

Request for Information (RFI): Re-envisioning U.S. Postdoctoral Research Training and Career Progression within the Biomedical Research Enterprise

Notice Number:

NOT-OD-23-084

Key Dates

Release Date: February 14, 2023

Response Date: April 14, 2023

Related Announcements

None

Issued by

Office of The Director, National Institutes of Health (OD)

Purpose

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) seeks information from extramural research community members regarding the current state of postdoctoral research training and career progression within the biomedical research enterprise. NIH is particularly interested in understanding the perspective and experience of recent and current postdoctoral trainees, postdoctoral office leaders, as well as graduate students considering becoming postdoctoral trainees within the academic sector. This RFI will assist NIH in hearing the voices of postdoctoral trainees along with others impacted by this unique and skilled training position, and in exploring ways to address some of the fundamental challenges faced by the postdoctoral trainee community. This information will inform the development of recommendations by the NIH Advisory Committee to the Director (ACD), an advisory group that provides advice on matters pertinent to NIH mission responsibilities in the conduct and support of biomedical research, medical science, and biomedical communications.

Review of this entire RFI notice is encouraged to ensure your response is comprehensive and to have a full understanding of how it will be utilized.

Background

NIH supports postdoctoral training through its [extramural](#) research programs and its own [intramural](#) training program. These efforts have supported the development of highly trained biomedical scientists who have the necessary knowledge and skills to pursue independent careers in the biomedical research workforce. Concerns about the postdoctoral training system and recruitment of qualified postdoctoral trainees have grown in recent years. [Data](#) published by the National Science Foundation suggest that the number of postdoctoral researchers may be declining, presenting an uncertain future for the overall U.S. biomedical research enterprise. These challenges have recently been severely compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing global economic environment. NIH seeks to evaluate the status of the postdoctoral training process, to understand fundamental issues affecting the postdoctoral trainee process, and to identify possible solutions to address these issues. Toward this end, an [ACD working group](#) has been established to explore the status of the postdoctoral training system, identify and understand critical factors and issues relating to the perceived decline in the number of postdoctoral trainees, and provide recommendations that address those factors to the NIH Director.

Information Requested

This RFI invites input on factors influencing postdoctoral training from the community. NIH is particularly interested in receiving input from trainees (e.g., graduate students, postdocs), as well as early-stage investigators, biomedical faculty, training directors, postdoctoral and graduate student office leaders, biotech/biopharma industry scientists, and research education program advocates. NIH is particularly interested in hearing about promising solutions to address current challenges affecting the postdoctoral trainee community. Input sought includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Perspectives on the roles and responsibilities of the academic postdoc (e.g., what the postdoctoral position means to you, how you view it).
- Fundamental issues and challenges inhibiting recruitment, retention, and overall quality of life of postdoctoral trainees in academic research.
- Existing NIH [policies](#), [programs](#), or [resources](#) that could be modified, expanded, or improved to enhance the postdoctoral training ecosystem and academic research career pathways.
- Proven or promising external resources or approaches that could inform NIH's efforts to enhance the postdoctoral training ecosystem (e.g., improving postdoctoral recruitment, training, working environment, mentoring, job satisfaction).

How to Submit a Response

All comments must be submitted electronically on the [submission website](#).

Responses must be received by 11:59:59 pm (ET) on April 14, 2023.

Responses to this RFI are voluntary and may be submitted anonymously. Please do not include any personally identifiable information or any information that you do not wish to make public. Proprietary, classified, confidential, or sensitive information should not be included in your response. The Government will use the information submitted in response to this RFI at its discretion. **The Government reserves the right to use any submitted information on public websites, in reports, in summaries of the state of the science, in any possible resultant solicitation(s), grant(s), or cooperative agreement(s), or in the development of future funding opportunity announcements.** This RFI is for informational and planning purposes only and is not a solicitation for applications or an obligation on the part of the Government to provide support for any ideas identified in response to it. Please note that the Government will not pay for the preparation of any information submitted or for use of that information.

We look forward to your input and hope that you will share this RFI opportunity with your colleagues.

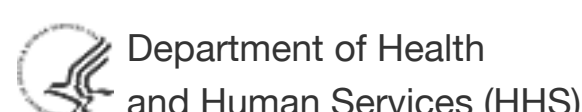
Inquiries

Please direct all inquiries to:

Office of the Director, NIH

Email: ACDPostdocInquiries4RFI@nih.gov

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