**TRANSCRIPT**

**Webinar:** Updates to NIH Grant Training Applications

**Event Date:** Wednesday, June 5, 2024

**Event Time:** 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. ET

Dr. Anissa Brown: I thank you for joining the NIH webinar. The title is Updates to NIH Training Grant and Applications. I will be your moderator for today's webinar. I am Anissa Brown, the Chief of Research Training-Career Development at the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research. Please note this webinar is not intended to be comprehensive of all of the expectations for Institutional Training Grants, and so before I actually introduce the team and we get started with the presentation, I just have a few housekeeping announcements. And the first one is, the slides for today's webinar are available online. The webinar is being recorded, and it will be posted as soon as possible. The other thing is, following the presentation, we will have a question and answer session. We will start with the questions that were previously submitted. There is a Q and A box that you can use to provide live questions, we will do our best to get to all questions. We do have an FAQ available on the webpage associated with this topic, and we will do our best to include the questions that we're unable to get to in that FAQ.

So, with that said, let me just introduce you to the presentation team. One second. So, the presenters for today will be Dr. Ericka Boone, who is the Director of the Division of Biomedical Research Workforce in the Office of Extramural Research. We also have Dr. Kenneth Gibbs, a Branch Chief in the Division of Training, Workforce Develop and Diversity, also known as TWD, at the National Institute of General Medical Sciences. Then we also have a number of individuals from our Office of Extramural Research that will be helping behind the scenes with questions and providing you with resources; they are Dr. Anastasiya Hardison, Dr. Teraya Donaldson, Dr. Ben Roberts. And we also have Dr. Lynn Morin with us here today.

So, let me quickly just walk through the topics for the presentation today. We're going to start with the background and motivations for changes, so Dr. Ericka Boone will be providing us with those details, followed by Dr. Kenneth Gibbs that will talk about the changes to the NIH Training Grant applications. And then we will have Dr. Boone back, that will talk about the implementation plans, and then we'll move into our Q and A session.

So, with that, I'm going to turn it over to Dr. Boone to get us started with her presentation.

Dr. Ericka Boone: Thank you so much, Dr. Brown. And good morning or good afternoon to everyone, depending on where you are. Welcome to today's presentation.

All right, so I'm going to discuss more of the background and motivation for change, for changes to the training grants here at the NIH. So, a major goal for NIH is to enhance and strengthen the biomedical research workforce. And as you are aware, biomedical research training has undergone considerable changes over the past several years. And in order to meet these changes, the NIH has sponsored several programs. As you can see here on the slide, I give an indication or an example of some of them. Two of them are common funds, including BEST, or Broadening Experiences in Science. And this particular initiative focuses on enhancing training opportunities to prepare early career investigators for a variety of options in the dynamic biomedical workforce landscape. There's also the Diversity Program Consortium, or DPC, another common fund initiative which consists of a network of institutions funded by NIH to improve training and mentoring, via the development, implementation, assessment and dissemination of innovative, effective approaches to research training and mentoring. As many of you are also aware, in 2023, NIH convened an ACD advisory committee that was charged with enhancing postdoctoral training, and this resulted in a report entitled Re-Envisioning NIH Supported Postdoctoral Training opportunities. And there are six different recommendations that this advisory committee, or this working group to the advisory committee, has developed all to support research training, career development and mentoring opportunities for postdocs within the biomedical research workforce.

Then lastly, not mentioned here in this slide, but I wanted to bring it up, is that more recently, NIH also convened an advisory council to revise review criteria and the application process for fellowships. And within this, there is more emphasis on support regarding mentorship, research training and other development needs for fellowship candidates, to assist them along their developmental career development pathways.

All right, so as an extension to some of the work that I mentioned on the previous slide, NIH is also focusing on improving training experiences for individuals that are receiving training on training grants. Back in 2020, NIH launched the UNITE initiative, which was charged with identifying and addressing structural barriers that exist within the biomedical research workforce, and also addressing them. One of the working groups within UNITE is UNITE E, and this particular working group focuses on its efforts on promoting equity within the NIH supported biomedical research ecosystem. So, about two years ago, UNITE E charged a small working group to further incorporate language into NIH's parent NOFOs, to strengthen mentoring opportunities. And we'll talk more about that today.

But the roots of this effort to update language regarding mentoring expectations as a means to support the growth of the biomedical resource workforce, started several years ago. And one of the major players in this effort of change was NIGMS. And they took it upon themselves to pilot some language in their T32s, encouraging institutions to improve mentoring and training environments for its trainees. So, in today's presentation, we're going to hear more about this effort.

All right, So, what is the goal and the -- I'm sorry, let me go back, I think I took us a little bit too far. I'm getting a little bit too excited about today's webinar. So, let's talk a little bit about these goals and the scope of training grant updates. So, basically we're trying to reduce applicant and reviewer burden by streamlining some of the data that is collected within the application, and also to enhance other aspects of the application process, to further support the development of a biomedical research workforce that will benefit from a full range of perspectives, experiences, backgrounds, etcetera, in order to advance our research discovery.

The scope -- so, the applications that use the training or T instructions in the SF424, or the research training data tables are included below. So, these are the activity codes that will incorporate the changes that you will hear more about today. Also, I'd like to call your attention to the published Guide Notice; if you don't have this Guide Notice, it is NOT-OD-24-129. And it entails or provides a lot of the information within this notice that you will see today.

All right, so let's talk about the process for the change. I indicated in the last couple of slides that these changes that you're going to hear more about today had as antecedents about two years ago. So, two years ago, a small working group was charged to update the Parent T32 NOFO, and identify additional changes that were needed to reinforce some of the changes that were going to be taking place within the NOFO, so there are going to be instructional changes that you'll hear a bit about today, as well as data table changes. And some of the individuals that were a part of this smaller working group are also a part of today's webinar. And that includes Dr. Anissa Brown from NIDCR, and Dr. Kenneth Gibbs from NIGMS. So, this group met many, many times over the course of the last couple of years, and they presented a set of recommendations to be implemented that you will be seeing today.

So, that brings us from 2022 to 2023, and now in 2024, we're working to operationalize the recommendations into an actual product that you all will see within the biomedical research workforce ecosystem. And these application changes are going to be implemented for applications that have the due dates on or after January 25th of 2025.

Now, I'm going to hand over the mic to my colleague, Dr. Kenneth Gibbs, to put into context the targeted updates that I've kind of mentioned to you before. I want to remind everyone that there's not a wholesale restructuring of review criteria for our training grants, but there are some revisions within the training grant application and process that we definitely want you all to be ready for and aware of. So, Kenny, I would like to hand it over to you. You can take it away.

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: Thank you so much, Dr. Boone. Thank you again for joining us, and I'm happy to walk you through the next few slides and give a few more details about the changes that are coming forward. Again, I point you to the Guide Notice that was published on Friday with more details.

Okay, and so here are four big overviews -- overview of the four big updates. First is the application form, the PHS 398 Research Training Form, where the Recruitment Plan to Enhance Diversity will become its own attachment. Currently, it's within the 25-page program plan, it will be its own attachment, and we'll speak more about that in a moment. We're going to be adding language regarding mentor training expectations and supporting a breadth of career outcomes, particularly the parent T series NOFOs. For the peer review, as Ericka mentioned, we're not doing wholesale change. As is always the case for the NOFOs, we only want to review on what we ask you for, and what we ask what we're going to review for. But the main thing that's going to happen as it relates to the review criteria is that the training and RCR, and the Recruitment Plan to Enhance Diversity will go from being additional review considerations, meaning they're only considered after the score, to being elements that reviewers can consider as part of the overall impact score. So, we'll talk about that more later. Then the NRSA Data Tables -- the goal there, we're going to have some updates streamlining it, as Dr. Boone mentioned, to reduce the burden and promote consistent information collection across the various training stages.

So, I'll go through those one by one. This is, on the right is an example of the current PHS 398 Research Training Program Plan Form. In it, there are five different attachments, number 2 through 6. But there is the program plan and the plans for instruction RCR, methods to enhance reproducibility, MPI leadership plan, if applicable, and progress report for renewal applications. Within the program plan currently, which is sort of a training grant application, there's 25 pages which includes the background, the Program Plan section, and then the Recruitment Plan to Enhance Diversity. So, again, that is the end of the 25-page program plan.

So, what NIH is doing is that -- you will see this is the updated form, going forward. And so now, that attachment will -- the Recruitment Plan to Enhance Diversity will be its own attachment. And so, we'll have the Program Plan, the Recruitment Plan to Enhance Diversity, RCR, and Reproducibility in PR Leadership Plan and the Progress Report. This will be three pages, just like the Plan for RCR and the Plan for Enhancing Reproducibility. And one other thought is that all of these elements are into growth of strong training programs, both training and rigor, training and responsible conduct, and ensuring that there is a strong recruitment plan in place to allow individuals from all backgrounds to participate in the research training program, and so we're going to just treat them similarly from the point of application and the point of peer review. So, that's the one change that you'll see. Instead of the recruitment plan being part of the 25-page program plan, it will be its own attachment, so you have more space to elaborate on your recruitment activities.

Next, we'll talk about some of the instructional changes that we anticipate. One, as Dr. Boone mentioned, is on mentor training expectations. And so again, NIH, over the last decade, funded the National Research Mentoring Network, which developed evidence-informed approaches to research mentoring and training, and we look at other resources like the National Academy of Science and Engineering and Medicine's report on the science of effective mentoring in STEM. All of these have shown that formal training and effective evidence-informed mentoring practices improves the knowledge and mentoring skills of research mentors across career stages, so it's not just a thing for early career investigators, but all faculty benefit from being trained, and professional development, evidence-informed mentoring practices. And importantly, access to high-quality mentoring through structured training programs, like NIH training programs, has been linked to enhanced training productivity, and enhancing their commitment to a research career, which are things that, as an agency interested in strengthening the biomedical research workforce, are very important to us. And so, we are going to incorporate mentor training language into the parent T32 program considerations, program plan instructions, and review criteria. And so, we go to the next -- on the next slide, we'll give a little bit more on that.

Okay, so here's an example. These are examples of language that we will see. This is to let you all start to think about how your institution can begin to meet these expectations. So, funded programs will be expected to support effective mentorship, by ensuring that all program faculty complete formal mentor training with appropriate periodic refreshers. We are not laying out what it has to be, we're just saying, relevant to the goals of the program, there should be appropriate training and effective mentorship practices. We have pulled from the literature and there are a number of different resources that are in the literature that you can see about what are important evidence-based and evidence-informed mentorship practices, but things including aligning expectations; how to make sure the faculty mentors maintain effective communication, and actually it's bi-directional. How do we foster appropriate independence, assessing their understanding of scientific research? And how to even help faculty articulate their mentoring philosophy and plan so that there are aligned expectations. And so these are examples of topics the institutions are encouraged to pursue as they think about the training that they have for the faculty we're serving as mentors on NIH training grants.

Okay, so again, the program plan, we ask for it in the consideration, we ask for it in the instruction as you're filling out the program plan. And so currently, we have the Program Faculty section, so subsection of the Program Plan. So usually, it just says who are the faculty, and we will continue to want to know who the faculty are, but we're also going to ask specifically about the planned mentor training and oversight structure as we're thinking about who the program faculty are. And so the applicant organizations can think about, for example, the planned strategy and administrative structure to oversee and monitor the program mentoring, to make sure there is an appropriate match and effective training progress, and to describe how the participating faculty are going to be trained to ensure the use of these evidence-informed mentoring practices that promote the development, really, of trainings from all backgrounds, including those from groups underrepresented in the biomedical research enterprise. And if we ask for it, we're going to review for it. So, we're going to incorporate a few additional questions into the review criteria to align with these changes.

Similarly, we're looking at training and career development. So, right now, the program plan has, in the proposed training section, will be updated to incorporate instructions on program activities that promote training and career development. Here are things you might think about, for example: How are they going to be trained for careers in the biomedical research workforce? And we're using this phrase intentionally. Careers in the biomedical workforce are the breadth of careers that sustain the biomedical research enterprise, which includes, but is not exclusive to, careers as an NIH-funded investigator. It could even include working at the NIH, like myself. But we joke and say, how do we make sure people are prepared for the breadth of careers that they can use their training for, and that will utilize their training? Then, how the program will provide appropriate learning opportunities -- appropriate learning opportunities -- we know that NIH training programs are flexible, but what are the appropriate learning opportunities? Anything from informational interviews to maybe internships, as appropriate, that allow trainees to develop the professional skills and the networks to transition into those applicable careers. So, again, the review criteria will be updated to align with what's being asked.

Next, the tables, everybody's favorite part of the training grant application. So, the overall goal here is to streamline to reduce burden and to promote consistency in what is requested. So, at-base, we are asking you to do less, or in some places just move where you're doing things from the application into the training table. So, let's walk through this. Here are a few examples. Table 1 is the Census for Participant Department or Interdepartmental Programs. So, currently, on T32 applications, you are asked to provide information on all the pre-doctorates and the post-doctorates, regardless of the training stage of the program. So, if it's a predoc only program, you ask information -- you still have to require information on postdocs. If it's a postdoc only program, you set the information on predocs. So, here's the plan. You will only be required to provide data on the training stages relevant to that program. If it's a mixed-stage program, you'll still need to provide information on both stages, but if it's a predoc only program, you only need to provide information on predocs. If it's a postdoc only program, you only provide information on postdocs. That same ethos is going to be carried forward to Table 2, where we still have that information; it'll be stage-specific, and that's in the notice. So, that's for T32 applications.

And then again, we talk about standardizing information for undergrad, or T34 programs, which are exclusively NIGMS, but we were thinking about how to make sure that information is collected in a standard manner. Right now, it's collected in a variable manner, and it's part of the program plan. So, we're actually taking that out so that applicants can be on level footing with all other applicants at NIH. So, by that I mean, Table 1 will now be a requirement for undergrad programs, and it won't be another attachment, but it'll be standard like it's collected for other programs. But that's it -- the information's already being collected, so we're just moving what we're asking for.

Table 8 -- Program Outcomes -- here's another example. You are currently asked, T32s, to include clearly associated trainees. We have heard the feedback that it's not clear who to include, and so we are removing Part 2 -- those clearly associated with training grants. As applicable, you are able to report the broader impact in the Program Plan section and the RPPRN narrative. So, that is ways that we are streamlining. Here are another couple of changes that we want to highlight for you.

Table 5 -- the Publications of Those in Training -- currently, it's oriented around the training faculty, as opposed to the trainee outcomes. And since they are training grants, you want to focus it more on the trainees. So, we know that program faculty can move, and if a program faculty moves between competitive segments, those trainings actually aren't included in the grant. So, what we're going to do is, realign the table to focus on the outcomes of the trainees supported by the grant. We are additionally going to allow the inclusion of interim research progress products, like pre-prints, only when we don't have the final publication available. So, this is similar to what is happening already for research project grants, F grants and K applications, so a trainee could put in their own fellowship inside the pre-print, but the instructions don't allow the training grant to do that, so we're just making it consistent, right? So again, but we only want that if you don't have the final peer review publication, and we trust that you all will follow instructions clearly, closely. And then again, thinking about making it aligned appropriately for undergraduates, we know that undergraduates sometimes don't have publications, but they do things like external published conference abstracts. So, for undergrads only, undergrad training only, we are, in addition to what we have for pre-prints, we're allowing external publish conference abstracts.

So, this is an example of what that table will look like in the updates. The left most column now is the trainee name, followed by the faculty member, and then the same information that we have right now -- past or current, what's the training period, and what are the publications. You will notice in the middle, a trainee named Daniel Barr, we included an example of a pre-print. So, those are examples of how we're updating to try to promote consistency and to focus on the trainee experience. You will also be able to add up to two mentors, and to note former trainers with an asterisk. So, if Dr. Chu left the university, we can still incorporate the outcomes relevant to the training grant as part of the application.

Finally, Table 6 -- Applicants, Entrants, and their Characteristics of the Past Five Years. Currently, T32 applicants collect detailed trainee characteristics on anybody who applied for or entered the training program. So, for predocs, that is the mean number of months of prior research experience, prior institutions where they did that, as well as their GPA. And for postdocs, it's how many publications in their prior institutions. NIH, though, particularly in these updates, we're going to be encouraging multi-factorial candidate review processes to promote opportunities for a broad group of research-oriented trainees to participate in the program. And importantly, program missions is the applicant organization responsibilities. We are focusing on post-appointment outcomes, and so the update is that we're going to remove those above referenced training characteristics from Table 6. And so, we still want to know what the pool is, but those detailed characteristics will no longer need to be a part of the table.

And so here we are, here is an example, the slimmed-down version of what you see now, the same information, including information about the number of -- the percent of candidates who are applying from underrepresented groups. And so again, and we will slightly update the title, just to make sure that verbiage is consistent; applicants are really the organizations, and now we're going to call them "training program candidates." But the information's all the same. So again, less information is what we're asking you to fill in.

Finally, peer review updates. Training grants will retain the five scored criteria. Training grants are -- we know there are a lot of changings happening, but training grant application updates are not part of the simplifying review efforts. So, if you've seen that for fellowships or research project grants as a separate track, or keeping things where they are, we're only -- again, only updates are to align with what is being asked, these other changes. But the major structural change is that the training and the responsible kind of good research, and the Recruitment Plan to Enhance Diversity, will become an additional review criteria that contributed to the overall impact score, instead of being post-score considerations. And so again, we went through that quickly, the slides are available. The Guide Notice is there, but hopefully you can see how this will strengthen NIH's ability to support strong biomedical research training while reducing the burden on applicants, and promoting strong mentoring environments and career outcomes for trainees.

With that, I turn back to the esteemed Dr. Boone for implementation plans.

Dr. Ericka Boone: All right, here I am, here I am.

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: Okay, I was going to say, I'll keep going if I need to. There you go, all right.

Dr. Ericka Boone: I was in the Q and A, trying to help to answer some of the questions from the community --

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: Thank you.

Dr. Ericka Boone: -- because they're coming in fast and furious.

So, as Dr. Gibbs indicated, we'll talk more about implementation plans. So, when will all of these things become active and available? As we've mentioned a couple of times during today's presentation, implementation of these changes are effective for a receipt date for applications that are due on or after January 25th of 2025. You see the list of activity codes where these changes will become relevant. Also keep in mind, if an activity code does not require a Recruitment Plan to Enhance Diversity, then the changes with regards to the Recruitment Plan to Enhance Diversity that have been mentioned in this webinar will not be applicable for that particular mechanism. But take a look at these activity codes on this screen, as well, I'll mention later on, that there will be resources available to the public so you don't have to remember any of this stuff, you don't have to take screen shots, or any of that. We're going to have public information available so you'll have an indication of when the effective dates are, as well as the activity codes where these changes will need to be implemented.

So, what are our implementation timelines? So, between now and late summer, we intend to publish updated data tables. In early fall we will publish the Parent T32 NOFO, no later than October, or mid to late October. We understand that it takes a lot of effort and time to put together a training grant application, and we want to make sure that institutions have enough time in order to be able to do this. So, as it says on the slide, as a reminder that the changes are effective for due dates on or after January 25 of 2025.

So, how do you learn more information? I mentioned resources a little while ago, so now let's talk about those resources that are available to the public. So, where can you go to receive more information about updates to training grants? There is a public webpage that is live right now that provides updates to our Institutional Training Guide applications. It gives information about the background, the activity codes where it's relevant, some resource documents. FAQs will also be available pretty soon as well, so make sure that you take a look at the site. And as we develop additional resources, we'll make sure to update this training page, or this web page so that you receive the latest and the greatest with regards to updates to our training grants here at NIH.

So, here's a listing of other resources that are currently available as well. So, make sure that you're checking out the NIH Research Training web page, and that one is researchtraining.nih.gov. If you find information there, it will link you out to relevant information regarding updates to the training grants. As well, I mentioned the fellowships earlier in the presentation, so there will be information there as well. Here are information about the data tables will be coming forthright. Also, please reach out to your IC contacts, reach out to your review officer, your grants management officer with regards to budget-related questions, your Program Officer with relation to your questions about application requirements, and also, ICO priorities. If you have questions about xTrain or xTract -- not who goes into it, what are the people that go into it, but how you fill it out, then reach out to the eRA service desk with those types of questions with regards to xTrain and xTract.

As we come to a close, I'd like to thank our UNITE E working group for the seminal work that they've done in order to help to improve research training opportunities for our earlier career scientists or investigators, also helping us to develop changes for the training grants where we're recognizing that mentors are also in need of additional opportunities to improve their mentorship skills as well. The actioning that people don't want to spend their time filling out these T32 applications with all of this information that they're not really sure if they're doing right, so streamlining has been a really significant part of the work, of this working group. We've had a myriad of individuals from across NIH to help us with this work, including on the NRSA tables, as well as the list and host of advisors and implementors that are helping us with this. I'd also like to give a humungous thanks to Dr. Kenneth Gibbs, to Dr. Anissa Brown, and to the members and staff for the Division of Biomedical Research workforce.

And with that, I'd like to say thank you. And I think we're going to bring our moderator and our other hosts back on camera now to go into our Q and A.

Dr. Anissa Brown: Yes. So, first and foremost, as Dr. Boone and Dr. Gibbs catch their breath, I do want to say thank you for presenting a wealth of details about the upcoming changes. And we will now move to the Q and A session which I know everybody has been waiting for. We've been seeing some questions come into the Q and A Chat. So, please continue to add some questions to the Q and A. Again, we will do our best to also try to include them in the FAQs. What we're going to start with first are the questions that were previously submitted.

So, i also thank you, Anastasiya Hardison, Dr. Anastasiya Hardison, who will be joining us to also help with questions. And we have people in the background helping to assist with answering questions. So, to kick off the Q and A, I have the first question. It's probably the most important question, is that how are people going to find that NOFOs, or Notice of Funding Opportunity announcements related to the changes that you all have been discussing today? And so --

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: I'm happy to take -- I'm happy to take -- as Ericka was speaking. So, this is actually pretty similar to every other NOFO. So, everything that we put out is in the NIH Guide. Additionally, you can look on the NIH wonderful research training site that Ericka's team has put together, that has a compendium of resources. And then this is -- we're giving high-level changes, as always, in the details, so sometimes there are Notices of Funding Opportunity that won't be reissued, but we might give you some additional instructions to say, how do you comply with this, going forward? So, if that's the case, you'll just look in the related Notices section at the very top of the Funding Opportunity. And that's pretty standard across all of NIH funding opportunities. But look for the guide, look for the [INAUDIBLE] notices, and we will be making resources available as they come. So, keep an eye out, we're not trying to surprise people. And we have until January, so take a deep breath. We've got plenty of time. Okay, go ahead, Anissa. I'm sorry, Ericka, did you --

Dr. Ericka Boone: I want to make a plug for the NIG Guide to Grants and Contracts just anyway. I think that -- I'm pretty sure that everybody that's here participating in today's webinar is already signed up to receive those automatic updates. So, if there's anything that's important coming out of NIH with regards to grants and contracts, it's going to be on this page for grants and contracts. So, make sure that you sign up for this so that the information can come to you. You don't have to go and look for it.

Dr. Anissa Brown: Thank you. So, if you were signed up, you would have known about that notice that Dr. Boone has mentioned, that came out last Friday.

So, let's move on to the next question. Dr. Gibbs, I'm actually going to ask you to address this question, is that how will the changes that you all have discussed today impact renewal applications?

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: Okay, great. So, all applications, new, renewal, resubmission, will follow the guidelines and instructions in the NOFO. Again, a point I want to reiterate here is that NIH is the Institutes of Health, emphasis with the S on Institutes. So, we're speaking about sort of centralized guidelines that we're going to have, particularly for the parents' announcements. Many ICOs put out their own training announcements. So, what's going to be -- the tables are for everybody, right, and they'll be more streamlined across all the application types. Plans for mentor training are existing, and will continue to exist for everybody. In review, we'll take into account RCR and the recruitment plan as part of the overall impact, but ultimately, you'll need to look at the specific funding opportunity to see how it impacts. Hopefully that answers that question.

Dr. Anissa Brown: Yes. So, you actually touched a little bit on another question that I actually have, so maybe you can re-emphasize the point --

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: Okay.

Dr. Anissa Brown: Of kind of how the changes apply to non-parent training grants.

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: Okay.

Dr. Anissa Brown: I think you did mention that a little bit.

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: Oh, great, yeah. So, as always -- follow the NOFO. So, one of the things you hear is, follow the funding opportunity. Whenever you read it, it'll say a few things; it'll say follow the SF 424, and these changes are part of the SF 424. It'll say follow the SF 424 and these additional instructions, or just follow these instructions that are here. But across the NIH, we're seeking to align. So, nih is making tweaks to the SF 424 to align with these changes, so if you are called to follow the NOFO -- or, sorry, the SF 424, you'll be impacted. But the tables are in NIH-wide, and so that's going to be applicable to all NOFOs, parent or non-parent. And all Ts will have RCR in the recruitment plan as part of the additional view criteria. So, if it's already in the NOFO, it won't be reissued, like NIGMS' NOFOs. That said, we're working to get -- but other NOFOs will continue to be reissued in alignment with these criteria.

Dr. Anissa Brown: Okay. Thank you. So, I have -- sorry, Dr. Gibbs, I'm going to come back to you again.

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: I'm done. I'm done.

Dr. Anissa Brown: So, we talked about the potential impacts on renewal applications. But what about RPPRs?

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: Yes. The main changes for the tables, and if you're a T32, it'll be less work. So, there will be no Part 2 of Table 8, those clearly associated with the training grant. You can always describe relevant information in the body of the text, but we're not overall changing the RPPR instructions, with the exception of, we're changing the table instructions. So, it's just the RPPR is incorporated in tables, then that is what's going to happen. This is for after January 25th, 2025, so if your RPPR is due before then, keep going with what you were doing, what the instructions said. That said, after January, you are good to go.

Dr. Ericka Boone: Well, according to all of the reactions and the hearts and the thumbs up --

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: Yes.

Dr. Ericka Boone: -- the people who are viewing this, the less work -- let's put the work where it --

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: We're trying. We aim to be a responsive agency while still providing appropriate oversight. So, there you go.

Dr. Anissa Brown: Thank you. I'll give Kenny a slight break -- or, Dr. Gibbs, I'm sorry.

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: No, it's all right.

Dr. Anissa Brown: So, dr. Boone, let me ask you a question, is that, how do these changes, do they have any effect on international training and grants? And if so, what is that impact?

Dr. Ericka Boone: Right. Just like Kenny said, all the information that you need is within the NOFO. Several times throughout this presentation, we've laid out specifically which activity codes are going to be impacted by these changes. So, just take a look within the NOFO, and you'll find out what you need to do. You know, the NOFO is almost -- I won't say it's your bible, but it's definitely your instruction manual for what you need to do, and how to submit a responsive grant. And I think that because people don't necessarily have the NOFO right now, there may be a little bit more anxiety or angst, because they're, like, really, what is this going to entail? But the NOFOs will be available for the public, we're hoping towards the end of the summer, so that folks can really get an indication of what is being required of them, and what are the changes, and how does it apply to their institution and their applications.

Dr. Anissa Brown: So, again, make sure you subscribe to the guide, and you will get firsthand notification when those NOFOs are out.

So, we're just going to kind of jump to budget. We talked about a lot of changes, and So, of course, people are probably thinking, how does that impact the budgets? So, can either Dr. Gibbs or Dr. Boone talk about any potential impact on the budgets for the Institutional Training Grants, and how people can get more information about this potential impact, if there is any?

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: Ericka, do you want to do that?

Dr. Ericka Boone: We both said --

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: Because this one -- I'll say, you know, the updates aren't going to change how the budgets are prepared. And so there is a link that I think one of our staff is going to put in about how to develop your budget, just so people know that. You should always reach out to the grants management contact on the funding opportunity. We will aim to make it clear that cost associated with mentor training activities are part, or can be part of the Training-Related Expenses, right, so we'll aim to clarify that. As it stands currently, there's a lot of flexibility that organizations have with the TREs, the Training-Related Expenses. So, i was going to try to make it clear that this is part of it. Yeah.

Dr. Ericka Boone: I do also want to say, because I saw there are lots of questions about, who's going to pay for this mentor training, right? The training of the mentors extends beyond just the trainees that are participating in the training grants, in and of themselves. And I'm sure that there are lots of opportunities for training, that the institutions already have in place that will be applicable for that.

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: Mm-hmm.

Dr. Ericka Boone: So, just really remember that. And also, Kenny did also indicate that there is some flexibility within the TREs in and of itself, but talk to your Program Officer, talk to your Grants Management Specialist to see what, exactly, is the flexibility with regards to that. But just remember, the skills that this mentor is gaining to be able to support the current needs of their trainees should not just be limited to the trainees. It improves the trainees' capabilities. It improves the training environment for our trainees. It's an institutional benefit, so it should probably be thought about in that way.

Dr. Anissa Brown: So, thank you. As you can see, we have Dr. Anastasiya Hardison with us. She is a Customer Relations Manager in the areas of xTract and xTrain. So, I have a question for you, Dr. Hardison. How will these updates or changes be supported in xTract?

Dr. Anastasiya Hardison: So, xtract generates tables based on what the forms are. So we, just like the last time we went through a forms update, xTract is going to start generating the tables to match and align with them. So, keep an eye out on your inboxes, because eRA is going to send out communications once that transition is coming into place, and we'll have a cutoff, we'll notify everyone of the cutoff when the system will start generating the new table format versus the one we are currently doing. And then also, if there's questions with the tables -- we kind of mentioned this earlier -- if it's a, how do I fill out, like where do I go? What do I do? That's an eRA Service Desk question. Otherwise, NIH Train is a good resource of what do I put into the table, and how do I list? So, one of the big things that's going to be coming is Table 8, Part 2, which is asking for those clearly associated with the program -- you're no longer going to be putting those in. We're going to only pull in trainees on funded grants for renewals revisions, and then for the RPPR as well. So, things like that, just keep an eye out. We try to communicate often and frequent, so yeah. Thank you.

Dr. Anissa Brown: Thank you.

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: I want to say real quick, I want you all to keep those applauses going for Anastasiya, because she and her team worked really, really hard to make this happen. So, program people have ideas, and people like Anastasiya and her team make them happen, with a lot of flexibility. So, i just want to make sure that she and her team get the shine that they deserve.

Dr. Anastasiya Hardison: Thank you.

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: Yes.

Dr. Anissa Brown: So, it's knowing how much people love the tables, and given the fact that we are talking about some changes to the tables, we'll give the examples of the tables. And I know, Dr. Gibbs, you presented some in the presentation. For all of the tables, where will people be able to find the examples reflecting these changes?

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: Yes. And so again, I think that link will be put into the Chat. But the NIH Data Table website will have those put in to reflect the updates. Now, I'm just going to go -- I saw in the Chat, my renewal is due on September 25th, 2024 -- these changes are effective January 25th, 2025. So, if your renewal is due this year, you are using the current system and the current tables. You are not -- if you do not follow them, you will be non-compliant, and you may be withdrawn, or [INAUDIBLE]. So, change takes time. And as is always the case, there's someone on one side or the other of the cut point. But I saw that in the Chat, and just wanted to -- don't go early and start doing it. Follow what's in the NOFO, and the NOFOs all currently have the current forms, which is what we're using.

Dr. Anissa Brown: Thank you, Kenny. So, again, we're trying to provide you with this information in preparation for the changes that are coming, and we apologize for any confusing that it may be creating for you. But hopefully you found it more useful than anything.

So, let me -- I know Dr. Gibbs, you did a very detailed presentation of the changes. We may have had some people that have joined late. We keep talking about these changes. Is there any way, kind of really briefly, you can kind of summarize the changes that people should expect with those tables? Really briefly?

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: Okay. Okay, no, okay. Table -- for a predoc, T32 -- T32, predoc first up. Table 1 and 2 will only ask for stage-specific information. Table 5, for all of them, will be reoriented so that we're focusing on the trainee first, followed by who they were trained by. And we'll allow for the inclusion of pre-prints. We also see the question in the Chat about hyperlinks -- so thank you for that question. We will update to make sure everything is aligned appropriately and complies with policy. Table 6 -- fewer characteristics. And then Table 8, Part 2, those clearly associated with the grant is going away. And then for undergraduates, we are introducing Table 1, because that information is already collected in the application, we're just moving it to the standard tables to standardize how we are collecting it. And then for undergrads specifically, we're also allowing the inclusion of external published abstracts, so for national conferences, for example, because those are appropriate outcomes for research training at an undergraduate level.

Dr. Ericka Boone: Guess where else people can find this information?

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: Where, Dr. Boone?

Dr. Ericka Boone: On the grants.nih.gov website.

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: That's wonderful. So, and again, our colleague, Ben, can put the notice in the Chat so everybody can see that note, OD -24-129 -- we know it just came out a few days ago, so you haven't had time to absorb it fully, but it's there. Thank you so much, Ben.

Dr. Ericka Boone: And we're all going to be developing additional resources, like for example, a side-by-side table to give an indication of what, currently, the requirements are, and then how those are going to be updated for applications due on or after January 25 of 2025.

Dr. Anissa Brown: Okay, thank you. I'm actually going to get into maybe some few questions that are kind of indirectly related to the information presented. So, i'm going to start with the first one, so Dr. Boone, maybe if you can provide a response for this question, is that, are any of these changes expected to impact the training grant eligibility requirements?

Dr. Ericka Boone: No. I will just make it very, very simple -- no.

Dr. Anissa Brown: Thank you for that very brief response.

Dr. Ericka Boone: It's right there.

Dr. Anissa Brown: Thank you. So, then the other question is, how did the training grants fit into the career development cycle for students and postdocs, kind of just bringing this all together for people?

Dr. Ericka Boone: The goals, objectives, etcetera, are the same. We're just trying to help advance or enhance opportunities for an individual. So, participation in our research training programs has the overall goal of producing scholars that have the necessary skills to move to the next phase of their careers and contribute to their advancement of the biomedical research workforce -- that is the goal. That is what it was yesterday, that is what it is today. That is what it will be tomorrow. And I think that probably many of us who are on this call today have participated in some sort of way, or benefitted in some sort of way from NIH Research Training opportunities; whether they were in fellowships -- I had an F31 and an F32. I was also in a training grant for one year in graduate school. So, these programs have -- you know, they provide so much benefit to individuals that are either staying in research and continuing in research, or part of the research workforce for a little while. But then we're also now contributing into it in a vast number of other ways, like we are on this call right now. So, these programs are really important for giving people the necessary skills, exposure, experiences to a broad array of opportunities to benefit the biomedical research workforce. Very long answer, but there we go.

Dr. Anissa Brown: That's okay, but I'm going to actually ask you to kind of dive a little bit deeper into that, but focusing on NIH's focus to expand opportunities for those that are in small and rural areas, thinking about the IDeA states, if maybe you could talk a little bit about that.

Dr. Ericka Boone: I want to invite Kenny to start off on that one.

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: Thank you so much. And again, we're seeing some things in the Chat -- we know there's an evolving landscape, we'll give more resources as they become available. So, stay tuned for the FAQs as it relates to some of the topic's mission today. That said, there are some specific NOFOs, and I see it to have the opportunity to focus on, for example, IDeA states. So, the IDeA program is a Congressionally-mandated program for support, or research capacity, in states that historically get less research funding. So, nigms, for example, recently published a NOFO called Lead MSTP, and so it's a Medical Scientist training program that is specific to applicant organizations and IDeA states, or that are historically black colleges and universities, or tribal colleges and universities. These are all areas that we can target, consistent with applicable law.

We also have a number of different NOFOs, and you'll see this across NIH -- sometimes we can target based on the amount of existing funding that you have already. And so at NIGMS, we have programs like U-RISE and G-RISE. But through the UNITE initiative, there's what's called an S10, or an Instrumentation Grant, that has been made available strictly for resource-limited institutions. And other offices are really aiming to provide greater outreach for research-active institutions, including Dr. Marie Bernard's office. So, we really are thinking about how we can leverage the full spectrum, because we know that rigorous research training and rigorous research can happen in a lot of environments, geographies including -- and institutions with different types of institutional resources.

Dr. Anissa Brown: And -- go ahead.

Dr. Ericka Boone: He has mentioned some of those UNITE funding initiatives, and they can also be found on the UNITE, I think it's Ending Structural Racism website, where some of these resources are available. So, capacity building type of research opportunities, R01s, etcetera, so there's a vast array of different opportunities that are available on this website that actually really target those institutions who are research-active institutions, and maybe not at that R1 status, because as -- can you say it -- training happens at a broad array of institutions, as started college at a very, very small, historical black college. But it had a marked program. And that was my introduction to research as an interest, and then as a research career. And then I got my PhD at Penn State, which was definitely an institution that was not hurting for funding, you know, at any point in time. So, I've had the experience of benefitting from these opportunities at a wide array of institutions, so we definitely have that understanding that training takes place across a broad spectrum of institutions, and benefits a broad spectrum of people. And we want to make sure that we have opportunities that are available to support this, moving into the future.

Dr. Anissa Brown: So, thank you, Dr. Boone and Dr. Gibbs. Before we wrap up, I do want to ask one question, because we haven't really talked about review, and I know, Dr. Gibbs, you mentioned that there may be some changes to the review to reflect the changes for the grants. How will reviewers be prepared for these changes?

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: They'll be prepared well, because many of you are going to be those peer reviewers. So, you've come to the webinar, you'll read the NOFO, and you'll be prepared. But in all seriousness, we're going to work with our colleagues and review policy, and the institute center review offices or review branches that typically manage this to make sure that there is alignment for any sort of change to go throughout this whole organization, it takes a lot of time, which is why we're talking about this in June, with the change during January, and it takes a lot of people. So, we are going to work to make sure that there is as much understanding about what this means. And as always, the case, reviewers use their own judgment, right? We say now you don't have to be strong in every area to be a strong application. That said, the ethos is going to be one where we're going to look for things like mentor training. We're going to look for a creative element. We're going to look for these different things. So, yeah, we're not doing the wholesale changes that have been in fellowships and RPGs -- Research Project Grants -- we are just going to align with what we're asking for. So, that's, yeah, that's where we are.

Dr. Anissa Brown: Thank you. So, I am going to wrap us up, and then if we have a minute or two, if there's anything in the Q and A, that you, either Dr. Boone or Dr. Gibbs, or even Dr. Hardison that you want to emphasize before we close out, you can prepare to share that. But let me just wrap up really quickly, and I'm going to thank Dr. Boone and Dr. Gibbs. I'm going to thank everybody behind the scenes that has providing the links, the resources, responding to questions. I do want to remind you to take a look at that web page, you'll find the notice that was talked about today, there are some other resources -- again, don't forget to reach out to the Program Officer at the institute or center of interest. I am a Program Officer, and I am always willing to talk to people and answer any questions regarding the expectations of the application. And then we will do our best to incorporate these questions into the FAQs. The slides, the recording and the FAQs will be available to you. And with that, I will say, enjoy the rest of the day.

But let me just see if you all have anything that you want to share with the audience that you want to emphasize from the Q and A box.

Dr. Ericka Boone: I think that one thing is just, don't be afraid that RCR and the recruitment plan -- Recruitment Plan to Enhance Diversity. Recruitment plan -- keep that in mind, especially those individuals that are in certain states who are, like, I'm not really sure of what to include in my application anymore -- "recruitment." Targeted recruitment is legal, we should be focusing on this, and not afraid to talk about that. But because this is going to be an additional review criteria, it's just like with methods for enhancing reproducibility, right? And these will contribute to the overall impact score. It will follow along that same trajectory. It will be weighed in that similar type of way, shape and fashion. So, don't be afraid to reach out to NIH to ask questions before these applications are submitted. We're here to help you. Anything you want to add?

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: Yeah, I'll just add, again, we're previewing this now, we're working on the final tweaks. So, Dr. Boone said, "Reach out" -- I would say reach out in the Fall when we have the thing online, right, because we're going to have more resources right now. But it is evolving even for us. But as Dr. Boone mentioned, outreach activities to foster awareness for trainings from all background and targeted recruitment to diversify a program. Applicant pools are permissible activities. And all of our programs, as an agency of the federal government, we only do things that are consistent with applicable law. So, we always encourage you all to talk with your own general counsel to ensure applicable laws and regulations are followed and program designed implementation. We know many of the laws say there are exceptions for federal programs, for example, and it's a requirement to make sure that, to Ericka's point earlier, we want a biomedical research workforce that can benefit from the full range of perspectives, experiences and backgrounds that we need to advance discovery, and to serve our increasingly diverse nation.

So, with that, we are so grateful. Anastasiya, did you have anything to add?

Dr. Ericka Boone: I also want to say, too, that there have been probably a couple of hundred or at least three hundred questions that were submitted to the Q and A, and we were not able to get to them. What we did was, we focused a lot of attention on questions that we received prior to the webinar. So, because we might not have gotten to yours, it doesn't mean that we didn't think that the question was important. Your colleagues beat you to the punch, right? So, what we'll do is, we'll try to make sure that we have -- we'll look at those FAQs that were not able to be answered, and we'll try to provide answers on the FAQ documents that we're going to be providing. Anastasiya, I'm so sorry.

Dr. Anastasiya Hardison: Oh no, you're fine. I think you guys did an amazing job covering everything, with as far as how this impacts xTract and RPPR. Like I mentioned earlier, keep an eye out. eRA is going to send out communications. Also, the Guide Notices often times will mention when things are going to be coming down and being in production. So, just keep an eye on your inbox.

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: Yes. And January 25th, 2025.

Dr. Anissa Brown: Twenty twenty-five.

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: January 25th, 2025. Okay. Thank you all so much.

Dr. Anissa Brown: Thank you all.

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: Thanks to Anissa for being a wonderful moderator, as well as for the session.

Dr. Anissa Brown: You're welcome. Thank you, everybody.

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: All right.

Dr. Anissa Brown: Have a good day. Take care. Bye.

Dr. Kenneth Gibbs: Take care. Bye.

Dr. Ericka Boone: Thank you for joining us.