

POSTDOCTORAL DIVERSITY ENRICHMENT PROGRAM (PDEP)

Proposal deadline:

January 20, 2025 (3:00 pm ET)

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KEY DATES

Grant application portal available	October 2024
Application deadline	January 20, 2025 (3:00 pm ET)
Notice of award	By June 2025
Award start date	September 1, 2025
Award end date	August 30, 2028

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The Burroughs Wellcome Fund is committed to fostering the development of the next generation of biomedical scientists and is strongly committed to supporting only degree-granting institutions to achieve this goal. The career development of young scientists has been a major funding theme at BWF. The continuing lag in the advancement of scientists from within underrepresented groups is a significant problem for the scientific community. Despite several decades of federally supported programs, Americans from these minority populations continue to be underrepresented among Ph.D. recipients and in the Science & Engineering workforce. Contrary to popular belief, many well prepared underrepresented minority students — including people of Latino, Native-American, Pacific Island, and African-American descent — are interested in pursuing scientific or engineering careers. Many students with strong SAT scores, impressive grades, and success in high school honors math and science courses leave the college science pipeline, but the loss is disproportionately among women and minorities. Thus, factors other than school preparation, science aptitude, and interest must be responsible for the low achievement and low persistence of these subgroups of undergraduate and graduate Science & Engineering students. Identifying and mitigating these negative factors, then retaining well-educated students with Science & Engineering interests would improve the United States' ability to compete in today's global scientific community. (SCIENCE, 31 March 2006, Preparing Minority Scientists and Engineers, Michael Summers and Freeman Hrabowski).

For this reason, the Burroughs Wellcome Fund created the Postdoctoral Diversity Enrichment Program in 2012. BWF is committed to funding the next generation of scientists and researchers, thus we have an interest in advancing the careers of minority postdoctoral fellows within underrepresented groups. The primary goal of the Postdoctoral Diversity Enrichment Program (PDEP) is to substantially enhance the postdoctoral training and experience of underrepresented junior scientists. Funds will be provided to support the following enrichment activities:

1. Activities for the postdoctoral fellow to enhance research productivity, e.g. workshops, courses, travel, collaborations, and training in new techniques
2. Activities for the postdoctoral mentor to increase the mentoring of PDEP fellows in university-based programs:
 - Career guidance of the underrepresented minority postdoctoral fellow
 - Research guidance that increases the productivity of the PDEP fellow
 - Attendance at one annual meeting of mentors hosted and/or sponsored by the Burroughs Wellcome Fund (BWF)
3. Participation in a peer network system of underrepresented minority postdoctoral scholars

POSTDOCTORAL DIVERSITY ENRICHMENT AWARD

The Postdoctoral Diversity Enrichment Program (PDEP) provides a total of \$60,000 over three years to support the career development activities for postdoctoral fellows within underrepresented groups at a degree-granting institution in the United States or Canada whose training and professional development are guided by mentors committed to helping them advance to stellar careers in biomedical or medical research. This year, up to 25 awards will be granted for enrichment activities annually. This grant is meant to supplement the training of postdocs whose research activities are already supported. It is not a research grant.

Beginning with the 2023-2024 grant cycle, BWF and the Charles H. Revson Foundation are proud to announce a collaboration aimed at expanding diversity and inclusion in the scientific research community. This partnership supports minority scientists' advancement and enhances their contributions to various fields of research.

Through PDEP, the Charles H. Revson Foundation will fund up to five additional fellowships to postdoctoral researchers at institutions located within the New York Metro area. PDEP award recipients being supported by the Charles H. Revson Foundation will be recognized as BWF PDEP/Revson Scholars.

The program provides a total of \$60,000 over three years as follows:

Year one: \$20,000 will be granted to support enrichment activities of the postdoctoral fellow (\$10,000 for research supplies or equipment uniquely required to enhance the postdoctoral fellow's research and \$10,000 for education and training, including for mentors in the research lab where the postdoctoral fellow is assigned.) The PDEP award cannot be used to support salary expenses or indirect costs. (Refer to "Terms of Grant" for information on indirect costs and other requirements for use of funds.)

Year two: \$20,000 (same allocation as year one)

Year three: \$20,000 will be granted to help the postdoctoral fellow advance research efforts towards the professoriate. The funds must be used to develop independent, innovative areas of research.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Applicants for the Postdoctoral Diversity Enrichment Award:

- must have no more than 48 months of postdoctoral research experience (in a research laboratory) at the time of application and not be more than 5 years from his/her Ph.D.
- must be nominated by a qualified mentor at the degree-granting institution where the applicant will conduct the postdoctoral/fellowship training. Applications must be approved by an official responsible for sponsored programs (generally from the grants office, office of research, or office of sponsored programs) at the degree-granting institution.
- must have secured a postdoctoral position with funding (including support by the mentor's existing research grants) at a degree-granting institution in the United States or Canada and must begin the postdoctoral position on or by the designated award commencement date.
- must be within an underrepresented group (i.e. American Indian or Alaska Native, Black or African American, Hispanic, or Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander).
- must be citizens of the United States or Canada (at the time of application).
- must devote at least 75% of time to research.

In addition to the PDEP awards funded by the Burroughs Wellcome Fund, up to five additional PDEP awards will be funded by the Charles H. Revson Foundation. These awards will be recognized as the BWF PDEP Revson Scholars. This designation is in recognition of postdoctoral researchers at institutions located within the New York Metro area receiving the BWF PDEP award. All elements of the PDEP award and programming are consistent with ALL PDEP awardees except in the case of some additional engagement of New York Metro awardees with the Charles H. Revson Foundation.

Individuals identified as underrepresented postdoctoral fellows conducting biomedical or medical research are eligible to apply. The program targets postdoctoral fellows with Ph.D.s in the biomedical or medical sciences. Applicants with M.D. degrees who have secured a postdoctoral research appointment beyond clinical fellowship will be considered for this program. DDS, DVM, and PharmD candidates may be eligible, but should contact BWF prior to applying. Proposals in health services research or involving large-scale clinical trials are ineligible.

IMPORTANT NOTES

A person with more than 48 months of postdoctoral experience (in a research laboratory) at the time of application or with more than five years from his/her Ph.D. is not eligible for this award.

The PDEP award can only be made to degree-granting institutions in the U.S. or Canada. Institutional Internal Revenue Service determination letter of non-profit status may be requested by BWF staff if said letter is not on file in our database.

A qualified mentor is required for the PDEP award. It has been documented that minorities are less likely to enter and remain in science and engineering when they lack mentors and role models. Mentors are expected to provide a letter of nomination with the proposal and the mentor's commitment to the applicant's career is important. Mentors of funded PDEP awardees are strongly encouraged to attend a mentoring workshop during the Fall of the year that the award is made. The mentor must explicitly state how the postdoctoral fellow's stipend is being supported since the PDEP award cannot be used to support salary expenses. Please see the characteristics of a qualified mentor under "Selection Process" and expectations of mentors under "Terms of the Award."

SELECTION PROCESS

Selection of award recipients is made by a scientific advisory committee with final approval by the Burroughs Wellcome Fund Board of Directors. Generally, up to 25 Postdoctoral Diversity Enrichment Program (PDEP) awards will be made annually. The committee will use the following criteria to identify PDEP fellows who are innovative and committed to research. The award will provide funding to support and advance the PDEP fellow and support clear articulation of the vision and philosophy of advancing his/her career.

Qualifications of PDEP Applicant

- PDEP fellows with strong Ph.D. achievement and actively conducting research in the biomedical and medical areas.

Characteristics of Proposed Mentor

- Capacity, track record, and commitment to advancing the careers of young scientists.
- Willingness to participate in workshops to understand expectations of the award and a commitment to its goals (see Eligibility and Terms of the Award).
- Publications, training, and research background.

Characteristics of Proposed Research Laboratory

- Appropriateness of facilities including laboratory, classroom, and residential spaces where the PDEP fellow is assigned.
- Clear indication of adequate equipment and facilities for work being proposed for PDEP fellows. If additional equipment is being requested, an explanation of why the equipment is required.

The PDEP program prioritizes groups in the US shown to be underrepresented in the sciences and historically excluded because of race/ethnicity: Native American, Native Pacific Islander, Black/African American, Latinx. For the purpose of this program, these groups are defined as follows:

- Black/African American refers to US citizens of African descent who have been raised in the United States and who are descendants from families of the American South or Deep South, or descendants of families who migrated from the American south to urban areas in the north, Midwest and southwest; Black Americans exposed to US discriminatory laws and practices that were in effect prior to the passage of the US Civil Rights Act by Congress in 1964, such as redlining, Jim Crow laws, and enslavement.
- Latinx refers to the people of Latin America and their descendants who live in the US. The PDEP program prioritizes support for postdocs who reside in the US and who are descendants from Latin American families disadvantaged by US immigration and economic practices such as migrant farm work and other low wage labor. Most such families will have immigrated from Mexico, Central America, or Puerto Rico. Puerto Rican residents and citizens are eligible to apply.
- Native American refers to US or Canadian citizens who are descendants from the indigenous peoples of North America. US Natives eligible for this program need to be accepted members of any of the 573 recognized Nations or tribes as listed by the US Bureau of Indian Affairs. Canadian Natives should be members of any of the First Nations, or Inuit, or Métis.
- Native Pacific Islander refers to: a) Native Hawaiians, who are the indigenous Polynesian people of Hawaii; b) Indigenous peoples of Oceania who are citizens of any of the islands served by the US Office of Insular Affairs.

TERMS OF THE GRANT/USE OF GRANT FUNDS

Indirect costs may not be charged against BWF grants.

Awards are made to the degree-granting institutions on behalf of the award recipients. The Postdoctoral Diversity Enrichment Program (PDEP) award provides a total of \$60,000 over three years as outlined below to support the development of a PDEP fellow at a degree-granting institution. Applicants at affiliated graduate and medical schools, hospitals and research institutions in the United States or Canada must apply through the degree-granting institution. Individual PDEP fellows conducting biomedical or medical research are eligible to apply. Award recipients must commit 75% of their time to research.

The institutions are responsible for disbursing the funds and for maintaining adequate supporting records and receipts of expenditures. Indirect costs may not be charged against the awards.

Award recipients must provide BWF with an annual progress report detailing their progress. Institutions must provide an annual financial report. Both reports must be submitted (on forms that will be provided) by November 1st of each award year. Continued funding will depend on both the timely submission of these reports and their favorable review by BWF and its program advisory committee.

Award recipients may obtain funds from other sources for research in the same or similar areas as that conducted under these grants, so long as there is no conflict with meeting the terms of BWF's award.

This award cannot be used to provide the postdoctoral fellow's salary or to purchase reagents or equipment commonly found in the mentor's laboratory. The award is under the control of the award recipient and may be used flexibly for career development activities as outlined below.

Year one: \$20,000 will be granted to support enrichment activities of the postdoctoral fellow (\$10,000 for research supplies or equipment uniquely required to enhance the postdoctoral fellow's research and \$10,000 for education and training, including for mentors in the research lab where the postdoctoral fellow is assigned.)

Year two: \$20,000 (same allocation as year one)

Year three: \$20,000 will be granted to help the postdoctoral fellow advance research efforts towards the professoriate. The funds must be used to develop independent, innovative areas of research.

BWF acknowledges that postdoctoral fellows may move to new institutions. Awards may not be transferred for another postdoctoral position. Award recipients who change institutions for another postdoctoral position may take with them any equipment or supplies purchased under the award.

Scientific publications or presentations that result from these awards must acknowledge the awardee's receipt of a Burroughs Wellcome Fund Postdoctoral Diversity Enrichment Program Award. Copies of journal articles and other publications should be sent to BWF along with the annual progress report.

Awardees should follow their institutions' patent, copyright, and intellectual property policies regarding discoveries that result from research conducted under these awards. BWF expects the appropriate federal, state, and local guidelines with regard to scientific misconduct are in place and enforced at all institutions with which BWF awardees are affiliated.

Awardees should share scientific findings in a timely manner via the standard means of scientific communication, including publications and/or presentations in scientific forums. BWF will not retain any rights to published results or patents that result from the research.

Expectations for Mentors

A qualified mentor is required for the PDEP. It has been documented that members of underrepresented groups are less likely to enter and remain in science and engineering when they lack mentors and role models. In most science and engineering disciplines, the percentage of those in underrepresented groups among faculty recently hired is not comparable to that of recent Ph.Ds. from underrepresented groups and is far below that of recent bachelor degree recipients. This results in fewer faculty within underrepresented groups to act as role models for minority students. (A National Analysis of Minorities in Science and Engineering Faculties at Research Universities, Nelson and Brammer, January 2010). This program is designed to encourage innovative scientists with broad ranging backgrounds in the biomedical and medical sciences and with experiences in working with postdoctoral fellows to consider serving as mentors.

BWF has developed a diversity enrichment workshop for PDEP awardees and their mentors. The workshop takes place annually in conjunction with BWF's New Awardee Meeting. Details of the workshops will be provided with ample notice and PDEP mentors will be strongly encouraged to participate in a minimum of one mentor workshop within the first two years of the active award period. Discussions and topics will include considerations of the cultural barriers that exist for underrepresented group postdoctoral fellows within the scientific community and the value effective mentoring can have on mentee career development and progression.

Questions?

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