



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

Subject: Limited Competitions: NIH Director's Early Independence Awards (DP5 Clinical Trial
Optional)

Date: April 28, 2021

UNM Researchers,

The [NIH Director's Early Independence Award](#) supports exceptional junior investigators who wish to pursue independent research soon after completion of their terminal doctoral degree or post-graduate clinical training, thereby forgoing the traditional post-doctoral training period and accelerating their entry into an independent research career. For the program to support the best possible researchers and research, applications are sought which reflect the full diversity of the research workforce. Individuals from diverse backgrounds, including those from underrepresented groups and from the full spectrum of eligible institutions in all geographic locations, are strongly encouraged to apply to this Funding Opportunity Announcement. *In addition, applications in all topics relevant to the broad mission of NIH are welcome, including, but not limited to, topics in the behavioral, social, biomedical, applied, and formal sciences and topics that may involve basic, translational, or clinical research.* Only single PD/PI applications are allowed.

Given the focus on early research independence, the receipt date of the terminal doctoral degree or end of post-graduate clinical training of the PD/PI must be between **June 1, 2020 and September 30, 2022**. The degree receipt date is that which appears on the official transcript for the degree. The end of post-graduate clinical training includes residency and fellowship periods. The PD/PI must not have served as a post-doctoral fellow for more than twelve months before June 1, 2020. In addition, individuals are eligible only if they, at the time of application submission, do not have research independence. Lack of research independence is defined functionally rather than by position title. Eligible individuals must have all the following characteristics:

- The PD/PI's current research agenda is set through concurrence with mentors.
- The PD/PI's research is funded primarily through support to other investigators (mentored fellowships such as NIH F31 or F32 Fellowships or NSF Graduate Research Fellowships do not preclude eligibility).
- The PD/PI does not have any space assigned directly by the institution for the conduct of his/her research.
- The PD/PI, according to institutional policy, cannot apply for an NIH R01 grant without special waiver or exemption from the institution.

Though PDs/PIs must not be functionally independent at the time of application submission, they may become functionally independent prior to time of award and still retain eligibility for the award.

Awards will be for up to \$250,000 in direct costs per year, plus applicable Facilities and Administrative (F&A) costs for a period of up to five years. Letters of intent are not required, but they are encouraged to be submitted by August 3, 2021 with full proposals due to the NIH by September 3, 2021. More information can be found in the funding announcement at <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-RM-21-018.html>.

This is a limited competition as each institution, as defined by having a unique DUNS number or NIH IPF number, may submit only up to two applications to this FOA. If you are interested in submitting to this program, please prepare and submit a 3-page preproposal narrative (plus cover letter, abbreviated budget and NIH formatted biosketch) to limited@unm.edu by **Thursday, May 27, 2021**. The cover letter should include a title of the proposed project, name, job title (if appropriate) and affiliation of PI, and the date the PI received or will receive their terminal doctoral degree or the date their post-graduate clinical training was completed, whichever is most appropriate. The narrative should be divided into three sections following the guidelines below:

- **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, facilitate the accomplishment of 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?

Should you have any questions please feel free to contact us at limited@unm.edu.

If you are affiliated with HSC, please contact Corey Ford (CFord@salud.unm.edu) or Cassandra Misenar (CMisenar@salud.unm.edu) for more information.