**TRAINING INSTRUCTIONS FOR NIH AND OTHER PHS AGENCIES SF424 (R&R) APPLICATION PACKAGES**

*Be sure to check for updated instructions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who must complete the “Recruitment Plan to Enhance Diversity”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Recruitment Plan to Enhance Diversity is required for all training grant activity codes except T34, T36, U2R, and all D-series activity codes. All other applications without a Recruitment Plan to Enhance Diversity will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>For more information, refer to the Notice of NIH's Interest in Diversity (NOT-OD-20-031).</td>
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<tr>
<th>2. PROGRAM PLAN</th>
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<tr>
<td>2A. Background</td>
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<tr>
<td>2B. Program Plan</td>
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<td>2C. Recruitment Plan to Enhance Diversity</td>
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**History and Achievements**

**Institutional Commitment to the Training Program**

The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) is committed to fostering a respectful, accessible and open campus environment that embraces individual differences and values all community members, regardless of their background. UAB cultivates access, engagement and opportunity in our research, learning, clinical, and work environments. Our diverse students, faculty, and staff enrich our community through life experiences, perspectives, and viewpoints that enhance the learning and work environment and reflect the students and communities we serve. Because UAB serves a diverse population, it aims to create an open and welcoming environment for all faculty, staff, students, and patients. Herein, the term “disadvantaged” will be used to represent first-generation college students as well as students/employees who:

- have faced challenging social, economic, educational, cultural, or other life circumstances,
- demonstrate a commitment to bringing diverse people together,
- demonstrate a commitment to working with disadvantaged populations,
- demonstrate an interest in addressing health disparities,
- demonstrate achievement and determination in the face of personal challenges,
- attend and/or who are employed at historically black colleges and universities and other minority serving institutions, or
- who graduated from rural high schools, high poverty or low performing high schools.

UAB is committed to compliance with its policies (e.g., Equal Opportunity and Discriminatory Harassment Policy, Title IX, etc.) as well as all applicable Federal and State laws. In accordance with its policies and laws, UAB ensures no program contains impermissible restrictions or preferences related to race, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, national origin, or sexual orientation.

The commitment to engaging disadvantaged individuals by this training program also reflects the NIH’s expressed interest in diversity (NOT-OD-20-031), which includes defined groups (Diversity Groups A-D) that are shown to be underrepresented in the biomedical, clinical, behavioral and social sciences. The program strives to engage leaders, mentors and trainees that reflect a highly talented pool of scientists with broad
knowledge, skills and experience that are ideally suited to foster innovation, enhance global competitiveness, create a vibrant learning environment and improve the quality of research.

**Proposed Plans**

**Recruitment and Retention Plan of Disadvantaged Individuals (Diversity Group A, C)**

The [Insert Training Program Name] is dedicated to nurturing an accessible and respectful scientific research environment. In alignment with the NIH’s commitment to enhancing representation from underrepresented and disadvantaged* populations, the [Insert Training Program Name] will uphold a high standard of achieving the goal of driving scientific innovation and improving public health outcomes. We believe that a wide range of perspectives, experiences and backgrounds are crucial for innovation, an elevated understanding of community, and research excellence. We invite individuals from all backgrounds to bring their unique insights to our team to collaborate on the improvement of health disparities and outcomes in the communities we serve. Our recruitment and retention plan includes targeted outreach, partnerships with traditional and non-traditional institutions such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) (where applicable), networking opportunities, and providing access to tailored career development and mentorship programs that will support and empower participants throughout their career journeys. In turn, our plan ensures the continuity and success of this program through providing essential resources for burgeoning trainees to advance in their careers.

1) UAB Disability Support Services (DSS) - UAB DSS exists to make programs, activities, and the UAB campus accessible to all individuals, including trainees with disabilities. DSS provides academic accommodations to qualified students with disabilities, which may be of interest to trainees who enroll in UAB courses. UAB’s ADA Compliance Officer works to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Over 450 individuals on the UAB campus are registered with DSS during any given semester. Individuals with disabilities at UAB are highly successful and are enrolled in nearly every program across the campus, including the School of Medicine, School of Dentistry, School of Optometry and in Graduate Biomedical Sciences. A variety of support services are available including assistive technology, individualized accommodation plans, and academic coaching support. DSS works collaboratively with students and faculty to make sure that eligible students are receiving the services they need. DSS is advertised on school websites (https://www.uab.edu/students/disability/students).

*Disadvantaged backgrounds are defined as those who meet two or more of the listed criteria listed in Diversity Group C of the NIH’s Interest in Diversity (NOT-OD-20-031).

**Recruitment and Retention of Persons with a Disability (Diversity Group B)**

The [Insert Training Program Name] understands the importance of the recruitment and retention of persons with disabilities, “defined as those with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, as described in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended.” Our program is committed to providing support and creating the infrastructure to bolster recruitment of individuals with disabilities through strategic efforts such as: (1) creating partnerships with disability organizations that will facilitate recruitment, (2) providing resources for recruitment and retention such as awareness and accessibility training, (3) requiring individuals to complete annual compliance training and certifications to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act along with registering with our institutional disability support service, and (4) fostering a work and research environment that ensures fair treatment and equal opportunity for individuals to succeed.

**Recruitment and Retention of Women (Diversity Group D)**

The [Insert Training Program Name] is also committed to supporting recruitment efforts and forging career development efforts that are essential for the continuous participation of women in scientific research. As the NIH Notice (NOT-OD-20-031) provides, women recruits and participants face barriers in the scientific environment. Our training program will incorporate strategic initiatives to address these barriers and thereby support the recruitment and retention of women. These initiatives will ensure their active involvement in all
facets of this training program and include: (1) implementing targeted outreach efforts to recruit women by partnering with women's organizations and community groups, (2) collaborating with women’s organizations and institutional groups, including affinity groups, to facilitate key recruitment opportunities, and (3) ensuring the effectiveness of our recruitment and retention strategies through regular evaluation and monitoring of programmatic efforts.

**Education of Trainees, Mentors, Staff and Leadership relevant to Disadvantaged Populations**

NIH requires a substantial investment in the research workforce to improve public health and advance scientific innovation. As provided in the NIH Notice (NOT-OD-20-031), disadvantaged individuals face a number of barriers in the scientific environment. To address these barriers for trainees and to enhance recruitment and retention of disadvantaged individuals, all persons involved in this training program will be provided with education and training on enhancing UAB’s accessibility, resources and support that are available for all community members, with an awareness that some trainees may face more barriers and have a greater need for additional support than others due to their circumstances. To establish preparedness and equip individuals with the skills necessary to grow supportive and accessible scientific research workforce, the [Insert Training Program Name] will support a comprehensive education plan that includes: (1) providing trainees, mentors, staff, and leadership access to workshops, training programs, symposia and educational courses focused on creating an accessible learning environment that fosters civility, respect and excellence and mentoring efficacy; (2) performing continuous evaluation of the program by collecting feedback from trainees, mentors, staff, and leadership to assess the effectiveness of our education initiatives to make necessary adjustments and improvements to our program; and (3) collaborating with our institution to identify external training and educational opportunities to fortify our program educational plan. By embedding these educational initiatives into our training program, we aim to build well-rounded and interpersonally adept individuals who will be equipped to carry out programmatic success outlined by the aims of this plan.

**Outreach and Publicity Efforts for the Training Program**

The [Insert Training Program Name] has a deliberate plan to amplify our strategy to recruit trainees and staff from disadvantaged groups for the program will need to be delivered through a multi-pronged approach. Our program is dedicated to fostering a training environment that recruits and retains outstanding candidates from a broad range of backgrounds, life experiences, and academic levels who will contribute to the program's goals of excellence in research, innovation, and community service. To achieve this goal, we will implement a comprehensive publicity strategy to ensure wide visibility of our program and its opportunities. This strategy includes the following components: (1) creating a robust web-based presence through creative and tactical use of social media platforms, job boards, and professional networks/Listservs, (2) promoting the program at regional and national conferences and symposia, and institutional meetings and seminars to recruit potential trainees, (3) collaborating with institutional departments and groups to recruit candidates from career development, graduate, and postdoctoral programs, (4) disseminating the program announcement and details through distribution of print and digital ads throughout our institution, alumni networks, and scientific journals, (5) and creating new recruitment pathways through partnerships with institutions that serve disadvantaged groups, as well as partnerships with HBCUs.