

NCI's Commitment to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility and anti-Harassment

*Shannon Hughes, PhD
Division of Cancer Biology
New Grantee Workshop*



“To those individuals in the biomedical research enterprise who have endured disadvantages due to structural racism, I am truly sorry. NIH is committed to instituting new ways to support diversity, equity, and inclusion, and identifying and dismantling any policies and practices at our own agency that may harm our workforce and our science.”

— Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D., NIH Director



“[Health Equity] is like oxygen, it has to be in every breath for us to make progress. That really is the way we think about equity at NCI – it belongs in everything that we do.” – Monica Bertagnolli, M.D., NCI Director

[NIH Director Statement, March 1, 2021](#)

[NCI Director Comments, December 6, 2022](#) (timestamp 16:15)

The NIH UNITE Initiative



- U** Understanding stakeholder experiences through listening and learning
- N** New research on health disparities/minority health/health equity
- I** Improving the NIH Culture and Structure for Equity, Inclusion, and Excellence
- T** Transparency, communication, and accountability with our internal and external stakeholders
- E** Extramural Research Ecosystem: Changing Policy, Culture, and Structure to Promote Workforce Diversity

UNITE Progress Report



Purpose:

- The UNITE Progress Report describes NIH's actions to identify and address structural racism that may exist within NIH and in the biomedical and behavioral research enterprise.
- The report (FY21-22) is the first UNITE progress report. It was developed in collaboration with UNITE co-chairs, committees, and stakeholders.
- The report focuses on health disparities and minority health research, the internal NIH workforce, and the external research workforce—topics that intersect and enable greater transparency, accountability, and communication across NIH and the biomedical and behavioral community.

The NCI Equity & Inclusion Program (EIP)

The EIP Initiative is a top priority for NCI Leadership.

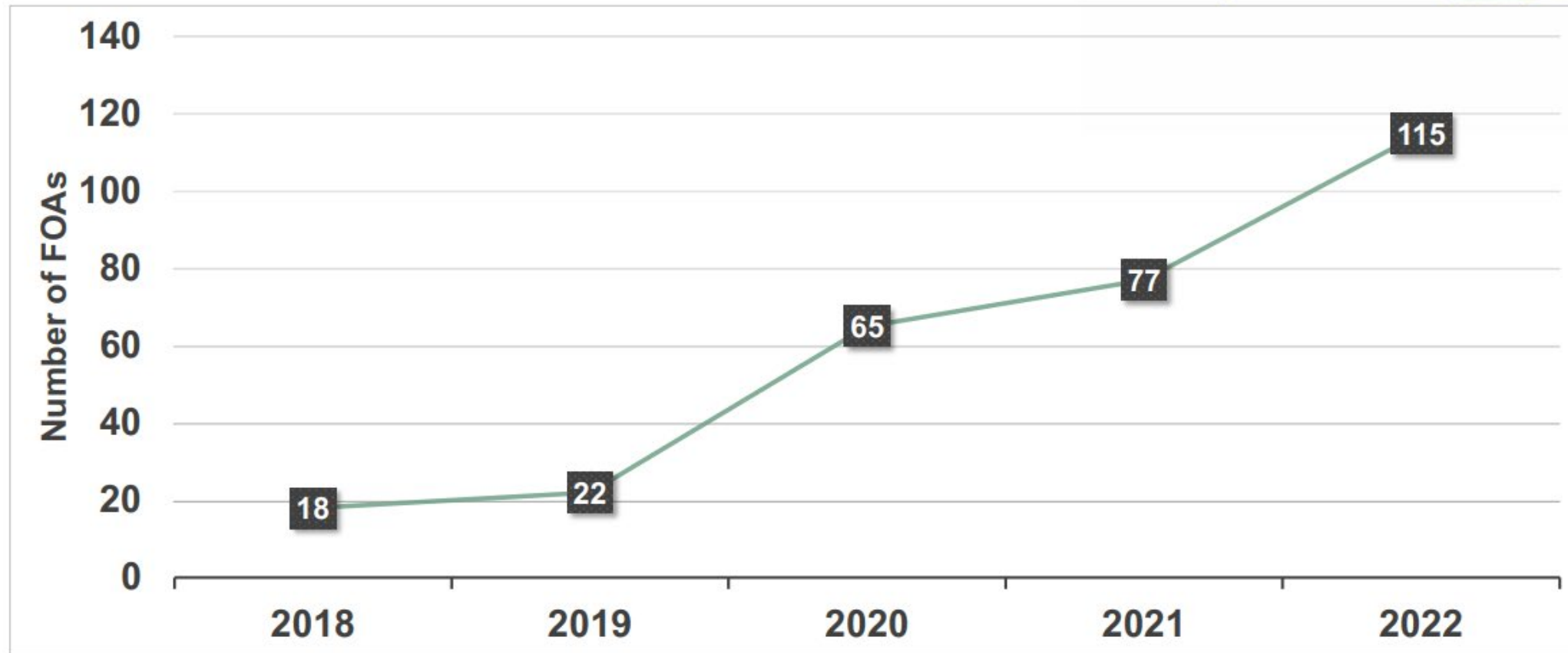
EIP Working Groups addressing three major areas:

1. Enhancing Research to Address Cancer Health Disparities
2. Ensuring Diversity of Thought and Background in the Cancer Research Workforce
3. Promoting an Equitable and Inclusive Community at NCI

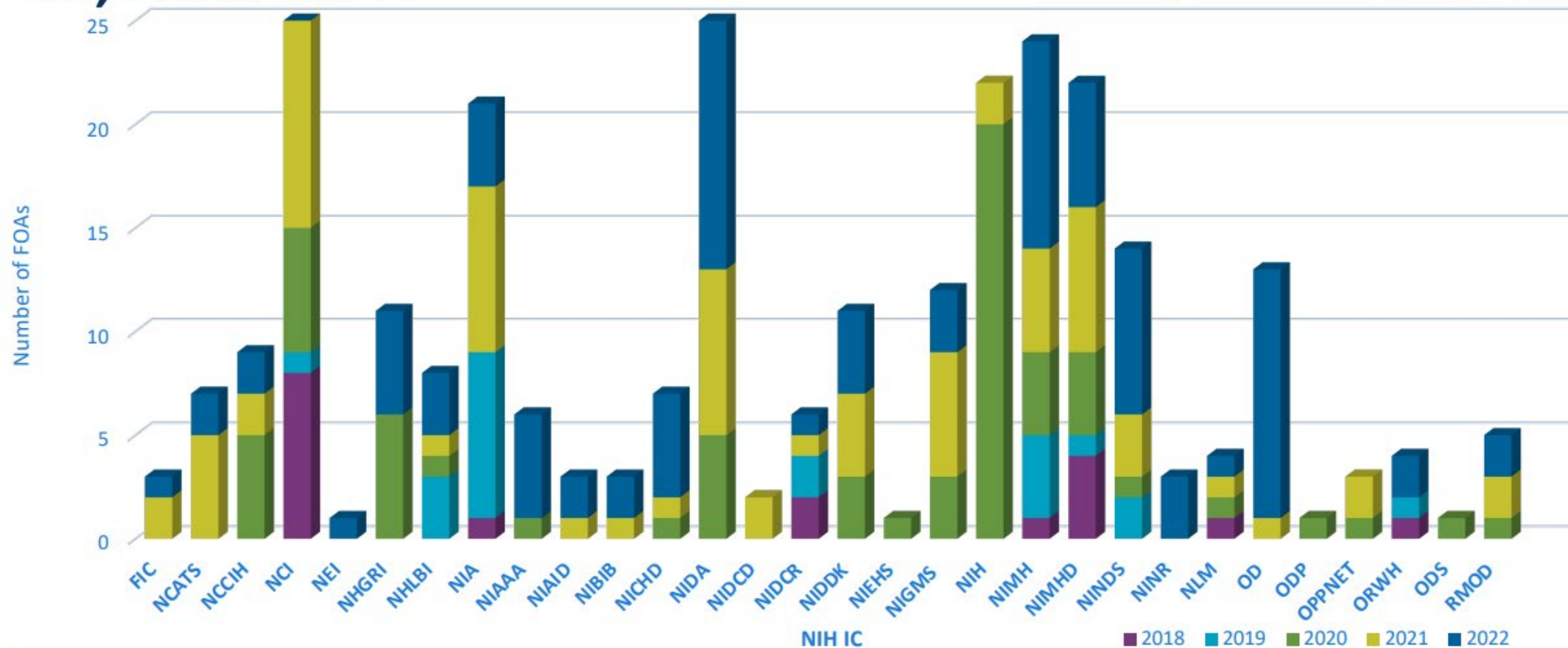


<https://www.cancer.gov/research/key-initiatives/nci-equity-inclusion-program>

FOAs Related to Minority Health and Health Disparities, 2018-2022



Distribution of Minority Health and Health Disparities FOAs by Year and ICs, 2018-2022



nih.gov/ending-structural-racism

The NIH UNITE Initiative to Strengthen Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Together, We're Stronger.



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Enhancing Research to Address Cancer Health Disparities

Funding announcements supporting basic research:

[PAR-21-322](#): Basic Research in Cancer Health Disparities (R01 Clinical Trial Not Allowed)

[PAR-21-323](#): Basic Research in Cancer Health Disparities (R21 Clinical Trial Not Allowed)

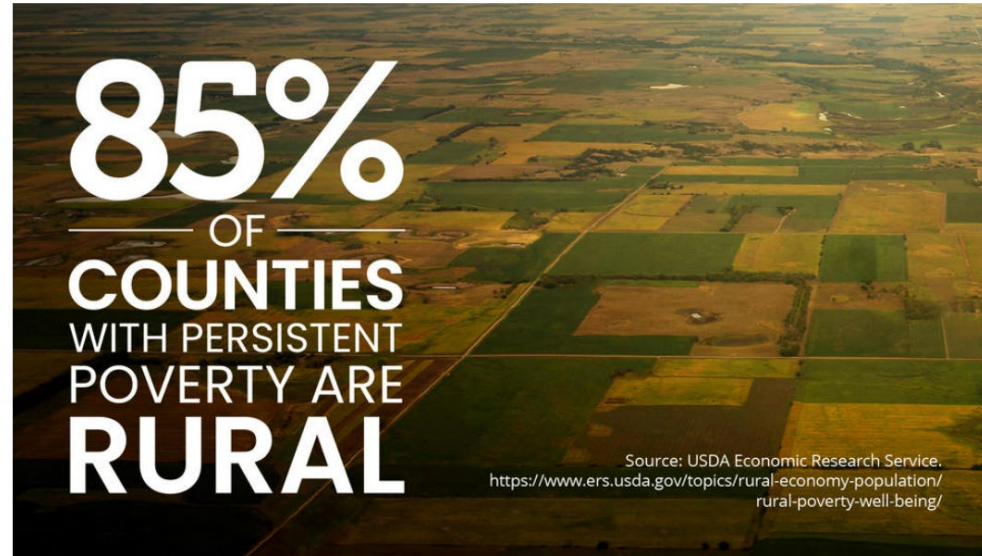
[PAR-21-324](#): Basic Research in Cancer Health Disparities (R03 Clinical Trial Not Allowed)

DCB Contacts: Anu Sharman (sharmananu@nih.gov) and Natalia Mercer (natalia.mercer@nih.gov); FOAs active until June 2024

<https://www.cancer.gov/research/key-initiatives/nci-equity-inclusion-program/funding>

Enhancing Research to Address Cancer Health Disparities

Persistent Poverty and Cancer: Increasing Health Equity across the Cancer Continuum



Current NOSI: [Expanding Cancer Control Research in Persistent Poverty Areas](#) (P01)

Upcoming FOAs: [Integrating Health Disparities into Immuno-Oncology Research](#) (P20)
[Cancer Control Research Centers in Persistent Poverty Areas](#) (U54)

Ensuring Diversity of Thought and Background in the Cancer Research Workforce

The EIAP Aims to Facilitate the Advancement of Scientists from Diverse Backgrounds:

- Enhance professional skills;
- Guide preparation of an R01 grant application;
- Provide access to a mentoring and peer network; and
- Grow a community of emerging independent investigators from diverse backgrounds.



Ensuring Diversity of Thought and Background in the Cancer Research Workforce



Consider volunteering as an EIAP Mentor!

Becoming a mentor of one of these young investigators may be of a significant impact on them and cancer research.

Your expertise would be invaluable for the EIAP scholars.

Your insights and tips on career development would complement the resources and activities provided by the EIAP program.

Volunteer mentor expectations:

- Meet with EIAP scholar monthly (virtually or in person, if possible);
- Attend a mentor training session; and
- Participate in conversations with EIAP program staff related to the mentoring experience

Contact: Jay Revilleza (mariajamela.revilleza@nih.gov)

Ensuring Diversity of Thought and Background in the Cancer Research Workforce

Cancer Moonshot Scholars program

Aim: **Increase number of applications** from Early Stage Investigators *from diverse backgrounds.*



**Funding
Opportunity:
RFA-CA-22-050**

*Expect to fund
45 new R01s during the
next 3 years.*

Due Dates:
November 8, 2022
June 6, 2023
February 6, 2024



cancer.gov/moonshotscholars



Ensuring Diversity of Thought and Background in the Cancer Research Workforce



There are a number of training opportunities available to support workforce diversity through the [NCI CURE Program](#).

An underutilized mechanism supports re-entry into the research workforce – this may become even more important post-COVID 19.

More on these mechanisms in a later talk.

Upcoming NIH Initiatives from UNITE



1. **Institutional Climate Assessment and DEI Action Plan Development Grants.** These grants will provide institutions with **support for conducting objective climate assessments** using validated instruments, performing self-studies of institutional culture change needs (e.g., surveys), and **developing action plans for culture change.**
2. **Excellence in DEIA Investigator Grants.** These five-year combined research and mentoring grants will support Principal Investigators (PIs) who have **demonstrated excellence in promoting DEIA** in biomedical research. The grant would provide support for PIs' research programs and continuation of DEIA efforts.

[Current Administrative Supplement Opportunity](#); due February 17, 2023

3. **Instrumentation Grant Program for MSIs.** These grants will provide instrumentation to develop research capacity at low-resource MSIs.
4. **Institutional Research Capacity Building Needs Assessment and Action Plan Development Grants.** These grants will support MSIs in assessing their needs for enhancing their biomedical research and training capacities. The funds will also support the development of action plans based on the results of each needs assessment.

NIH Raising a Resilient Scientist Series:

Hosted by NIH Office for Intramural Training & Education (but targeting the extramural community). Webinars and facilitated small group discussions are offered.

Five units:

- Communication Skills to Build Trainee Resilience ([Recording Available](#))
- Promoting Trainee Resilience ([Recording Available](#))
- Building a Welcoming and Inclusive Research Group ([Registration Open](#); Jan 18)
- Difficult Conversations, Conflict, and Feedback ([Registration Open](#), February 8)
- The Mental Health and Well-being of Your Trainees ([Registration Open](#), March 8)

NIH Anti-Harassment Policy

The [National Academies report on sexual harassment of women in science](#) found that *“federal agencies may be perpetuating the problem of sexual harassment.”* The NIH Director stated that he is concerned that NIH has been part of the problem.

Clarifying expectations for institutions and investigators to ensure a safe workplace

- Read more on the [6/14/2019](#) and [6/29/2021](#) “Open Mike” blog
- Instituting new reporting policies for change in PI Institution.
- *“...the request for approval should include mention as to whether change(s) in PD/PI or Senior/Key Personnel is related to concerns about safety and/or work environments (e.g. due to concerns about harassment, bullying, retaliation, or hostile working conditions).”*

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NIH Anti-Harassment Policy

- **Providing clear channels of communication to the NIH**

- It is appropriate to report all types of harassment, including sexual harassment, discrimination, and other forms of inappropriate conduct that result in a hostile working environment.
- For guidance on where to report and information on what to expect after reporting visit <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/harassment/find-help.htm>.
- For concerns related to harassment affecting NIH-funded research, an email can be sent to: GranteeHarassment@od.nih.gov
- Or incidences may be directly reported using a webform: <https://public.era.nih.gov/shape/public/notificationForm.era>

- The [June 29, 2021](#) “Open Mike” blog provides data regarding harassment reports to the NIH during the period 2016-2020.

- NCI is committed to ending structural racism in biomedical research and supports (and works together with) the NIH UNITE initiative.
- NIH and NCI efforts will go beyond race and ethnicity to include other underserved and underrepresented groups, such as people with disability (see [recent NIH report](#) here).
- NIH and NCI encourage reporting of harassment of all kinds. ***All incidences reported to NIH are investigated.***



Exhibit 8: Imagery from The Power of an Inclusive Workplace Recognition Project

www.cancer.gov

<http://cancer.gov/dcb>