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COSSA Washington Update

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NSF AND DOD SIGN MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Department of Defense (DOD) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that would allow researchers to apply for grants to study subjects that may be of interest of U.S. national security.

The MOU will now allow NSF to move forward in its participation in Project Minerva, an initiative by DOD Secretary Robert Gates to increase DOD support for social and behavioral science research (see Update, [June 16, 2008](#) and [April 21, 2008](#)). A solicitation from NSF may come soon.

According to NSF, funding for research projects will come under consideration on a case-by-case basis. DOD will consider supporting proposals submitted to regular NSF programs that are managed by the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Directorate (SBE). One idea is for DOD to help fund proposals in the Human and Social Dynamics priority area. Another is to sponsor joint conferences.

NSF will use the normal SBE merit review process, with DOD having some input into participants on the special panel(s) that will examine the proposals. The research will be unclassified and there will be no constraints on the researchers' ability to publish their results.

NSF and SBE officials do not believe this relationship creates any difficulties since one of the Foundation's originally chartered missions is to secure the national defense and that social and behavioral scientists have always pursued research topics that could benefit national security. The MOU will simply provide more resources for SBE research.

CENSUS 2010 COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN: SOLUTION TO REDUCING THE UNDERCOUNT

In April of this year, the Census Bureau announced its plans to abandon the hand-held devices and return to a paper-based non-response follow up (see Update, [April 7, 2008](#)). The decision requires additional funds bringing the total cost of the decennial to roughly \$11.5 billion. Amid the rising costs there are concerns that tardy revision plans put hard to count groups at risk. These were expressed in a recent [Washington Post](#) article.

"If the bureau does not get sufficient funding for the shift to a paper-based follow-up," said Arturo Vargas, executive director of the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO), "my concern is that the Census Bureau is going to start shortchanging programs they consider less essential, such as paid advertising targeting hard to count groups."

A July 10 hearing held by the Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census and National Archives, chaired by Rep. William 'Lacy' Clay, focused on the communications campaign and other outreach activities as a key to reducing the undercount.

Census Bureau Director Steve Murdock emphasized his commitment to such outreach programs at the hearing. He spoke confidently that the 2010 Communications Campaign will help ensure that everyone, especially those hardest to count, is reached. To achieve this the Bureau, Murdock explained, plans to use an integrative approach that encompasses a mix of mass media advertising, targeted media outreach to specific populations, national and local partnerships, grassroots marketing, and special events. Draft FCB of New York, recipient of the 2010 Communications contract, is a full service marketing communications agency that will team with other companies that specialize in reaching minority audiences. Current team members include:

- Global Hue (Black audiences);
- Global Hue Latino (Hispanic audiences);
- IW Group (Asian audiences);
- G&G Advertising (American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander); and
- Allied Media

Jeff Tarakajian, executive vice president of client services for Draft FCB, indicated that every broadcast medium will be used in an effort to reach hard to count communities. Advertisements will be placed on network television and radio, sporting events such as NFL games, local and cable television, ethnic programming, and the Internet.

Draft FCB will also provide support for the partnership specialists under the Census Partnership Program. The partnership program has been in existence since 1990 and has served as a key component to outreach. As of May 2008, the Bureau reports that regional offices have hired and trained 120 specialists who are now actively developing local partnerships with key stakeholders.

Barbara A. McKinzie, of the National Pan-Hellenic Council recounted the Council's experience in the 2000 partnership program as "a highly successful education, outreach, and mobilization campaign." McKinzie identified that overall timing and resources are areas that need improvement. McKinzie noted that the findings from the Government Accountability Office's (GAO) review of the Program, [2000 Census-Review of Partnership Program Highlights-Best Practices for Future Operations](#), resonated with the Councils. Recommendations for 2010 encourage providing adequate and timely information on how partners can support the Census, maintaining open channels of communications with local partners, and encouraging partners to initiate Census planning activities early. Draft FCB has already developed interim materials that are currently in use and has committed to providing the first wave of materials for partnership support in November 2008 and for developing a partnership communication area on census.gov.

Tarakajian testified that their work is on schedule and in line with its budget and includes a built in broad range of risk scenarios and mitigation plans. The Risk Register explores possible threats to the Campaign ranging from funding and approval delays to large-scale cataclysmic events. Trade-offs will have to be made, he noted, in order to keep the Campaign's implementation on time, if substantial delays in fact occur.

CNSF HOLDS FOURTEENTH ANNUAL HILL EXHIBITION

On June 25th, the Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF) held its fourteenth annual exhibition on Capitol Hill showcasing research supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF). Over 400 members of Congress, congressional and agency staff, and scientific community representatives attended. COSSA was a co-sponsor of the exhibition.

The 34 exhibits included presentations sponsored by COSSA members. Lauren Krivo and Ruth Peterson of the Ohio State University highlighting their research on *Race, Residence and Crime: A Structure of Inequality* represented the American Sociological Association. The American Psychological Association called on David Krantz one of the leaders of Columbia University's Center for Research on Environmental Decision Making to illustrate the activities of the Center.



Krivo, Rep. David Price (D-NC), COSSA Executive Director Howard Silver, Peterson

The American Educational Research Association (AERA) presented *Using Tablet PCs and Smartphone Technology to Support STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics] Learning*. Lisa Elliott and Pamela Francis demonstrated how these technologies allows hearing impaired students to understand and remember information both inside and outside the classroom. The Population Association of America/Association of Population Centers brought in Duncan Thomas of Duke University to discuss with attendees research on *Aceh in the Aftermath of the 2004 Tsunami*.

Other social/behavioral science related exhibits included Joshua Cornell of the University of Chicago highlighting research on *Police Officers, Training, and Racial Bias in the Decision to Shoot* on behalf of the Federation of Behavioral, Psychological and Cognitive Sciences. Eric Foster-Lussier and Ilana Heintz represented Ohio State and presented their study *Integrating Statistics and Linguistics to Improve Models of Human and Computer Speech Recognition*.

CNSF is an alliance of over 120 organizations united by a concern for the future vitality of the national, science, mathematics, and engineering enterprise. CNSF supports the goal of increasing the national investment in NSF's research and education programs in response to the unprecedented scientific, technological, and economic opportunities facing the United States. COSSA Executive Director Howard Silver chaired CNSF from 1994-2000.

NSF ANNOUNCES NEW SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY CENTERS COMPETITION

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has announced a new Science and Technology Centers (STC) competition. These awards are for "innovative research and education projects that require large-scale, long-term investments." They support "world-class" research through partnerships among academic institutions, national laboratories, industrial organizations and/or other public/private entities and with international collaborators, where appropriate. The research should be potentially transformative, complex, at the interface of disciplines or using fresh approaches within disciplines. The STC should include an education component and foster broadening participation of underrepresented groups.

NSF expects to spend approximately \$25 million for first year support and expects to make 5-7 awards. The initial award will last five years with a possibility of renewal for another five years.

Preliminary proposals are due September 30, 2008. Invited full proposals are due April 30, 2009. NSF expects to announce the awards in March 2010. The anticipated start date for the STCs is June 2010.

For the full solicitation go to: http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=5541&org=SBE&from=home .

For further information contact: Joan M. Frye 703/292-8040; jfrye@nsf.gov.

HOUSE PASSES BILL TO PRESERVE ELECTRONIC MESSAGES

On July 9, the House of Representatives passed The Electronic Message Preservation Act by a vote of 286-137. The bill sponsored by Reps. Henry Waxman (D-CA), Lacy Clay (D-MO), and Paul Hodes (D-NH) modernizes the requirements of the Presidential Records Act to help preserve email messages and other electronic messages for historical research.

The legislation seeks to correct deficiencies found by the Government Accountability Office (GAO). In a report published July 8, GAO found that many Federal agencies are not compliant with key e-mail preservation requirements and were consequently making the records easier to lose or delete and harder to find and use.

The Democratic sponsors were also concerned that the Bush White House may have lost hundreds of thousands of e-mails, including those of White House Senior Advisor Counselor Karl Rove.

According to the Congressional Research Service summary of the legislation, the bill requires: (1) the Archivist of the United States to promulgate regulations governing agency preservation of electronic communications that are records; (2) agencies to comply with such regulations and to report to the Archivist on their compliance; and (3) the Archivist to report to specified congressional committees on such compliance.

It further requires the Archivist to promulgate regulations that include provisions for establishing standards necessary for the economical and efficient management of presidential records during a President's term of office.

In addition, the Archivist must: (1) annually certify whether the records management controls established by the President meet this Act's requirements; and (2) report to specified congressional committees on the status of the certification.

Finally, the legislation compels the Archivist, one year following the conclusion of a President's term or the conclusion of the last consecutive term, to report to specified congressional committees on: (1) the volume and format of records deposited into that President's archival depository; and (2) whether the records management controls of that President met this Act's requirements.

In the Senate the bill has been referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs, chaired by Sen. Joseph Lieberman (I-CT).

FOGARTY RELEASES NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

The John E. Fogarty International Center for the Advanced Study in the Health Sciences (FIC) recently released *Pathways to Global Health: Strategic Plan 2008 - 2012*, which intensifies its focus on chronic non-communicable diseases while at the same time continuing to address "the unfinished infectious disease agenda.

Fogarty's mission is dedicated to advancing the mission of the National Institutes of Health by supporting and facilitating global health research conducted by U.S. and international investigators, building partnerships between health research institutions in the U.S. and abroad, and training the next generation of scientists to address global health needs. FIC Director Roger I. Glass emphasizes the Center's "long investments in low- and middle-income countries," and the "hope to build on our past successes and bring new dimensions and a new vision to [FIC's] in the next five years and the century ahead."

The Plan notes that global health, as defined by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, refers to "health problems, issues, and concerns that transcend national boundaries, may be influenced by circumstances or experiences in other countries, and are best addressed by cooperative actions and solutions." Emphasizing that the concept of global health goes "beyond" the "simple 'absence of disease' and beyond a focus on exotic tropical diseases that galvanized much of the international health research in early days," the Center observes that "addressing global health challenges today means marshalling experts in many fields of behavioral and biomedical research, from anthropology to zoonotic infections, ecology, healthcare systems, and public health policies on health and disease."

FIC's Strategic Plan has five goals and strategic priorities.

Goal 1: Mobilize the scientific community to address the shifting global burden of disease and disability. Life expectancy and prosperity are generally increasing across the developing world, with the exception of sub-Saharan

Africa, thanks to public health measures and biomedical advances worldwide. As people age, however, they become vulnerable to non-communicable, chronic diseases including cancer, diabetes, heart diseases and the risk factors that cause them. Social and economic changes such as migration to cities, adoption of more sedentary lifestyles and rich diets, and smoking and addictions add further risk factors to a healthy life.

Strategic priorities include:

- Expand FIC's investment in non-communicable diseases research and research training. Fogarty will enhance its portfolio to include more research and training in non-communicable diseases and their risk factors such as diet and lifestyle.
- Continue to invest in infectious diseases research and training.

Goal 2: Bridge the training gap in implementation research. Fogarty has formulated a goal to support research training in the field of "implementation science" to assure that the results of research do not languish in the lab. This training is designed to help scientists create generalizable knowledge that can be applied broadly to address central questions about health-care scale ups and determine the strategies that will work in the field. The Plan notes that implementation research is "interdisciplinary in nature, involving collaborations between behavioral and social scientists and clinicians, epidemiologists, mathematical modelers, operations engineers, business analysts and importantly policy makers."

Strategic priorities include:

- Support and expand the development of research training programs for implementation science research. Fogarty will encourage the use of complex systems analysis and predictive modeling as research tools, using its in-house expertise to advance this approach. New grants and enhancements of existing programs will be used to build Fogarty's portfolio for implementation science.
- Support the application of implementation research to the recommendations from the Disease Control Priorities Project.

Goal 3: Develop human capital to meet global health challenges. Fogarty plans to extend the reach of its training of investigators in low- and middle-income countries to meet strategic needs through pre- and post-doctoral research awards to conduct studies in disease-endemic countries, among other initiatives.

Strategic priorities include:

- Expand programs to provide early global health research experiences for U.S. health science students and junior faculty. The Center plans to expand its program for clinical research scholars to include support for advanced students, medical residents and fellows, graduate students in health-related fields, junior faculty and postdoctoral fellows.
- Sustain research for training for future generations of foreign health scientists.
- Expand research support for foreign researchers to promote pathways to independence.

Goal 4: Foster a sustainable research environment in low- and middle-income countries.

Strategic priorities include:

- Support the development of research hubs in low- and middle-income countries. Fogarty envisions research "hubs" as a way to enrich and sustain the research capacity of any single institution by linking it with other sites, or nodes, within a country or across a region. These hubs will provide a resource for training in areas such as bioinformatics, bioethics, clinical trials, research management and administration.
- Bolster the development of expertise and use of information and communication technologies in support of research and research training programs.
- Sponsor the development of Fogarty alumni networks.

Goal 5: Build strategic alliances and partnerships and in global health and training.

Strategic priorities include:

- Forge partnerships based on mutual interest and complementary strengths.

For more information on FIC's Strategic Plan see http://www.fic.nih.gov/about/plan/stratplan_fullversion.pdf (full version) or http://www.fic.nih.gov/about/plan/exec_stratplan.pdf (executive summary).

OHRP SEEKS COMMENTS ON MANDATORY TRAINING ON HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION

The Office of Human Research Protection (OHRP) of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has published a notice in the *Federal Register* (July 1, 2008, pp. 37460-37463) seeking information and comments.

OHRP wants to know whether it should develop a regulation *requiring* (my emphasis) that institutions engaged in human subjects research supported by HHS implement training and education programs for certain individuals involved in the conduct, review, or oversight of such research? Alternatively, OHRP could simply issue additional guidance recommending such programs.

Under current Federal regulations, institutions or organizations that conduct HHS-supported research with human subjects must file with OHRP an assurance of compliance with the Federal rules set out in 45 CFR [Code of Federal Regulations] 46. The rules also require that Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) that scrutinize such research "must have sufficient staff" and its members "must be sufficiently qualified through experience and expertise." IRB members are also expected to have sufficient knowledge "to ascertain the acceptability of the proposed research in terms of institutional commitments and regulations, applicable law, and standards of professional conduct and practice."

In 1998, the HHS Office of Inspector General issued a report, "Institutional Review Boards: Time for Reform," which called for strong Federal action regarding the education of investigators and IRB members with respect to protecting human subjects. The report recommended Federal requirements for that education. Starting in 2000, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) required "education on the protection of human research participants for all key personnel as a condition of funding grant applications or contract proposals involving such research."

A year later the National Bioethics Advisory Committee recommended that all institutions and sponsors engaged in research involving human participants should provide educational programs in research ethics. A year later, the Institute of Medicine also called for educating investigators, IRB members, and other individuals substantively involved in research with humans. In 2007, the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Human Research Protections (SACHRP) proposed that OHRP require institutions to ensure that initial and continuing training is provided for IRB members and staff, investigators, and certain institutions officials.

In response to this chorus of voices, OHRP had recommended that key institutional officials, including the IRB chair complete the OHRP Assurance Training Modules available on the agency's website. It also called for educational training and oversight mechanisms appropriate to the nature of the institution's research portfolio.

OHRP, however, is now suggesting its experience with compliance activities has revealed that many individuals involved in the conduct or review of HHS-supported research at numerous institutions have a significant gap in knowledge about human subject protections. Hence, OHRP is now contemplating the idea of requiring by Federal regulation the implementation of education and training programs.

Comments are due by September 29, 2008. For further information contact Michael A. Carome, 240/453-6900 or Michael.Carome@hhs.gov

ALYSON REED NEW HEAD OF LINGUISTIC SOCIETY

Alyson Reed has taken the reins as the new Executive Director of the Linguistic Society of America (LSA). She replaces Felix Oliver who resigned at the beginning of 2008 following a short tenure. Katha Kissman has served as Interim Executive Director.

Reed comes to the LSA from her leadership position at the National Postdoctoral Association. She had previously served as Executive Director of the Maryland Commission for Women and of the National Committee on Pay Equity. Her other experience includes senior management and policy posts at the National Kidney Foundation and the American College of Nurse-Midwives. She has also worked as a radio news reporter for a National Public Radio affiliate in upstate New York and as a project manager for the League of Women Voters.

Reed has a B.A. from SUNY-Binghamton and a M.A. in Public Policy and Women's Studies from the George Washington University.

SKEDSVOLD TO LEAD PSYCHOLOGY FEDERATION

Paula Skedsvold has been named Executive Director of the Federation of Behavioral, Psychological and Cognitive Sciences. She replaces Barbara Wanchisen, who left earlier in the year to head the National Academies' Board on Behavioral, Cognitive and Sensory Sciences. Norman Bradburn of the National Opinion Research Center and former Assistant Director for the National Science Foundation's Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences Directorate has been serving as Interim Executive Director.

Skedsvold has served most recently as Director of Education Research Policy for the American Educational Research Association. She has also been a Senior Legal Research Analyst for the International Women's Human Rights Clinic of the Georgetown University Law Center, a Senior Policy Analyst for the National Institute of Health (NIH)-funded Social and Behavioral Sciences Working Group on Human Research Protections, and a Science Policy Officer at the NIH Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research. Skedsvold was an American Psychological Association Congressional Fellow and began her Washington career with the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues.

She has a Ph.D. in Experimental Psychology from the University of South Carolina and a J.D. from the Georgetown University Law Center.

The Federation is a dues-supported coalition representing the interests of scientists who conduct research in the areas of behavioral, psychological, and cognitive sciences, focusing its efforts on legislative advocacy and education and the communication of information to scientists. Skedsvold will also lead the Foundation for the Advancement of Behavioral and Brain Sciences (FABBS), the educational, non-profit arm of the Federation.

MILLENNIUM PROMISE AWARDS: NON-COMMUNICABLE CHRONIC DISEASES RESEARCH TRAINING PROGRAM

Led by the Fogarty International Center (FIC), the National Institutes of Health (Child Health and Human Development, Nursing, Neurological Disorders and Stroke, Environmental Health Sciences, and the Office of Dietary Supplements) is seeking applications for research training designed to build research capacity in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) in fields related to cancer, cerebrovascular diseases including stroke, lung disease, including obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and environmental factors including indoor air pollution, and obesity and lifestyle factors related to these conditions as well as genetics of non communicable diseases.

The Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) (PAR-08-175) notes that "as the origin of and potential solutions to most chronic diseases are complex in nature, programs that strive to develop and provide training across disciplines (e.g., bridging biological, social, and behavioral sciences) are strongly encouraged." According to the agency, the bulk of factors that are responsible for onset of chronic disease are so diverse that it is essential that those trained in these areas of research have broad understanding or work across disciplines that might include nutrition, business, and the corporate sector, behavioral health, health law, economics, environmental health and urban planning. It is noted that most of the research training and research on chronic diseases have been conducted in high income countries and has seldom been multidisciplinary. This program is intended to strengthen research capacity by developing a pipeline of scientists in LMICs who will conduct transdisciplinary and implementation research in this field (see related story on FIC's strategic plan).

Letters of intent are due August 31, 2008; August 31, 2009; and August 31, 2010.
Applications are due: September 29, 2008; September 29, 2009; and September 28, 2010.

For more information see <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-80-175.html>.

GEOGRAPHIC AND CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES ON ENERGY BALANCE-RELATED HEALTH BEHAVIORS

While there is considerable evidence indicating that factors related to energy balance (e.g., diet, physical activity, and body weight) are correlated with the incidence of cancer and other chronic diseases, there is no consensus regarding the relative contributions diet, physical activity and obesity make to many health outcomes. Similarly, there is no consensus on the best methods to improve diet, increase physical activity, and help people achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

The National Cancer Institute, the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, the National Institute of Nursing Research, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research are seeking applications that propose hypothesis-driven projects exploring associations between the built environment, other contextual factors, and energy balance-related behaviors. The funding opportunity announcement (FOA) (PA-08-192) encourages studies that explore how diverse neighborhood and contextual variables, such as density, diversity and design of the built environment and transportation infrastructure, as well as social, economic and policy variables, might influence health behaviors related to energy balance.

The sponsors of the FOA seek grant applications that go beyond the publicly released data and take advantage of special arrangements for data release or access to information in data centers. It is expected that applications will develop novel hypotheses concerning causal associations between contextual effects and energy balance-related health behaviors, to be validated by analysis of cross-sectional data, longitudinal studies, natural experiments, and designed experiments at the community level. Grant applications may involve multidisciplinary expertise in various combinations including, but not limited to, public health, urban and transportation planning, geography, informatics, energy balance, health economics, behavioral theory, and mechanisms of disease.

Examples of the specific questions that may be addressed include, but are not limited to:

Characterize associations between the built environment and physical activity. Explore how these associations are moderated by demographic factors, particularly age, gender, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

Examine associations between the availability/geographical distribution of food outlets and dietary habits of residents. Past work in this area has focused on economic factors. Further studies are encouraged to analyze how economic factors interact with other neighborhood characteristics. Such efforts could take advantage of rapid development in the capacity of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to characterize the built and commercial environments.

Explore how a person's age modulates associations between environmental variables and physical activity or diet. Few, if any, large survey data sets have been exploited for this purpose despite literature suggesting that age-related changes might be among key factors influencing health behaviors.

Explore new data sources that have not been used in public health research concerning energy balance-related behaviors. For example, the recently released American Time Use Survey might allow exploration of the interactive effects of neighborhood access to food and recreation-related facilities with demographic differences in daily patterns of time.

Investigators interested in proposing exploratory research projects should submit applications in response to the part FOA of identical scientific scope (PA-08-193).

RESEARCH SUPPLEMENTS TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY IN HEALTH-RELATED SUBJECTS AVAILABLE

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) recognizes a unique and compelling need to promote diversity in the biomedical, behavioral, clinical, and social sciences workforce. The agency expects efforts to diversify the workforce to lead to the recruitment of the most talented researchers from all groups; to improve the quality of the educational and training environment; to balance and broaden the perspective in setting research priorities; to improve the ability to recruit subjects from diverse backgrounds into clinical research protocols; and to improve the Nation's capacity to address and eliminate health disparities.

Accordingly, the NIH and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently announced the availability of administrative supplements (PA-08-190) to support and recruit students, post-doctorates, and eligible investigators. The supplements must support work within the scope of the original NIH-supported projects. Although the agency currently provides multiple opportunities to develop research careers and improve participation for individuals from groups with low representation in the biomedical and behavioral sciences, reports from the National Science Foundation and others provide strong evidence that diversity remains an important problem that the entire research enterprise must actively address.

According to the agencies, there is abundant evidence that the biomedical and educational enterprise will directly benefit from broader inclusion. Recent studies have supported the argument that diversity enhances the quality of education in multiple settings. There is limited evidence, however, that individuals who have participated in the NIH

administrative supplement program preferentially conduct research in areas related to health disparities or minority health. The agencies emphasize that there is no question that the need for a diverse workforce permeates all aspects of the nation's health-related research effort.

The NIH has found its programs to be an effective means of encouraging institutions to recruit from currently underrepresented groups. All of the NIH awarding components participate in these programs which are designed to provide research support for research experiences for individuals from identified groups throughout the continuum from high school to the faculty level.

To this end, the NIH continues to encourage institutions to diversify their student and faculty populations and thus to increase the participation of individuals currently underrepresented in the biomedical, clinical, behavioral, and social sciences. This includes individuals from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, individuals with disabilities, and individuals from socially, culturally, economically, or educationally disadvantaged backgrounds that have inhibited their ability to pursue a career in health-related research. Institutions are encouraged to identify candidates who will increase diversity on a national or institutional basis.

For more information about the supplements see <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-08-190.html>

AGING INSTITUTE SEEKS PROPOSALS ON SOCIAL NEUROSCIENCE OF AGING

The National Institute on Aging is seeking to stimulate interdisciplinary research in the Social Neuroscience of Aging and has released a funding opportunity announcement (FOA) (RFA-09-006) inviting applications for research examining the neurobiological and/or genetic foundations and correlates of social behaviors (i.e., behaviors influenced by others or by features of the social context or behaviors occurring in the presence of others) and social relationships of relevance to aging.

Applications are expected to either: (1) address the neurobiological and/or genetic foundations and correlates of social behaviors and social relationships of particular relevance to middle-aged and older adults, or (2) use life course or lifespan developmental approaches to understand neurobiological and genetic mechanisms or pathways by which social behaviors and social relationships affect important aging outcomes. The FOA also calls for multilevel research that combines measures and methods from the behavioral and social sciences with neurobiological and or genetic approaches to shed light on these issues. It particularly encourages research projects that (1) link social neuroscience laboratory with population-based research, (2) cross traditional disciplinary barriers within the biological and behavioral sciences, or (3) offer bridges to translational efforts to improve social function and enhance social roles in older adults.

While the FOA is intended to stimulate research on a broad range of topics in the social neuroscience of aging, examples of specific research needs include but are not limited to the following:

- Research on how changes in social worlds (e.g., social relationships, social behaviors, family patterns, locus of residence) and social roles (e.g., caregiving, widowhood) impact neurobiological systems for social behavior, and the process by which these changes are reversible.
- Research on the neurobiological underpinnings of stigma and stereotypes of aging, and the neurobiological mechanisms whereby stereotypes and attitudes about aging impact behavioral and functional aging.
- Research exploring gene by environment interactions to elucidate how social behaviors at different life stages influence gene expression and genetic influence.

The FOA also cites methodological needs for advancing social neuroscience research on aging. These focus on the specification of improved behavioral phenotypes and endophenotypes of social behaviors that will be useful in future sociogenomic studies, including:

- Development of innovative methods for measuring social behaviors of relevance to middle aged and older adults that can be translated across laboratory, field, and neuroimaging environments.
- Longitudinal research on social behaviors and their relation to neurobiological markers of socioemotional function, and innovations in measurement of neurobiological markers of social behaviors in population-based studies.
- Assessments of the reliability of neurobiological measures of social behaviors over the short and long term.

- Data on the generalizability of social neuroscience laboratory findings to real-world social behaviors (e.g., caregiving, marital interaction, generativity, volunteering, intergenerational transfers).

INTEGRATING BIOBEHAVIORAL AND SOCIOCULTURAL RESEARCH TO PREVENT HIV TRANSMISSION AND INFECTIONS: APPLICATIONS WANTED

The National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR), the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIAID) are seeking applications designed to develop theoretically grounded approaches to prevention of HIV infection and transmission that incorporate biobehavioral approaches in studies that are culturally appropriate.

The Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) (PA-08-188) notes that approaches may focus on sociocultural impacts of biomedical HIV prevention research, or they may focus on behavioral interventions tested with attention to participants' sociocultural contexts, and also include biological variables within the design. Other factors relevant to culture such as social, economic, family, and community considerations as well as national or ethnic traditions, practices, and history may also need consideration. It stipulates that both descriptive and intervention studies should lead to the development and testing of different modes for implementing efficacious HIV prevention interventions.

A major purpose of the announcement is to encourage advances in HIV prevention by integrating programs of research across sociocultural and biobehavioral domains. Research is needed on the theoretical underpinnings of successful interventions that integrate biobehavioral and sociocultural variables and existing models that may not have fully addressed sociocultural aspects of biobehavioral prevention in populations at elevated HIV risk. Models that attend to factors such as acculturation and assimilation may prove particularly useful, as well as those which help illuminate how the presence of an HIV epidemic affects cultural norms that affect risk behavior or acceptance of biological prevention modalities. Innovative culturally appropriate research strategies are sought, including those that incorporate community-based participatory research (CBPR).

Examples of research topics include, but are not limited to:

- Create methodologies for measuring, interpreting, or integrating cultural variables with biobehavioral HIV prevention research design and data analysis with attention to intervention targets such as sexual practices or drug use which are particularly proscribed or hidden in particular cultural contexts.
- Examine the impact of cultural variables on translation and adoption of empirically tested biobehavioral HIV prevention interventions into community-based organizations, school, drug treatment programs, criminal justice settings, and other public settings.
- Investigate the ethical issues associated with testing biobehavioral or biomedical prevention interventions in specific cultural contexts.
- Develop strategies for testing vaccines, microbicides, or pharmacological approaches to HIV prevention with evidence of clear consideration of specific cultural contexts.
- Conduct validation studies of culturally appropriate research tools for biobehavioral or biomedical HIV prevention research.
- Re-examine relationship theory (e.g., gender and power) within specific cultural contexts. Develop and test biobehavioral or biomedical HIV prevention interventions based upon the updated theoretical constructs.

For more information or to apply see <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-08-188.html>

CONSORTIUM OF SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

COSSA

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