



NCRR: A Catalyst
for Discovery

NCRR Fact Sheet

Institutional Development Awards (IDeA) enhance biomedical and behavioral research in specific geographic areas. The Division of Research Infrastructure of the National Center for Research Resources (NCRR) provides IDeA grants to foster research within states that traditionally have not received significant levels of competitive funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

This grant program strengthens an organization's infrastructure and increases its capacity to conduct cutting-edge biomedical and behavioral research.

Eligibility for the IDeA Program is limited to those states that attained a success rate of less than 20 percent in competing for NIH grants or received less than \$70 million on average in NIH support from 1995 to 1999. Based on these two criteria, the following are currently eligible to participate in the IDeA Program:

- Alaska
- Arkansas
- Delaware
- Hawaii
- Idaho
- Kansas
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Maine
- Mississippi
- Montana
- Nebraska
- Nevada
- New Hampshire
- New Mexico
- North Dakota
- Oklahoma
- Rhode Island
- South Carolina
- South Dakota
- Vermont
- West Virginia
- Wyoming
- Puerto Rico

The IDeA Program is carried out through two approaches:

- Centers of Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE)
- Biomedical Research Infrastructure Networks (BRIN)

Centers of Biomedical Research Excellence

The objectives of the COBRE funding are to augment and strengthen an institution's biomedical research capacity and to develop a multidisciplinary research center with a thematic science focus. COBRE also enables an institution to develop resources needed to conduct state-of-the-art biomedical research, with the ultimate goal of preparing investigators to successfully compete for other NIH research grants.

An essential element of a COBRE grant application is to identify a "magnet" investigator to serve as the principal investigator for the COBRE. This investigator must be

The National Center for Research Resources ensures that essential tools and research resources are readily available to NIH-supported investigators nationwide. NCRR-supported resources—a comprehensive range of human, animal, technological, and more—enable biomedical research advances.

an established NIH-funded biomedical researcher; have an active research laboratory; conduct relevant peer-reviewed, funded research; show institutional commitment; and be able to mentor junior investigators who will propose and conduct pilot research projects.

The junior investigators' research projects must be thematic and cut across the full spectrum of basic and clinical research. This research may include cellular and molecular biology, biophysics and biotechnology, genetics and developmental biology, pharmacology, and other fields of biomedical research. COBRE funding is intended to support investigators from several different disciplines. In some instances, COBRE support also will help an institution develop a new research center to study a specific disease or will augment the research capacity of an existing center.

Biomedical Research Infrastructure Networks

The purpose of BRIN is to attract established biomedical and behavioral investigators to institutions in the IDeA-eligible states, while simultaneously creating ways to use and develop the research skills of talented investigators and gifted students already residing there. Ultimately, BRIN support is expected to effectively build a competitive research base.

The BRIN Program: 1) brings together institutions within a state to establish a network; 2) provides competitive funding to the state-based network; 3) supports institutional alterations and renovations; 4) provides funding for modern laboratory equipment; and 5) assists in the recruitment of new faculty.

For example, with BRIN funding, a research or doctorate-granting institution serves as the network lead, and three to five institutions that offer bachelor's or master's degrees comprise the rest of the network. Funding is provided to all of the network institutions to carry out basic, clinical, or both types of research in a creative and integrated approach. This funding also is intended to strengthen the basic science departments of the undergraduate institutions in the network by recruiting outstanding faculty who will pique the students' interest in health-related science, and involve the students in the professors' research. The undergraduate institutions also serve an important "feeder" role to the science departments of graduate schools within the IDeA-eligible states and Puerto Rico.

Institutions that serve minority populations are encouraged to participate in BRIN so that their investigators may include minorities in research studies of health disparities.

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