources responsive to that vision. There are three programmatic divisions within the Institute beyond the Office of the Director:

- Science Programs (including extramural research)
- Data Management and Scientific Reporting
- Intramural Research

The National Advisory Council on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NACMHD) provides guidance on the Institute's research portfolio and serves in an advisory capacity for the Health and Human Services Secretary, NIH and NIMHD Directors on matters related to the Institute's mission. The Council has 15 members as well as ex officio members and representatives from other federal agencies.

## NIMHD GRANTS PROCESS

NIMHD offers and/or participates in a range of funding mechanisms including research project grants (R01), small grants (R03), exploratory/developmental research projects (R21), and various center grants. Career (K) awards are also offered as are individual fellowships (National Research Service Awards). Applications are submitted electronically. Funding ranges depend on the grant mechanism and RFA/program announcement requirements. Most grants last 3 to 5 years.

NIMHD receives funding through the Congressional appropriations process that funds NIH. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 NIMHD operating budget was \$391,586 million, representing a 16.6% increase from the previous fiscal year. (Source: [NIH Operating Plan for FY2021](#))

## *FY 2020 Awards/Success Rates*

NIMHD received 437 applications for R01s and R56's and was able to fund 42 for a 9.6% success rate. R21s and R03s

fares worse at 5.7% and 3.8% respectively. K Awards reflected a higher success rate of 36.5% (Source: *The NIMHD Director's Report to the Council, February 2021*).

**Contact with Agency Program Staff:**

NIMHD encourages principal investigators (PIs) to have open discussions with Program Officers from an early stage of project development on topics including how your proposed project relates to Institute priorities, questions about your budget, and how to choose the most appropriate study section. Following peer review, Program Officers can often provide more specific detail about reviewer comments on your Summary Statement.

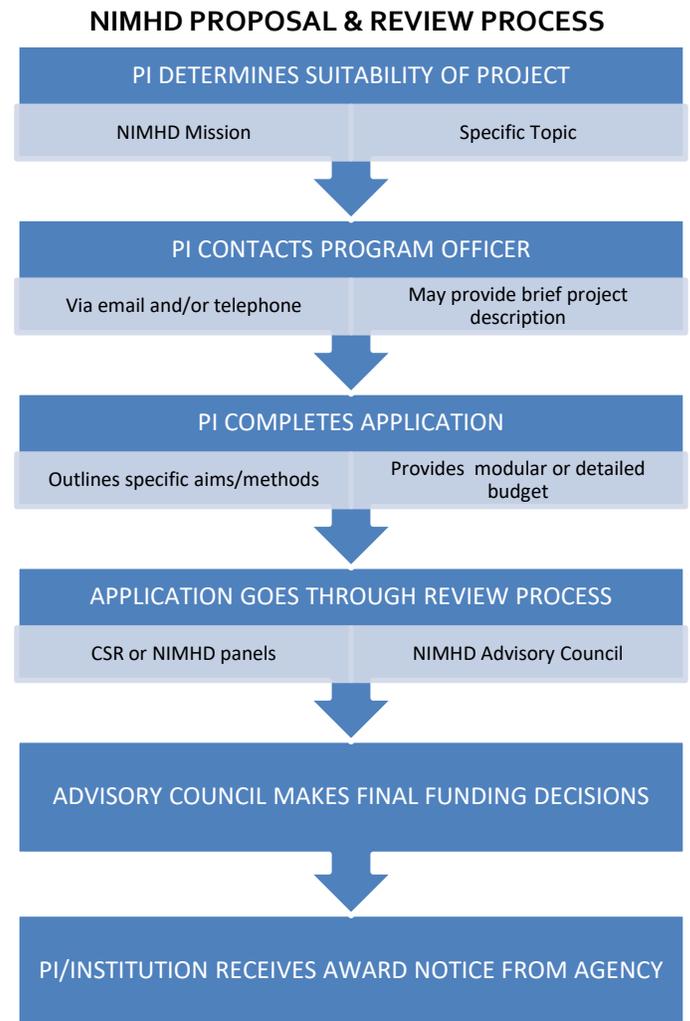
**Typical NIMHD Application Process:**

- 1) PI determines suitability of proposed project to NIMHD mission and specific topic area(s)
- 2) PI contacts Program Officer with questions
- 3) PI completes application
- 4) Application goes to NIH Center for Scientific Review or is reviewed by NIMHD special review panels, depending on grant mechanism; primary, secondary, and tertiary reviewers are assigned applications for review
- 5) Assigned reviewers provide preliminary impact scores and review comments; scores determine if application is discussed at review meeting
- 6) Peer review meeting takes place, led by Scientific Review Officer (SRO); top applications are discussed and study section members provide impact scores for each discussed application
- 7) Best scored applications are reviewed by the National Advisory Council on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NACMHD) (second tier review)
- 8) Advisory Council makes funding recommendations
- 9) Successful PI/institution receive award notice

**Application Review Process:**

Most NIMHD applications are reviewed by Scientific Review Groups (aka study sections) organized by the NIH Center for Scientific Review (CSR). Review criteria include significance, investigator(s), innovation, approach, and environment. Up to three reviewers are assigned to read/evaluate an application, and provide a preliminary impact score. Preliminary scores determine which applications are discussed at the study section meeting. Each application discussed receives a final impact score from all study section members. Applications that score

within funding limits set for that round then go through a second-tier peer review process performed by the NIMHD's Advisory Council.



**What Happens Next?**

PIs may follow review process results via the NIH electronic grants management system, e-Commons. Once initial peer review has concluded, PIs receive Summary Statements. Those who are within or close to the funding parameters of the Institute will be asked to provide additional information concerning current support levels, and human or animal subjects as applicable (known as Just in Time). PIs then receive award notifications.

Those who are not funded will review their Summary Statements, begin to think about how best to address reviewer concerns, and then talk with Program Officers to ascertain further details about the review. Discussing results with mentors and colleagues will be helpful in determining if resubmission is a good choice.