2021 CCTS NCATS Diversity Supplement  
— Request for Proposals —

Instructions for Application  
(Available at [https://www.uab.edu/ccts/training-academy/research-fellowships/diversity-supplement](https://www.uab.edu/ccts/training-academy/research-fellowships/diversity-supplement).)  
Deadline for Letters of Interest: July 30, 2021, 5:00 PM (CT)  
Deadline for Invited Full Application: October 15, 2021, 5:00 PM (CT)

To submit a proposal for the 2-year Diversity Supplement program, please review the two-phase application instructions described below.

I. OVERVIEW

The Center for Clinical and Translational Science (CCTS) Partner Network, is pleased to announce a request for Diversity Supplement applications, funded by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS). We are accepting two-page letters of interest from early career faculty committed to conducting translational research that addresses health disparities and/or diseases/conditions that disproportionately affect the Deep South. There will be a maximum of two Diversity Supplement applications selected for submission. Instructions on how to apply can be found at the website listed below.

In alignment with the CCTS mission, this program seeks to help build a culturally diverse and pluralistic faculty committed to teaching and working in an environment where differences are valued and respected. Applicants are of all backgrounds are encouraged to apply, including individuals from ethnic/racial backgrounds historically underrepresented in health-related sciences, those with a disability, persons from disadvantaged economic or educational backgrounds, women, LGBTQ+ scientists, and investigators from broad and varied scientific disciplines.

The mission of the CCTS Career Development Programs is to prepare independent investigators to pursue careers focused on translational research. In partnership with the Driving Research: An Interdisciplinary, Vibrant, Engaged Network (DRIVEN) program, this opportunity will support up to two “DRIVEN” Scholars for a period of two years with 75% salary support (current salary) up to $100,000 available salary annually. Selected candidates must commit a minimum of 75%* of time to research and career development. Additional support is provided for skill development through didactic training and research related expenses (see table). Our research and training base includes a partnership of eleven institutions, offering a large and diverse pool of experienced mentors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum commitment of academic effort to the program</th>
<th>DRIVEN Scholars</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salary amount supported</td>
<td>75%*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training related expenses (e.g., travel, research expenses)</td>
<td>Up to $100,000 max (plus fringe)</td>
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<td>Up to $10,000</td>
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*50% min. for surgeons w/ justification required

II. ELIGIBILITY

Candidates must be U.S. citizens, non-citizen nationals, or have permanent residency status and must be part of an underrepresented population in biomedical, clinical, behavioral, or social sciences research (see NIH Notice Number: NOT-OD-20-031 for more information). Eligible applicants will have earned a clinical or research doctorate, including MD, PhD, ScD, DrPH, or equivalent. Candidates must be early career-level, full-time faculty or be able to provide confirmation from Division/Department leadership of a faculty appointment on or before May 1, 2022. Successful candidates will be able to demonstrate a commitment to a research career.
Candidates must be able to commit a minimum of 75% protected time (50% for surgeons with justification) to career development research training.

Individuals are NOT eligible for appointment as scholars if they:

- Have simultaneously submitted or have an application pending peer review for any other Federal career development award, or a research project grant (R01).
- Have simultaneously submitted or have an application pending peer review for any non-Federal research grant, contract, or cooperative agreement over $100,000 direct costs per year;
- Have been or are currently a PD/PI on any other Federal mentored career development awards;
- Have been or are currently supported on an institutional K12 grant or KL2 (or similar grant);
- Have been or are currently a PD/PI on a Federal research grant (such as R01, R29, P01) or subproject leaders on Program Project (P01) and Center Grants (P50); and/or
- Have been or are currently a PD/PI on peer-reviewed non-Federal research grants, contracts or cooperative agreements over $100,000 direct costs per year.

Please contact Jeanne Merchant (jsmerchant@uabmc.edu) if you have any questions regarding eligibility requirements.

III. ITEMS TO BE SUBMITTED

A. Letter of Interest

Please submit the following as a Letter of Interest to be considered for the Diversity Supplement program:

1. Two-page Letter of Interest
   PLEASE NOTE: All health-related translational research topics are welcome; the review committee is especially interested in health-related translational research topics that address health disparities and diseases/conditions that disproportionately affect the Deep South.
   • Font size: must be 11 points or larger (smaller text in figures, graphs, diagrams and charts is acceptable as long as it is legible when the page is viewed at 100%)
   • Line spacing: must be no more than six lines per vertical inch
   • Margins: Provide at least one-half inch margins (top, bottom, left, and right) for all pages. No applicant-supplied information can appear in the margins.
   • Text color: must be black (color text in figures, graphs, diagrams, charts, tables, footnotes and headings is acceptable)
   • Page Limit: 2 pages (references are not subject to page limits)

   This section should be organized as follows:
   • SIGNIFICANCE
     - Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress in the field that the proposed project addresses.
     - Please provide a clear and concise description of the central theme and goals of the research.
     - Please comment on how the proposed work fits the definition of Translational Research. Translational research refers to the multidirectional and multidisciplinary integration of fundamental, patient-oriented, and population-based research, with the goal of improving health and health care delivery.
   • INNOVATION
- Explain how the application challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms.
- Describe any refinements to or novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or interventions to be developed or used, and any advantage over existing methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.

- **MENTORING AND TRAINING PLAN**
  - Briefly identify the other individuals that will be asked to contribute intellectually to the research, and to enhance the applicant’s skills and knowledge
  - Identify the research experiences intended to provide opportunities for development as a productive researcher.

- **APPROACH**
  - Be sure to include explicit statements of aims and corresponding hypotheses.
  - Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Include how the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted as well as any resource sharing plans as appropriate.

- **REFERENCES CITED**
  - Provide a bibliography of all references cited. Each reference must include the names of all authors, the article and journal title, book title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication.
  - References are **outside of page limit**.

2. NIH Biosketch documents for **applicant and primary mentor**. ([https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm))
   - PLEASE NOTE: The Primary Mentor’s biosketch should detail their experience mentoring early career faculty and in championing mentees underrepresented in science. Primary mentors should have a significant track record of NIH-level or equivalent funding.

The timetable for submission and review of Letters of Interest is as follows:
- Letters of Interest due: Friday, July 30, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.
- Applicants invited for full proposals: On or before August 15, 2021

B. **Invited full application**

If selected for full application, please submit the following:
1. A brief proposal describing the project and training/career experience (not to exceed 10 pages), including:
   - Summary or abstract of the funded parent award or project **(not to exceed one page; we will provide this)**. Provide a brief overview about how the candidate will use the CTSA Program resources to complete their research training plan and which resources will be used.

   - Research Strategy: Description of the candidate’s proposed research strategy within the scope of the funded parent award or project **(not to exceed four pages)**. Organize the Research Strategy section using the following sections: Research Aims, Significance, Innovation and Approach. Applicants are encouraged to use NIH’s guidance for fellowships or career development applications.

   - Mentoring Plan: A mentoring plan for the candidate must include a plan for the candidate to interact with other individuals on the parent grant, to contribute intellectually to the research, and to enhance her/his research skills and knowledge regarding the selected area of biomedical, behavioral, clinical or social sciences science. It also must provide evidence of a focus on the enhancement of the research capability of the underrepresented student, postdoctoral fellow or faculty member and that the research experience is intended to provide opportunities for development as a productive researcher. In addition, it must demonstrate that the CTSA...
Program UL1 program director(s)/principal investigator(s) are willing to provide appropriate mentorship. The selected mentor(s) should be an active investigator in the area of the proposed research and be committed to both the career development of the candidate and to the direct supervision of the candidate’s research. Candidates are encouraged to identify more than one mentor, (i.e. a mentoring team (or advisory committee)), as this is deemed advantageous for providing expert advice in all aspects of the research career development plan. It is encouraged that the mentoring plan includes the description of the development of an individual development plan for the candidate (see \textbf{NOT-OD-14-113} \textit{(not to exceed three pages)}). Additionally, a plan for the candidate's next source of funding is required.

- Mentoring experience of the CTSA Program UL1 PI (we will provide a paragraph for Robert Kimberly) and selected mentors \textit{(not to exceed one page)}. The mentor, or a member of the mentoring team, should have a successful track record of mentoring individuals at the candidate’s career stage.

- A timeline for the research and career development experiences proposed \textit{(not to exceed one page)}

2. \textbf{Identification of the Project/Performance Site Location}: Include the primary site where the proposed supplement activities will be performed. If a portion of the proposed supplement activities will be performed at any other site(s), identify the locations in the fields provided.

3. \textbf{Identification of Senior/Key Personnel}: List the CTSA Program UL1 PD/PI (Robert Kimberly) as the first person (regardless of their role on the supplement activities). List the candidate proposed to be added through this supplement, or for whom additional funds are being requested through this supplement.

- Note: Candidates for this supplement support must have an \textbf{eRA Commons} account and the candidate’s Commons Username must be entered in the Credential field.

4. \textbf{Biographical Sketches}: Include a biographical sketch for all personnel that will contribute to the research mentoring (PI/PD, candidate, mentors and collaborators). The biographical sketch should follow \textbf{NIH guidelines}. The personal statement of the candidate’s biographical sketch should address:

- Evidence of scientific achievement or interest;
- Any source(s) of current funding; and
- A statement from the candidate outlining her/his research objectives and career goals.

5. \textbf{A Proposed Budget for the Entire Project Period}: Applicants should follow the instructions for electronic or paper-based form submissions as indicated in the FOA. Only include funds requested for the additional supplement activities.

6. \textbf{Candidate Eligibility Statement (not to exceed one page)}: A signed statement from the CTSA Program UL1 PD(s)/PI(s) and an institutional official establishing the eligibility of the candidate for support under this program that must include clearly presented information on citizenship. The strength of this statement will be considered by the NIH administrative review committee along with all other materials provided. The statement must include:

- Information on the nature of the candidate’s disability, circumstances, background or characteristics that confer eligibility under this program;
- For Diversity Supplements, a convincing description of how the appointment of this specific candidate will address the issue of diversity within the national scientific workforce; and
- A description of any current or previous Public Health Service (PHS) research grant support the candidate has received, including start and end dates. Include a statement indicating that the candidate has not received any current or previous PHS support, if applicable.
7. Other Project Information:
   o If applicable, attach PDF documents in the "Other Attachments" field indicating that the proposed research experience was approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) or human subjects Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the grantee institution. Name the documents "IACUC Documentation.pdf" and/or "IRB Documentation.pdf". Adherence to the NIH policy for including women and minorities in clinical studies must also be ensured, if additional human subjects' involvement is planned for the supplement.
   o If human subjects will be involved, additional human subjects documents will be needed. Ms. Merchant will provide guidance and a REDCap link for the upload of these additional documents.
   o Home Institution Approval: Under unusual circumstances where the applicant and mentor would be at a site other than the grantee institution, an appropriately signed letter from the institution where the research is to be conducted must also be submitted. The request must be signed by the CTSA Program UL1 PD/PI, the candidate and the appropriate institutional business official.
   o Sub-Recipient Approval: If any of the research is to be conducted at an organization other than the grantee institution, an appropriately signed letter from the institution where the research is to be conducted must be submitted. The request must be signed by the candidate, the CTSA Program UL1 and the Subsite PD/PI, and the appropriate institutional business official.
   o If the request is for a supplement based on disability, the institution should indicate what, if any, reasonable accommodations the institution has supported or plans to provide along with a full description of how any additional support for accommodation that might be used. The relationship of the proposed accommodation to the proposed project must be described.

Please note:
- Applicants will be required to undergo a CCTS Panel review prior to submission of their full applications. Ms. Merchant will assist in scheduling this panel.
- Clinical trials are not allowed.
- Submission of a completed application does not guarantee funding. NCATS (the CCTS' funding agency) makes decisions about the selection of Diversity Supplement awardees.

The timetable for submission of full applications is as follows:
- Panel review by: September 20, 2021
- Completed full application due: October 15, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.

IV. REVIEW CRITERIA

Please keep in mind the review criteria below used in the determination of scientific merit of diversity supplement training awards.

1. Candidate

How does the candidate’s training and accomplishments to date prepare them for a career in translational and/or patient centered research? Does the candidate have the potential to develop as an independent and productive researcher? Will funding the candidate enhance the participation of individuals from groups identified as underrepresented in the biomedical, clinical, behavioral and social sciences? Is the candidate’s academic, clinical (if relevant), and research record of high quality? Is there evidence of the candidate’s commitment to meeting the program objectives to become an independent investigator in research? Candidates must: (1)
demonstrate a commitment to conducting translational research; and (2) have identified at least two established faculty members who have agreed to serve as their mentors.

2. Career Development/Training Activities/Plan to Provide Mentoring

Does the applicant’s career development plan sufficiently address perceived or stated needs for additional skills development and academic training (e.g., didactic coursework, mini-sabbaticals, other career development enrichment)? What is the likelihood that the plan will contribute substantially to the scientific development of the candidate leading to scientific independence? Are the candidate’s prior training and research experience appropriate for this award? Are the content, scope, phasing, and duration of the career development plan appropriate when considered in the context of prior training/research experience and the stated training and research objectives for achieving research independence? Are there adequate plans for mentor(s) monitoring and evaluating the candidate’s research and career development progress?

3. Mentoring

Are the mentor’s research qualifications in the area of the proposed research appropriate? Do(es) the mentor(s) adequately address the candidate’s potential, strengths, and areas needing improvement? Is there adequate description of the quality and extent of the mentor’s proposed role in providing guidance and advice to the candidate? Is the mentoring plan for the investigator well formulated? How will each of the mentors contribute to the applicant’s career development plan (minimum of two mentors)? Is there a well-formulated mentorship plan? Are there adequate plans for monitoring and evaluating the career development awardee’s progress toward independence? How will mentorship duties be divided? Is there evidence of the mentor’s, consultant’s, collaborator’s previous experience in fostering the development of independent investigators? Is there evidence of previous research productivity and peer-reviewed support?

4. Research Plan

Are the proposed research question, design, and methodology of significant scientific and technical merit? Is the research plan relevant to the candidate’s research career objectives? Is the research plan appropriate to the stage of research development and as a vehicle for developing the research skills described in the career development plan? Will the proposed research provide data which will provide a pathway for future federally funded translational research?

5. Resonance with CCTS Mission

Is the proposed research resonant with the stated CCTS mission of addressing health disparities and/or diseases that disproportionally affect the Deep South?

V. FORMATTING

Include applicant name in header of each page (Last name, First name, Middle)

Please use Arial typeface and a font size of 11 points or larger. (A symbol font may be used to insert Greek letters or special characters; the font size requirement still applies.) Type should be typical single space. Font should be black.

Use at least one-half inch margins (top, bottom, left, and right) for all pages, including continuation pages.

Appendices are not allowed.

VI. TIMELINE and SUBMISSION PROCESS
Both Letters of Interest and Full Applications must be submitted via the CCTS website. Full applicants will have a personalized upload portal. Uploaded documents must be in PDF format. Full applications must be received no later than 5:00pm Central Time on October 15, 2021. Please note that full applications do have to be submitted to Office of Sponsored Programs, however this is not the responsibility of the applicant. The central CCTS office will submit to OSP and to NCATS.

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<th>LOI Due</th>
<th>7/30/21</th>
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<tr>
<td>Applicants invited for full proposals</td>
<td>On or before 8/15/21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Due Date for full proposals</td>
<td>10/15/21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Awardees notified</td>
<td>Winter/Spring 2022</td>
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APPLICATION SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO:

Robert P. Kimberly, MD
Howard L. Holley Professor of Medicine
Director, Center for Clinical and Translational Science
Senior Associate Dean for Clinical and Translational Research, UAB School of Medicine
Associate Vice President for Medicine and Biomedical Research
University of Alabama at Birmingham

QUESTIONS MAY BE DIRECTED TO:

Jeanne Merchant, MPH
Administrative Director, CCTS Career Development Awards
jsmerchant@uabmc.edu
205.492.9744