

# NIH and NCI Initiatives to Promote Workforce Diversity



## NCI EQUITY AND INCLUSION PROGRAM (EIP)

The EIP, which is overseen by the NCI Equity Council and five working groups, strives to:

- Increase the diversity of the cancer research workforce.
- Build a more equitable and inclusive NCI community.
- Address cancer disparities and advance health equity.

## EARLY INVESTIGATOR ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM (EIAP):

With the support of its Equity Council, in December 2021, NCI launched EIAP to facilitate the advancement of scientists from diverse backgrounds to become independent investigators.

The cancer research enterprise needs a continuous flow of talent through the research career pipeline to thrive. One critical juncture is the transition from junior investigator to independent investigator. EIAP aims to enhance professional skills, guide preparation of an R01 grant application, provide access to a mentoring and peer network, and grow a community of emerging independent investigators from diverse backgrounds.

Each year, EIAP will support the professional and career development of a cohort of eligible and qualified Early-Stage Investigators (ESIs) and New Investigators from institutions across the country. Cohort members will provide peer support for each other both during and beyond their participation in the program.

## FACULTY INSTITUTIONAL RECRUITMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE TRANSFORMATION (FIRST):

NIH launched the FIRST program with the goal of developing cultures of inclusive excellence—scientific environments that can cultivate and benefit from a full range of talents—at NIH-funded institutions. Inclusive excellence hinges on enhancing diversity and inclusion, as well as institutional culture change. Fostering inclusive environments that cultivate and benefit from a full range of talents is not only essential for the quality and impact of science, but also improves stewardship of federal funds to ensure that the most talented researchers are recruited, supported, and advanced to become competitive research investigators.

## CONNECTING UNDERREPRESENTED POPULATIONS TO CLINICAL TRIALS (CUSP2CT)

The CUSP2CT program will implement and evaluate multilevel and culturally tailored outreach and education interventions with the primary goal of increasing referral and, ultimately, accrual of underrepresented racial and ethnic minority populations to NCI-supported clinical trials. CUSP2CT will address cancer health disparities through a network of local multidisciplinary and integrated partners that include community health educators, lay health advisors, community members, health care providers, and researchers working in coordination to educate and refer racial and ethnic minority populations to NCI-supported clinical trials and increase provider awareness about racial and ethnic minority participation in NCI clinical trials.

## PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT SERIES (PAVES)

Launched during the pandemic, this CRCHD-hosted seminar series is held monthly and offers professional development for both intramural and extramural grantees and trainees. From networking with each other to learning about cancer systems biology or transitioning to faculty positions, the experiences and information are fruitful.

## TRAINING NAVIGATION

CRCHD uses a Training Navigation model to facilitate and increase the successful entry of underrepresented scholars into the **Continuing Umbrella of Research Experiences (CURE)** training pipeline and to transition existing CURE scholars through the CURE pipeline to career independence. Training Navigation also aims to provide career development support for the advancement of early to mid-career and tenured investigators to develop the skills necessary to obtain R-type funding and achieve career advancement.

The Training Navigation model has also been leveraged by the **Geographic Management of Cancer Health Disparities Program (GMAP)**. GMAP is a national program designed to enhance the recruitment and career/professional development of underrepresented investigators, trainees, and students; communication and dissemination; and evaluation, as part of building region-based “hubs” for the support and efficient management of cancer health disparities research, training, and outreach. GMAP-supported activities include addressing questions from potential applicants and GMAP Regional Coordinating Directors, performing NCI outreach activities, promoting new and existing funding opportunities, hosting/supporting webinars and workshops, connecting scholars with potential mentors and regional training opportunities, and identifying existing NIH career development/grantsmanship resources and available tools. Tracking investigators as they mature professionally is important for career progression and growth.

## UNITE INITIATIVE

UNITE is comprised of five committees with separate but coordinated objectives on tackling the problem of racism and discrimination in science, while developing diversity and inclusion across the biomedical enterprise:

- **Committee U:** Understanding stakeholder experiences through listening and learning
- **Committee N:** New research on health disparities, minority health, and health equity
- **Committee I:** Improving NIH culture and structure for equity, inclusion, and excellence
- **Committee T:** Transparency, communication, and accountability with our internal and external stakeholders
- **Committee E:** Extramural research ecosystem changing policy, culture, and structure to promote workforce diversity