FAQs for T15 Training Program

Application Process

1. Q: Can the T15 applications be submitted via ASSIST, instead of Grants.gov?
   A: Yes.

2. Q: We have multiple campuses, each with its own DUNS number. How many applications can my organization submit?
   A: An application can come from each DUNS number. However, NLM will not fund more than one application at an organization; multiple applications will compete against one another.

3. Q: Will requesting a small number of slots make our application less competitive?
   A: Reviewers will assess your ability to find qualified applicants, not the number of slots.

4. Q: For slots funded by other NIH Institutes/Center, will the review process be the same or will there be separate review considerations?
   A: NLM will conduct their review of the applications, and within the context of those being considered for funding, NIEHS will decide which slots to support.

5. Q: What is the line limit for the Project Summary/Abstract?
   A. Applicants should follow the application guide instructions and restrict to the 30-line limit.

6. Q. If my training program does not exist, what information should be submitted for Qualifications of Recent Applicants (Tables 8 A-B) and Qualification of Current Trainees (Tables 9 A-B)?
   A. For applicants seeking to add a program to a university center or department, that already has similar trainees funded through other sources, list the other similar trainees, to give reviewers a sense of the kinds of trainees the training program attracts. If this is done, include an explanatory note explaining what the table reflects and why.

7. Q: When there are more than 5 or even scores of authors, should all authors be listed?
   A: No. Follow the bibliography format of standard writing guides, usually reducing to the first 3 and et al. Or use some approximation of that which shows the name you want to highlight, but be consistent in how you do it.

Trainees

1. Q: If a trainee's mentor is no longer at the university, can we list them and their publications?
   A: Yes, provide an explanatory note.

2. Q: The tuition reimbursement levels differ for degree and non-degree seeking post-docs. Do institutions have to specify between degree and non-degree seeking post-docs?
   A: The budget you request will be locked in your Notice of Award for 5 years, so it's best to evaluate your program as closely as possible, and determine what tuition expenditures you are likely to need.

3. Q: What if a trainee had two mentors during training?
   A: You may list both mentors, perhaps annotating the difference, and adding an explanatory note

4. Q: If a postdoc has changed mentors, where do we list their publications?
   A: You may list with both new and old mentors, with an explanatory note

5. Q: Do T15s prefer to fund pre-docs for longer periods?
   A: Yes. NLM supports predoctoral trainees for up to 5 years, so they can complete their PhD studies. This differs from the practices of other NIH Institutes that use the T32 mechanism.

6. Q: Is there a maximum length of time for post-doc training?
   A: NLM offers up to 3 years of post-doc support.

7. Q: What are the expectations of research time commitment for post-docs vs training time expectations?
   A: NLM trainees are expected to be full time. If the trainee is a post-doc, their research is the training. As a reminder, unlike NSRA post-docs, NLM post-docs do not have a payback requirement.

8. Q: Do STTPs (Short Term Training Positions) make the application more competitive?
   A: The STTP is a strategy that NLM offers its training programs so they can enhance their diversity recruitment plans by creating the pipeline for diversity. Not having STTPs does not work against a training program applicant.

9. Q: Is it preferable to fund the same pre-doc trainee for 3, 4, or 5 years?
   A: NLM feels that it is better a training model to support trainees through both their coursework and their PhD research. Many NIH institutional training grants support only the coursework portion and then move trainees onto research grants for the remainder of their training. NLM's training model doesn't preclude this, but it would be expected that an NLM predoctoral trainee who was moved to a research grant would be moved to an informatics research grant that permitted her/him to undertake novel informatics research.

10. Q: Our program is new and we don't yet have trainees. How should we complete tables 8 and 9?
    A: Regarding the tables 8 and 9, sometimes, people are seeking to add a program to a center or department in their university that already has similar trainees in it funded through other sources. In that case, they list the other similar trainees, to give reviewers a sense of the kinds of people they attract. If you did this, you would include an explanatory note explaining what the table reflects and why.

Budget

1. Q: When submitting the budget, should we put in the full tuition or just 60% of it?
   A: Put in your estimate of the full tuition; NLM will do the calculations.

2. Q: How do we budget the stipends for TBN Postdocs?
   A: Use the PGY3 amount from NRSA table.

3. Q: Regarding post-doc tuition, can we ask for tuition for relevant courses for an informatics PhD-holding post-doc, who is not enrolled in a degree granting program?
   A: Yes, for post-docs, who are not in a degree-seeking program granting, you can request up to $4500 a year, in tuition.

4. Q: For state universities, who have different tuitions for in-state and out-of-state students, how should those universities plan their budget?
   A: NLM expect universities to look nationally for candidates, so it would be wise to prepare a budget that reflects what you need. It might make most sense to budget using the higher tuition amount charged to out-of-state students.

5. Q: How should a program budget funds, if health insurance is more than the allotted amount in specified in the FOA? Can funds from the Trainee Related Expenses be used to supplement any remaining balance from health insurance costs?

A: NRSA guidance states that Trainee Related Expenses (TRE) funds are expected to cover health insurance costs. NLM provides a health insurance allocation, and a university can supplement that by using funds from the TRE. Note that the allotted health insurance funds can only be used for health insurance, while the Trainee Related Expenses can be used as seen fit by the intuition.

6. Q: Can funding be included for program management personnel?
   A: Not directly. A program can to use money from the Training Related Expenses for this personnel expense, but it cannot be budgeted in the application budget.

7. Q: Can tuition be used for online/certificates, such as offered by Coursera or other data science workshops?
   A: While NLM is not opposed, this is a decision made by the institution, which determines which courses provide credit toward the PhD.

Degrees

1. Q: What if our PhD program is not yet approved?
   A: Explain what PhD degrees will be awarded to the trainees in the interim, and when you expect the new PhD to be approved.

2. Q: Do institutions have to specify between degree and non-degree seeking post-docs?
   A: In short, it depends. This specification will be locked in your Notice of Award for 5 years, so it's best to evaluate your program as closely as possible, and determine what to specify in the application.

3. Q: Are Master Degree students eligible for this program?
   A: The NLM Training program does not support individuals seeking terminal Master Degrees students, i.e. persons who are not seeking a PhD. For Pre-Docs, if the trainee has been admitted to a PhD program, the trainee is eligible.
   For Post-Docs, if outside the field of informatics and information sciences, they should be obtaining a Master's degree.

Curriculum

1. Q: If a program was to offer several different degree alternatives, what does "core curriculum" mean in that context? Does it mean across the different degree alternatives, there must be a common set of courses OR should the program use the core curriculum that each degree program separately offers, where they may have some, but not all, courses in common?
   A. Yes, NLM expects a biomedical informatics common core curriculum across the degree programs. Many training programs do this by having one or two

required courses in biomedical informatics/data science that all of their trainees take, and then additional required courses, with selectives that are tailored to each track. Programs that support training in more than one of the four areas sometimes have one large required course for everyone, for example. Reviewers should be able to see the cohesion that makes your program a single training program in biomedical informatics/data science and not several different programs.

For further questions, email:

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