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RESEARCH RESOURCES**  
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH  
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NCRR-supported resources—  
a comprehensive range of  
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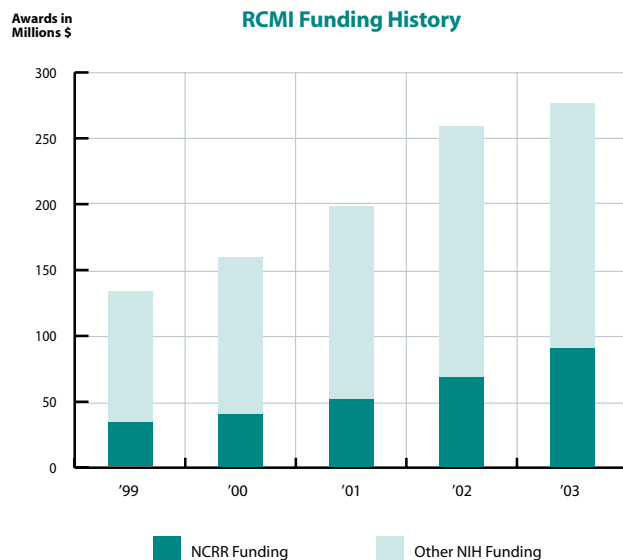
# Research Centers in Minority Institutions

Research Centers in Minority Institutions (RCMI) assist institutions in strengthening their research environment by improving and expanding their human and physical resources for conducting biomedical and behavioral research. These centers not only foster environments that are conducive to excellence in basic, clinical, and behavioral research, but they establish a critical mass of scientists that more closely reflects the growing ethnic and cultural diversity of the U.S. population.

The Division of Research Infrastructure (DRI) of the National Center for Research Resources (NCRR) provides RCMI grants to expand our nation's research capacity in colleges and universities that (1) have a 50 percent or greater enrollment of students who are underrepresented in biomedical sciences, and (2) award doctoral degrees in the health professions or health-related sciences. Underrepresented students are African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, Alaskan Natives, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders.

The RCMI Program provides for: core administrative staff; pilot projects; faculty development, enrichment, and expansion; acquisition of state-of-the-art instrumentation; enhancement of grants management and research development activities; improvement of biostatistical and computer resources; development of new technologies; initiation and expansion of research disciplines; and renovation of laboratories and animal facilities.

RCMI grants are limited to institutions within the United States and its territories. All RCMIIs share common concerns about minority health issues; however, they differ from one another in several aspects. For example, of the 18 institutions that currently host RCMIIs, 8 are graduate schools, 7 are medical schools, 2 are schools of pharmacy, and 1 is a school of veterinary medicine. Moreover, several are state-supported institutions, while some are private; a few are relatively new, while others have long-standing research programs in the health sciences.



When applying for an RCMI grant, the applicant must identify a thematic scientific focus in one research area such as neuroscience, cancer, structural biology, immunology, or bioengineering that may use basic and/or clinical research approaches to attain the goals of the proposed center. An advisory committee is an integral part of the planning and development process, which should begin with a self-assessment of the institution's current biomedical and/or behavioral research capabilities. Program plans to enhance biomedical research capacity must be consistent with the long-range goals of the applicant institution and must provide a means to evaluate the extent to which program goals are achieved.

RCMI grant applications undergo a two-tiered review process. The primary review criterion focuses on how the proposed program will enhance the applicant institution's health-related research goals. A specific plan for achieving the goals will be assessed, and each component within the plan will be evaluated on the extent to which it contributes to the stated goals. If applicants are successful, funding amounts for each award are based on the reviewers' recommendations

as well as programmatic considerations and available federal funds.

Once an institution has established an RCMI, additional types of support are available to enable the center to accomplish its program goals.

These include:

- RCMI Faculty Development Award
- RCMI Clinical Research Infrastructure Initiative
- RCMI Clinical Research Faculty Development Award
- Centers of Clinical Research Excellence
- Comprehensive Centers on Health Disparities
- RCMI Planning Grants

The **RCMI Faculty Development Award** provides up to five years of support to individual faculty members at institutions that host RCMI to enable them to become independent biomedical research investigators. A successful application for this award will be funded as a competing supplement to an existing RCMI grant. Although this award supports up to five years of didactic and research activities, the requested budget may not go beyond the funded period of the RCMI grant. A candidate for this award must: (1) have a Ph.D. or doctoral degree in the health professions and a full-time faculty appointment at an RCMI host institution; (2) be a U.S. citizen or hold a permanent immigration visa; and (3) may not have been the principal investigator on an independent peer-reviewed grant within five years prior to the funding of the application. The applicant's primary mentor and other participating scientists may be based either at the applicant institution or other performance sites. The program must be designed and tailored to fit the specific needs of the applicant within the time frame proposed. A minimum 75 percent effort is required. The remaining time may be devoted to other teaching or research pursuits consistent with the objectives of the faculty development award.



The **RCMI Clinical Research Infrastructure Initiative (RCRII)** provides funds to strengthen the clinical research capacities of institutions that host RCMI and are affiliated with medical schools that do not have NCCR-supported General Clinical Research Centers (GCRCs). Currently, 5 of the 18 institutions that have RCMI also have clinical research centers. The primary distinction between the RCRII and the traditional RCMI is the exclusive focus on the development of clinical research capacity. An RCRII grant supports the infrastructure needed for RCMI to support clinical studies of diseases that disproportionately affect the populations served by the host institutions. RCRII support is intended to position these medical schools to compete successfully for clinical research grants, including grants to establish GCRCs. Also, the RCRII is intended to enable faculty at the medical schools affiliated with institutions that host RCMI to successfully compete for clinical research project grants funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and to conduct research relevant to the mission of the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS).

The **RCMI Clinical Research Faculty Development (CRFD) Award** provides up to five years of funding to a physician or dentist dedicated to becoming an independent clinical investigator. An application for this award must be funded as a competing supplement to an existing RCRII grant, described above. The requested budget may not go beyond the funded period of the RCRII grant. A CRFD award is not renewable; no more than three individuals will be supported for a given RCRII. A candidate for a CRFD award must have an M.D., D.D.S., or an equivalent degree; must have completed residency training; and must be a U.S. citizen or hold a permanent immigration visa. Candidates for this award may not have held independent peer-reviewed grant support as the

principal investigator prior to the funding of this application, and they must have a faculty appointment at the RCRII grantee institution. However, the primary mentor and other scientists participating in the career development training may be based at the applicant institution or at another clinical research center. The CRFD program must be designed and tailored to fit the specific needs of the applicant within the time frame proposed. A minimum of 25 percent, and up to 50 percent, of an investigator's effort must be devoted to clinical research development activities. The remainder may be devoted to other clinical, teaching, or research pursuits consistent with the objectives of the CRFD award.

### **Centers of Clinical Research Excellence (CCRE)**

support augments and strengthens the clinical research capacities at institutions that have RCMI by providing funds to recruit established senior basic or clinical research investigators who already have funded independent research projects. Moreover, investigators who are at the applicant institution and will participate in the CCRE must be full time and must have completed two or more years of clinical research at the post-doctoral level. These investigators can mentor junior investigators, including those who are just beginning to develop clinical research careers. Funds are provided to establish research laboratories, acquire specialized equipment, and support postdoctoral fellows and technical assistants. Ideally, research at a CCRE will focus on one or more of the diseases that disproportionately affect the minority populations served by the RCMI institution. CCRE support is expected to complement the RCRII. Each RCMI institution that applies for CCRE funding must identify a collaborating institution—domestic federal or non-federal, public or private, or non-profit. All collaborating investigators must be supported by an NIH grant funded by the R-series and/or P-series mechanisms.



## Comprehensive Centers on Health

**Disparities (CCHD)** awards augment and strengthen institutional clinical research capabilities that are needed to address the cause(s) of health disparities in the racial and ethnic minority populations served by these institutions. Applicants must be from RCMI institutions affiliated with a medical school. The primary goals of CCHD are to: (1) develop sustainable, replicable and culturally appropriate prevention and/or intervention research programs targeted to minority populations designed to decrease the incidence and prevalence of disease; (2) strengthen clinical and translational research capacity at minority medical schools committed to addressing health disparities; (3) enhance opportunities for multi-disciplinary research collaborations between minority institutions and institutions with more established research programs in the identified areas; and (4) increase the role of research in maintaining a vigorous and stimulating academic environment that will inspire students and fellows to pursue careers that focus on health disparities.

**RCMI Planning Grants** may be used to: (1) provide institutions that have RCMI with the resources needed to plan and apply for support through new RCMI initiatives or other components of the PHS, and (2) provide currently unsupported RCMI-eligible institutions with the resources needed to plan and apply for RCMI support. For all planning grants submitted by unsupported RCMI-eligible institutions, applicants are required to select a program director and to establish a planning committee. The committee must be composed of institutional officials and external biomedical

and behavioral researchers who can assure the quality of submitted applications. The planning committee will oversee the overall institutional planning and application development. Program plans to enhance the biomedical research capacity must be consistent with the applicant institution's long-range goals. The total requested project period for planning grants may not exceed 12 months and \$75,000 in direct costs. Funds may be requested for personnel, such as faculty release time and support for a program director and staff; consultant services, including external advisors and collaborators; and other expenses necessary to develop a program.

Before applying for the grants described here, contact the DRI program staff to ensure that the proposed approach to expanding the institutional biomedical research capacity appropriately addresses both national program goals and institutional goals. Program staff also can provide application information, including receipt dates for each grant program.

To access additional information about the RCMI program, visit the NCRR Web site at: [www.ncrr.nih.gov](http://www.ncrr.nih.gov).



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