



# Overview of the F31 Award Funding Mechanism

*Elements of Successful F31  
Diversity Fellowship Applications*

CENTER TO REDUCE  
CANCER HEALTH DISPARITIES

Nicole McNeil Ford, PhD

# Overview: Top 10 Tips to Successfully Navigate the F31 Diversity Fellowship Application Process

1. Who is Eligible for an F31 Diversity Fellowship?
2. What Do We Look for in a F31 Diversity Application?
3. What can F31 Diversity Fellowship Application Can Do for You?
4. F31 Diversity Fellowship: Goals and Requirements
5. What to Know Before You Start Writing
6. Important Elements of an F31 Application
7. Common Pitfalls to Avoid
8. Five Required Sections of the F31 Application
9. Time Table for Applying for an F31
10. Final Tips for Preparing an F31 Fellowship Application

# Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award Individual Predoctoral Fellowship to Promote Diversity in Health-Related Research (Parent F31 – Diversity)



## Individual Awards:

- Diversity and Re-entry Supplements
- **F31 Diversity Fellowship**
- K01; K08; K22
- R21

Middle  
School

High  
School

Under-  
graduate

Postbac &  
Post Masters

Pre-  
doctoral

Post-  
doctoral

Early Stage  
Investigator

F31

# 1. Who is Eligible for an F31 Diversity Fellowship?

- Individuals from a racial or ethnic group considered underrepresented in the biomedical, behavioral, or clinical sciences
- Must have completed baccalaureate degree, and are currently enrolled in a Ph.D. program (or equivalent), a formally combined M.S./Ph.D. program, or other combined professional or clinical and research doctoral program
- Work on a research project with the support of a Sponsor, have high academic performance in the sciences, and a commitment to a career as an independent research scientist, physician-scientist, or other clinician-scientist
- U.S. citizen or permanent resident at the time of the award

F-Kiosk: <https://researchtraining.nih.gov/programs/fellowships>

## 2. What Do We Look for in a F31 Diversity Application?

Candidate	Sponsor and Training Plan	Research Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strong academic record</li><li>• Some research experience</li><li>• Excellent letters of recommendation</li><li>• <b>Eligibility letter</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Experienced sponsor/mentor(s) with track record of training predocs</li><li>• Defined role(s) and commitment of mentor(s)</li><li>• Training of career skills</li><li>• Candidate-specific plans</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overall scientific impact</li><li>• Application of novel concepts, methodologies or interventions</li><li>• Specific Aims involve well-reasoned strategies, methodologies and analyses</li><li>• Unique features of scientific environment</li></ul>

### 3. What Can F31 Diversity Fellowship Application Do For You?

- **Fellowships (Fs) Supports Research Training:**

- Provides individualized, mentored research training under the guidance of a dedicated faculty Sponsor
- Gain experience conducting research using state-of-the-art methods, as well as presenting and publishing research findings as first author
- Development of a stronger grant writing skillset in preparation for more competitive NIH funding

F-Kiosk: <https://researchtraining.nih.gov/programs/fellowships>

## 4. F31 Diversity Fellowship: Goals and Requirements

- **FOA (PAR-16-308):** <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-16-308.html>
- **Objective:** To increase biomedical workforce diversity by supporting mentored research training leading to a PhD or combined dual doctoral degrees.
- Student is the PI of the F31.
- **Requirements:**
  - An academically strong applicant with research experience.
  - A well-defined research project with scientific impact and detailed training plan.
  - Experienced, committed, & funded mentor/mentoring team.
  - Institutional Environment with opportunities for cutting edge research & training
- Application receipt: Dec. 8, April 8, and August 8



# NRSA Benefits and Stipends

## 2017 NRSA Benefits

### ▪ Tuition/Fees

- Predoc: 60% of requested tuition, capped at \$16,000 (\$21,000 for MD/PHD programs)

### ▪ Training Related Expenses

- Predoc: \$4,200
- Includes Health Insurance

### ▪ Duration of Award

- Supports up to 5 years of PhD (or equivalent) training during dissertation research or up to 6 years of training support for a combined M.D./Ph.D. degree or other combined dual-doctoral degree.

## 2017 NRSA Stipend

- **Predoc:** \$23,844

### ▪ Postdoc by Years of Experience

- 0 = \$43,692
- 1 = \$45,444
- 2 = \$47,268
- 3 = \$49,152
- 4 = \$51,120
- 5 = \$53,160
- 6 = \$55,296
- 7+ = \$57,504



## 5. What to Know Before You Start Writing...

Be Familiar with the  
Program Announcement!!

Follow the Fellowship Application  
Guidelines

**Emphasize Scored Review Criteria!!!**

Understand Which Format  
Attachments Are Needed!

## 6. Important Elements of an F31 Fellowship Application

- Overall Impact
- Exciting ideas
- Clarity of the research and training plans in context of your career goals
- Realistic aims and timelines -- Don't be overly ambitious
- Brevity with things that everybody knows
- Noted limitations of the study
- A clean, well-written application

## 7. Common Pitfalls to Avoid

1. Missing letters and attachments
2. Failing to appreciate submission is a multi-step process
3. Submitting your application at the last minute
4. Not using the right application form
5. Not giving the instructions enough attention
6. Submitting a new application but referring to previous review outcomes or criticism
7. Using a small font

## 8. Five Required Sections of the F31 Application

1. Fellowship Applicant
2. Sponsors, Collaborators, and Consultants
3. Research Training Plan
4. Training Potential
5. Institutional Environment & Commitment to Training

### ▪ **Scoring Guidance:**

[https://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/review/rev\\_prep/scoring.htm](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/review/rev_prep/scoring.htm)

# Five Required Sections of the F31 Application

## 1. Fellowship Applicant

- Scholastic performance
- Productivity commensurate with career stage
- Aptitude and enthusiasm
- Clarity of stated career goals
- Letters of reference

# Five Required Sections of the F31 Application

## 2. Sponsors, Collaborators, and Consultants

- Documented mentoring successes
- Expertise in the field
- Present productivity
- Funds available to cover research expenses
- Co-mentor to cover weaknesses
- Clearly defined roles for mentors and collaborators

# Five Required Sections of the F31 Application

## 3. Research Training Plan

- Significance & impact of the proposed research
- Logical hypothesis or approach
- Clarity, feasibility and alternative strategies
- Stats, vertebrate animals, human subjects
- Sophisticated technologies and approaches
- Likelihood training will lead to publications and degree
- Appropriate for the applicant fellow's stage of research development

# Five Required Sections of the F31 Application

## 4. Training Potential

- Is there individualized training that addresses weaknesses and career development needs?
- Will participants learn new technical skills, new design approaches?
- Do training activities match career goals?
- Will training confer an advantage to be competitive?
- Will the applicant fellow receive requisite individualized and supervised experiences?



# Five Required Sections of the F31 Application

## 5. Institutional Environment and Commitment to Training

- Scientific environment
- Opportunities for collaborations within and outside institution if needed
- Resources available

## 9. Time Table for Applying for F31

- **Ideal Time to Apply:** After you have identified a Research Sponsor and have preliminary date for your Proposed Research Project
- **8–10 months** before application deadline:
  - Start Writing Application
  - Notify Program Director of Intent to Apply: *1st Draft* of Application
- **6–8 months** before Deadline:
  - Send *Specific Aims and Biosketch* to Program Director
  - Have someone at institution review application
- **6–4 months** before Deadline: *2nd Draft* of Application
- **2–0 months** before Deadline: *Final Draft* of Application

## 10. Final Tips for Preparing an F31 Fellowship Application

Know NCI's mission

Understand application and review process

Find mentors and collaborators

Improve writing skills

Contact Program Directors early

Make use of available resources

# More Tips for Preparing an F31 Fellowship Application

## *Ask the Right Person For Help!*

- Your **Sponsor** needs to be an integral and active participant in your training and throughout the application process
- Contact your **Program Director** with application questions
- Have your **Sponsor and Program Director** review your Biosketch and/or Specific Aims
- Find **Instructor/Mentor/Staff** in your lab/at your Institution with Grant writing experience to Review your Application
- Email **CSR Fellowship Contact** with questions about Study Section or Reviewers

# NCI CURE Program Staff Contacts

Mechanism	Program Contact
F31 Diversity Fellowship	Dr. Nicole McNeil Ford
Training Navigator	Dr. Hana Odeh
Center for Scientific Review (CSR)	See CSR, Study Section, Fellowship website: <a href="https://public.csr.nih.gov/StudySections/Fellowship/Pages/default.aspx">https://public.csr.nih.gov/StudySections/Fellowship/Pages/default.aspx</a>

[crchd.cancer.gov](https://crchd.cancer.gov)

# F31 Award Workshop Agenda: Guidance & Tips

- Applicant Biosketch *Davyd W. Chung, PhD*
- Research Training Plan *Nicole McNeil Ford, PhD*
- Training Potential *Nicole McNeil Ford, PhD*
- Sponsors, Collaborators and Institutional Environment *Behrouz Davani, PhD*



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