



To: Distribution List

From: Faculty Research Development Office (FRDO)  
Office of the Vice President for Research

Subject: Limited Competition: NIH, Director's Early Independence Awards (RFA-RM-23-007)

Date: April 18, 2023

Dear UNM Researchers,

The NIH **Director's Early Independence Program (DP5)** provides an opportunity for exceptional junior scientists to accelerate their entries into independent research careers by forgoing the traditional post-doctoral training periods. Although most newly graduated doctoral-level researchers would benefit from post-doctoral training, a small number of outstanding junior investigators are capable of launching independent research careers directly. The Early Independence Award is intended for select junior investigators who have already established records of scientific innovation and research productivity, as well as and having demonstrated unusual scientific vision and maturity. Typical post-doctoral training would unnecessarily delay their entries into independent research. Early Independence Awards require significant institutional support, as well as extensive input to the application. **Prospective PIs should contact appropriate institutional leaders to seek an appointment to an independent research position.**

Total funding is approximately \$5 million to support 12-13 awards in FY 2024. Awards will be for up to \$250,000 in direct costs per year, plus applicable F&A costs. The project period is limited to 5 years. Details can be found at <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-RM-23-007.html>. Letters of Intent are **not required** but are requested by August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023 to allow staff to estimate the potential workload and plan the review. The deadline for submitting full proposals to the agency is **September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023**.

**Eligibility:** The receipt date on the official transcript of the doctoral degree or the end of post-graduate clinical training must be between **June 1, 2022 & September 30, 2024**; the *end of post-graduate clinical training* includes residency & fellowship periods. The PI must not have served as a post-doctoral fellow for more than 12 months following a previous, non-terminal doctoral degree before June 1, 2022. **Effort:** In Years 1 & 2 of the project period, awardees must commit **at least 9.6 person-months (80%)** of effort to the Early Independence Award project each year.

This is a limited competition. **Each institution is limited to TWO applications.** Please submit your 3-page preproposal (plus budget and CV; 11-point font) by **NOON on May 15, 2023** via UNM's [InfoReady Review portal](#). No late submissions will be considered.

The pre-proposal should address the major points that will be included in the proposal narrative, including a description of the following:

*Research Objectives:* State your research topic and overall approach. Why is this area of research significant? If you have an overarching hypothesis, what is it? What impact will your research have if successful? What are the major conceptual or technical innovations you are introducing into this research area?

*Institutional Support:* How will the institutional support (including the assurance of research independence) help you accomplish your research objectives?

*Early Independence Rationale:* How will your scientific and technical background, research accomplishments, leadership/mentorship attributes, and scientific vision be leveraged to accomplish the research objectives?

The narrative should be accompanied by a **draft budget overview**, an **abbreviated PI CV**, and an **acknowledgement of support from your chair**. The acknowledgement serves as confirmation that they will hire the applicant into an independent research position if the grant is awarded. For the pre-proposal, you will be able to request this acknowledgement from within the InfoReady application.

Should you have any questions please feel free to contact us at [limited@unm.edu](mailto:limited@unm.edu).

*If you are affiliated with HSC, please contact HSC Limited Competition at [HSC-LimitedComps@salud.unm.edu](mailto:HSC-LimitedComps@salud.unm.edu) for more information.*