NIH RESEARCH FOCUS

- NIH is the largest source of funding for medical research in the world.
- Interested in research that improves health and save lives.
- NIH is made up of 27 Institutes and Center (ICs), each with a specific research agenda:
  - National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
  - National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders.
Consider carefully whether your proposed project fits within the NIH mission

Explore potential Institutes and Centers (ICs) that might support your application. Each has its own mission, scientific goals and objectives. Your application should address the mission and research priorities of the Institute or Center likely to fund your application.
Funding Opportunities

Parent Announcements
- Standard receipt dates, usually open for three years
- Reviewed in Center for Scientific Review (CSR) or in an IC, by one of many review committees
- Non-specific, investigator-initiated “unsolicited” research. Not all ICs participate in all parent FOAs.
- May submit any topic within the breadth of the NIH mission. Competition tied mainly to an IC’s overall payline.

IC-Specific Program Announcements (PA)
- Standard receipt dates, usually open for three years
- Reviewed in CSR or in an IC, by one of many review committees
- Often broadly defined or a reminder of a scientific need; investigator-initiated “unsolicited” research

Request for Applications (RFA)
- Single
- Specifies funds and targets number of awards
- Usually reviewed in an IC, but sometimes in CSR. Same review committee for all applications. Usually reviewed by a Scientific Review Group, called a Special Emphasis Panel, that is convened on a one-time basis
- NIH-Requested Research; Well-defined scientific area
- Competition depends on number of applicants
COMMON MECHANISMS

- **R01 NIH Research Project Grant Program (R01)**
  - Used to support a discrete, specified, circumscribed research project
  - Advance permission required for $500K or more (direct costs) in any year
  - Generally awarded for 3-5 years

- **R03 NIH Small Grant Program (R03):**
  - Provides limited funding for a short period of time to support a variety of types of projects, including: pilot or feasibility studies, collection of preliminary data, secondary analysis of existing data, small, self-contained research projects, development of new research technology, etc.
  - Limited to two years of funding
  - Direct costs generally up to $50,000 per year

- **R21 NIH Exploratory/Developmental Research Grant Award (R21)**
  - Encourages new, exploratory and developmental research projects by providing support for the early stages of project development. Sometimes used for pilot and feasibility studies.
  - Limited to up to two years of funding
  - Combined budget for direct costs for the two year project period usually may not exceed $275,000.
  - No preliminary data is generally required

**Information on all funding mechanisms:**
http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/funding_program.htm
Defined as:

within 10 years of completing their terminal research degree at the time of application

- Given special consideration during peer review and at the time of funding
- Peer reviewers will be instructed to focus more on the proposed approach than on the track record, and to expect less preliminary data than would be provided by an established investigator
Specific Aims
- State concisely the goals of the proposed research and summarize the expected outcome(s), including the impact and hypotheses where appropriate.

Research Strategy
- Significance (specific to NIH and ICs mission)
- Innovation
- Approach (methods)
- Preliminary studies if new application
- Progress report for renewal
PROPOSAL CRITERIA

- **Significance.**
  - Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the field?

- **Investigator(s).**
  - Are the PD/PIs, collaborators, and other researchers well suited to the project?

- **Innovation.**
  - Does the application challenge and seek to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions?

- **Approach.**
  - Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project? Are potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented?

- **Environment.**
  - Will the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Are the institutional support, equipment and other physical resources available to the investigators adequate for the project proposed?
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th>Strengths/Weaknesses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
<td>Exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>Extremely strong with negligible weaknesses</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Very strong with only some minor weaknesses</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Strong but with numerous minor weaknesses</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Strong but with at least one moderate weakness</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Some strengths but also some moderate weaknesses</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Some strengths but with at least one major weakness</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>A few strengths and a few major weaknesses</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Very few strengths and numerous major weaknesses</td>
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Most investigators are not funded the first time

On each revision, a 3-page summary detailing your responses to the previous concerns is included with your proposal

Generally, marking your revisions in the proposal is required