NIH Funding for D&I Research

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Dissemination and Implementation Research in Health FOAs

- PAR-18-007 (R01)
- PAR-16-237 (R03)
- PAR-18-017 (R21)
- PAR-17-261 (R18)
- Applications responding to other FOAs but with a D&I component or focus are also reviewed.
D&I FOA Purpose

• Identify, test, develop, evaluate, and/or refine strategies to disseminate and implement evidence-based practices (e.g., behavioral interventions; prevention, early detection, diagnostic, treatment, and disease management interventions; quality improvement programs) into public health, clinical practice and community settings.

• Studies to advance dissemination and implementation research methods and measures are encouraged.
Examples of relevant research directions

• Studies of strategies to implement health promotion, prevention, screening, early detection, and diagnostic interventions, as well as effective treatments, clinical procedures or guidelines into existing care systems.

• Studies of the local adaptation of evidence-based practices in the context of implementation that systematically identify intervention components that surpass or fall short of expected intervention effects.

• Longitudinal and follow-up studies on the factors that contribute to the sustainability of evidence-based interventions in public health and clinical practice.
Examples of relevant research directions

• Studies testing the effectiveness or cost effectiveness of dissemination and implementation strategies to reduce health disparities and improve care among low-income, rural, low literacy and numeracy, or other underserved populations.

• Studies of the de-implementation of clinical and community practices that are not evidence-based, have been prematurely widely adopted, yield sub-optimal benefits for patients, or are harmful or wasteful.

• Studies of the relationship of context and local capacity of clinical and community settings to adoption, implementation and sustainability of evidence-based practices.
Significance – D&I FOA

• What is the estimated public health benefit of the research?
• Do the existing data, public health and patient needs justify dissemination and implementation?
• If the aims of the proposed project are achieved, how will dissemination and implementation knowledge be advanced?
• Will potential adopters and organizations be able to determine the applicability of the results to their setting?
Investigators – D&I FOA

- Are the investigators part of stakeholder teams or have strong links and engagement of stakeholders necessary to accomplish the project aims?
- Is there clear evidence of dissemination and implementation research expertise as part of the team?
Innovation - D&I FOA

- Does the proposed dissemination or implementation research contribute new and innovative design approaches to the study of dissemination or implementation processes and/or outcomes?
- Do the methods proposed promise to speed the translation of research into practice and/or produce novel and robust findings?
Approach D&I FOA

• Does the applicant demonstrate an understanding of dissemination and implementation research principles?
• Is the dissemination or implementation approach appropriate to the problem and population using research methods that are relevant, rigorous and practical?
• Are the measures and analysis plan linked to the dissemination or implementation plan and study aims?
• How appropriate are the plans to sustain effective dissemination and implementation approaches once the research-funding period has ended?
Environment-D&I FOA

- Are the investigators capable of taking the results of the proposed study to scale to achieve public health impact?
- Is there evidence of institutional support to sustain dissemination or implementation interventions once the research funding ends?
Common weaknesses with D&I grant submissions

• Significance
  – No clear rationale for proposed implementation strategies selected.
  – No clear linkage between proposed strategies and identified barriers and facilitators
  – It is difficult to see how the proposed study will advance our understanding of implementation and dissemination.
Common weaknesses with D&I grant submissions

• Significance
  – The study aims are not supported by an existing implementation theory, model or framework.
  – The program, practice or intervention being implemented is not evidence-based.
  – The fact that none of the current tools for assessment were developed in one kind of setting does not inherently mean they are of little or no value.
Common weaknesses with D&I grant submissions

• Investigators
  – Research team lacks experience or expertise in Implementation research.
  – Having implemented an EBP is not the same as having conducted research on D&I.
  – Expertise of D&I investigators not reflected in approach.
Common weaknesses with D&I grant submissions

• Innovation
  – Hybrid studies are no longer innovative.
  – Using the infrastructure of an existing effectiveness research project is not especially innovative.
  – Use of mixed methods and multidisciplinary teams are not especially innovative in implementation research.
Common weaknesses with D&I grant submissions

• Approach
  – Lack of understanding of function and capabilities of existing D&I theories, models and frameworks (e.g., CFIR is not a measure of fidelity)
  – Lack of rationale for implementation outcomes selected.
  – The application lacks important information on how the intervention will be implemented in the study sites.
Common weaknesses with D&I grant submissions

• Approach
  – Enrolling a convenience sample is ill-advised as the sampling strategy is not theory-based or sufficiently purposive to provide adequate information during data collection.
  – The application claims to adopt principles of community-based participatory research, but apart from formation of a community advisory group, there is no description of how CPBR principles will be operationalized.
  – Although the study is labeled as a mixed method study, procedures for integrating qualitative and quantitative methods are not described.
For further information