



# Mentors, Co-Mentors, Collaborators, and Institution

*Guidance & Tips*

| CENTER TO REDUCE  
CANCER HEALTH DISPARITIES

Abigail Soyombo, PhD, MBA

## Outline

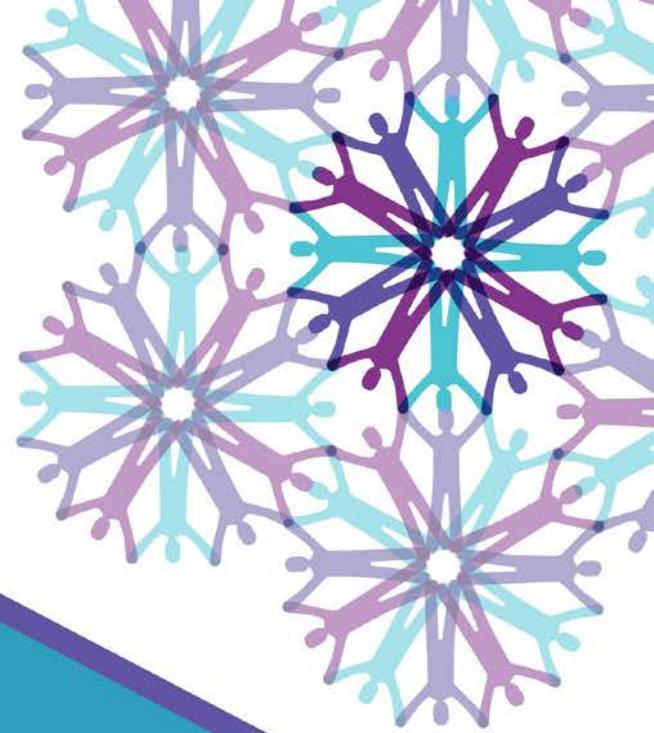
1. *Mentor and Co-Mentor(s)*
2. *Collaborators, Contributors and Consultants*
3. *Institutional Environment*
4. *Institutional Commitment to the Candidate*
5. *Letters of Recommendation*



# Purpose

- Demonstrate mentoring team is committed to the candidate's CDP
- Mentors are qualified and have the experience to mentor candidate to independence
- Candidate will have access to resources, facilities and expertise required for the proposal through collaborators and consultants
- The institutional environment is adequate for the career development activities
- The institution is committed to the candidate's career development

# Plans and Statements of Mentor and Co-Mentor(s)



# Mentor and Co-Mentor(s)

- Assemble a mentoring team with complementary expertise
  - Primary mentor - a senior investigator with appropriate expertise and NIH funding
  - Include co-mentors that complement the primary mentor's expertise
  - Co-mentors also provide additional project-related expertise
  - Co-mentors can be at a different institution but must include a communication plan
- Scientific advisory committee can also be proposed
  - These are external scientists with expertise in areas related to the application
  - Meet with the applicant once or twice a year to provide additional guidance and evaluation
  - Willing to provide strong letters of support

# *Plans and Statements* of Mentor and Co-Mentor(s)

- Statement from the mentors should include:
  - Research qualifications and previous experience of successful mentoring
  - Validation of candidate's scientific capability and experience
  - Plan that describes the nature of the supervision, resources available and mentoring
  - Plan for career progression for the candidate
  - Plan for evaluating the candidate's research, publications, and progression
  - Statement that the candidate will be able to commit at least 9 person-months (75% of full-time professional effort)
- All mentors must provide biographical sketches
- This section can be up to 6 pages long

# Sample Plans and Statements of Mentor

It is with my highest level of enthusiasm that I write this statement as the primary mentor for Dr. Doe, who is applying for the NCI Mentored Research Scientist Development Award. Dr. Doe has made strong progress since joining my research team eight months ago.

Jane has been in my lab for eight months, and has already demonstrated promise in a new area of research. Jane developed an interesting idea on molecular mechanisms governing expression of an important tumor suppressor gene. She discovered a novel long noncoding RNA emanating from a distal upstream regulatory element of PU.1, a master regulator of myeloid and B cells and a tumor suppressor in Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML). Jane is an independent thinker, and came up with most of the design of this proposal, with support and overall guidance from me.

As I have done with many of my former trainees, I am very interested in supporting Dr. Doe's future endeavors in every way possible. My ultimate goal for her training is to prepare her to become an independent and successful research investigator. She has the freedom to pursue her own ideas. As the project leader, she will plan and perform the research studies, interpret the collected data, prepare for presentations at meetings, and write manuscripts for journal submission.

- This letter should be 1-2 pages long

# Sample Plans and Statements of Co-Mentor(s)

I write this letter to provide my support for Dr. Doe and her application for the KO1 Mentored Research Scientist Development Award from the National Cancer Institute. Both my lab and the lab of her primary mentor, are located on the same floor so I have interacted with Dr. Doe often. It is through this close interaction with Dr. Doe that I have witnessed her abilities, ambitions, and dedication to science.

As mentioned above, Dr. Doe has developed excellent research skills throughout her career. However, she recently began to work with fusion proteins and leukemia models. Therefore, her future career will benefit from further learning and skill development in fusion protein biology and animal models.

I have an outstanding track record in training postdoc fellows who eventually become successful independent investigators. Many young researchers from my lab have moved on to prominent positions in the United States as well as internationally.

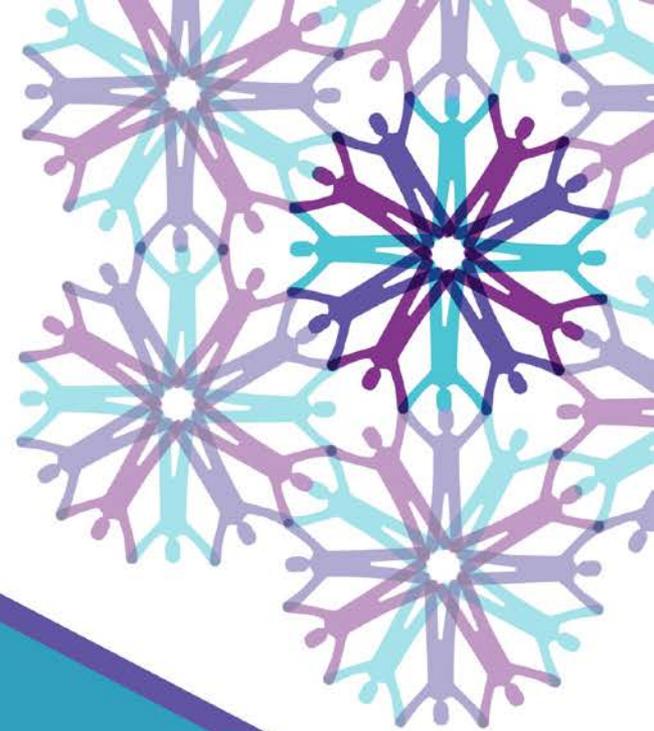
Our team meetings with Dr. Doe will assess her research progress and career development activities and I will provide evaluations of her progress annually. I will provide additional guidance and the support necessary to ensure she is well prepared for her future research career. I have no doubt that after being trained by our mentoring team during the KO1 period, Dr. Doe will successfully launch an independent career in cancer research.

- This section should be 1-2 pages long

## Mentor, Co-Mentors: Application Tips

- The candidate, together with the primary and co-mentors, are responsible for planning, developing, directing, monitoring, and executing the proposed career development program
- Mentors should be recognized leaders in their field with track records of training and placing early stage investigators
- Mentors should have sufficient independent research support, preferably NIH research project funding
- Mentors need to document adequate plans for monitoring and evaluating the career development and progress towards independence
- Prior relationship with the primary mentor should be less than 3 years

# Collaborators, Contributors, and Consultants



# Collaborators, Contributors, and Consultants

- Provide specific expertise and resources to the project
- Support aspects of the proposal not available through mentors
- Can be at external institutions
- Need to provide letters of support

## *Letters of Support* from Collaborators, Contributors, and Consultants

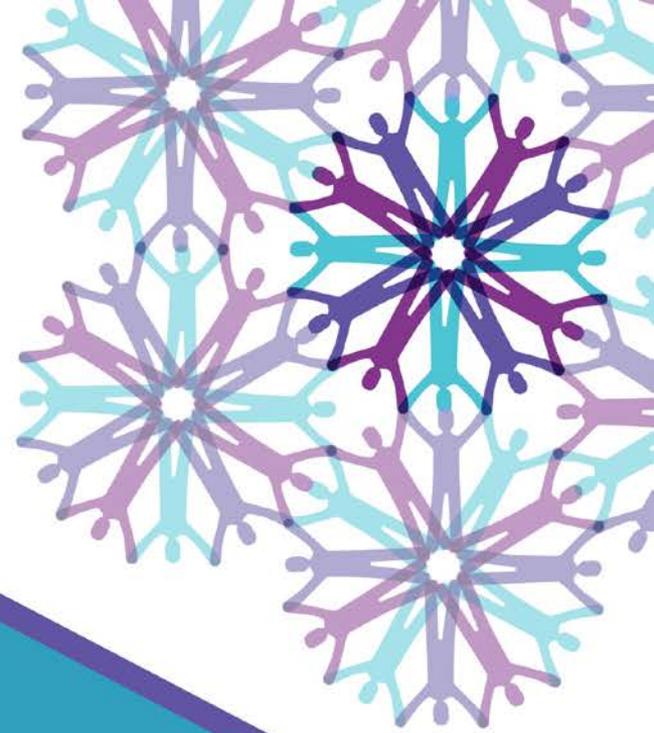
- Signed statements from **all** collaborators and/or consultants
  - Confirm participation and describe specific roles and contributions
  - Document the appropriate expertise in the proposed areas of collaboration/consulting
  - Letters should be consistent with their roles in the application
- Signed statements from scientific advisors can also go here confirming participation, specific roles, and indicate expertise
- Include communication plan with advisory committee members
- These individuals *generally do not need* to provide biographical sketches

# Sample Letter of Support

I am writing in strong support of your NCI K-01 to Promote Diversity application entitled “.....”. It is with great pleasure that I express my support as an advisor/collaborator with you on this exciting proposal. I believe that this is a very important area of research which will help us elucidate how lipid utilization in prostate cancer cells may impact cell survival and diagnostic imaging. [Your preliminary data is very compelling](#) and I am excited to be involved in this effort.

As you know, I am the **Director of the Biostatistics and Bioinformatics Shared Resource** (BBSR) of the University of Colorado Cancer Center (UCCC). I have been a member of the UCCC Lung SPORE since 2001. I am also a faculty member in the Department of Biostatistics and Informatics in the Colorado School of Public Health where I teach biostatistics courses at the MS/PhD and MPH levels. My expertise resides in biomarker development and validation, methods for discrimination and survival analysis. I am pleased by this opportunity to formally collaborate with you on your project.

As you set about to refine the design of your study and begin to collect data, [I will also be ready to provide quantitative expertise you might need for abstracts, manuscripts and presentations](#) resulting from your proposed research. I understand that you will also be taking courses on research methods and statistical analysis to complement the background you have already developed through your graduate studies. [I will be happy to guide you in this important area of training](#) as well.



# Institutional Environment

## *Institutional Environment* and Contribution to Success

- The institutional environment should be able to enable the candidate's proposed career development and research activities
- The institutional environment is high-quality if you can demonstrate
  - Key faculty members and other investigators capable of productive collaborations with the candidate
  - Academic and career development activities (courses, seminars, journal clubs) that will contribute to the candidate's career progression
  - Access to facilities, equipments, and resources proposed in the application
  - Highly beneficial peer-to-peer cohort interactions

## *Institutional Environment* and Contribution to Success Cont.

- External Institutional environment
  - The research environment described could be at a co-mentor's institution, if such environment is not present in your current institution
  - Letter of support from the Chair of the Department will be required to indicate that you will have access to resources described as part of the mentoring/collaboration

# Sample Description of Institutional Environment

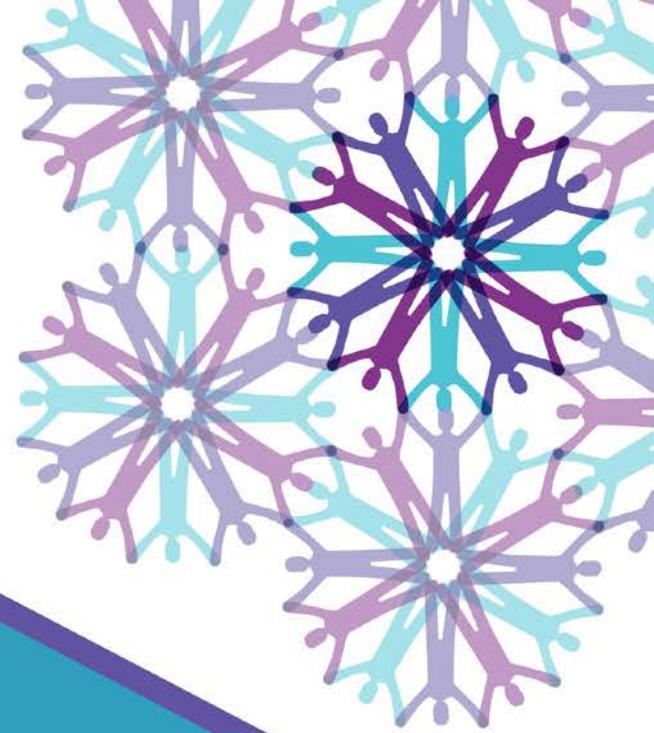
*Introduction:* UNM is the most comprehensive institution of higher education in the state. UNM is one of eight designated Minority Serving Institutions in the US and one of two Hispanic Serving Institutions which is also a Carnegie Doctoral/Research Intensive University. UNM ranks 5th in the nation for numbers of Hispanic faculty (8.5%) and has high representation of underrepresented minority students in graduate and professional programs (20-25%) in the Health Sciences Center. [UNM's multicultural environment provides role models for Dr. Doe and an opportunity for her to serve as a role model to others. UNM's commitment to minority faculty recruitment and retention will provide a uniquely supportive environment for Dr. Jane Doe.](#)

*Project Relevant Resources:* The UNM Health Sciences Center is one of 25 institutions in the country with both an NCI designated P30 Cancer Center and a U54 Clinical Translational Science Center. In addition, we have one of 12 National Centers for Systems Biology and one of 8 Roadmap Screening Centers. [These centers offer pilot funds, discounted fees on the use of core facilities and a research environment that is highly supportive for conducting cutting edge research.](#)

*Seminars and Research Groups.* [A weekly seminar, entitled "The Cellular and Molecular Basis of Disease", features distinguished scientists in a wide variety of fields. This series affords trainees and faculty to meet with preeminent scientists, keep abreast of new areas of research and build career networks.](#) A weekly Clinical Translational Science (CTS) Series features weekly speakers during the academic year on projects, which are clinically relevant and highly translational.

- This section should be 1 page

# Institutional Commitment to the Candidate



## *Institutional Commitment to Candidate's CDP*

- Commitment to the candidate's development into an independent R01-competitive investigator
- Signed letter of institutional commitment (on institutional letterhead)
  - Institutional commitment to the candidate's research is not contingent upon receipt of the career award
  - Assurances that the candidate will be able to devote a minimum of 75% full-time effort to the development of their research program
  - Candidate will be provided with appropriate office, laboratory space, equipment, and other resources and facilities for the proposed activities
  - Assurance that appropriate time, support, and mentors will be available consistent with the career development plan
- Institutional letter of commitment does not need to categorically state offer of a tenure-track position at the end of the award

# Sample Institutional Commitment Letter Excerpts

As Chair of the Department of Medicine and Chief of the Division of General Internal Medicine, we [express our enthusiastic support and approval for the training and research proposal](#) outlined in Dr. Jane Doe's K01 application entitled "....." Her research strategy will generate new insights and a solid foundation on which to build future research on the understanding of cancer in this population.

We will ensure that Dr. Doe has adequate office and lab space, equipment, and [access to all the core facilities and other resources needed](#) for this project. [This commitment is not contingent upon receiving this K01 award and reflects our confidence in Dr. Doe.](#)

Dr. Doe's [productivity and collaborative spirit have made her an asset](#) to this department and the broader research community. We have clear expectations for Dr. Doe's career advancement, and commit to [her retention, development and advancement during the period of the award.](#)

Dr. Doe has [great potential to become an independent researcher.](#) We will continue to support her development in order to prepare her for a transition to a proposed appointment as Assistant Professor in the Department of Medicine, Division of General Internal Medicine. We expect that her first author publications will continue to increase in order to increase the likelihood of a faculty appointment.

Based on her excellent scientific acumen, commitment to cancer research and consistent record of accomplishment, I believe [she is an outstanding candidate for this award,](#) and I thank you for your consideration

# Letters of Recommendation

- 3 – 5 letters are required
- They should be from senior investigators who have competed successfully for research funding and have been involved in the training of junior investigators
- Letters should address the candidate's potential for a research career
  - Potential for conducting research
  - Evidence of originality
  - Need for further research experience and training
- Can be from any period in your career (e.g., graduate school)
- Cannot be from your primary mentor, co-mentors, collaborators



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