TRAINEE RESOURCES

Pre-doctoral Training

Level: Candidates for a health-profession degree (short-term), MD/PhD candidates, and candidates for Ph.D. or equivalent degree
Duration: A trainee may have up to 5 years of support.

Commitment: Full-time research traineeship


Training-related expenses: See FY2013 NIH Guide Notice.

Postdoctoral Training

Level: Postdoctoral (M.D. or Ph.D. or equivalent)

Duration: A trainee may have up to 3 years of postdoctoral support.

Commitment: Full-time research traineeship


Training-related expenses: See FY2013 NIH Guide Notice.
"Payback" under the National Research Service Award (NRSA)

Training program directors and Institute business officials are urged to share the following information with prospective postdoctoral trainees in this program.

If you become a postdoctoral trainee on either an NRSA Institutional Training Program (a T32) or an Individual Fellowship (an F32), you will be asked to sign an agreement to comply with the rules regarding Payback. For most trainees, payback is easily accomplished, as described below.

Predoctoral trainees or fellows will not incur a payback obligation. Postdoctoral trainees who complete two years of training will have fulfilled their payback obligations under the NRSA program.

Payback means that you will perform qualified activities for a length of time equal to the amount of time you received postdoctoral training under the NRSA, up to a maximum of one year of payback.

Policy guidelines for NRSA awards are described in detail in the NIH Grants Policy Statement and on the Payback Agreement Form PHS 6031. Specific requirements for payback are outlined in Section 11.4.3 of the NIH Grants Policy Statement.

The following information is provided to describe these requirements to you in a straightforward manner so that you can appreciate the breadth of activities which will satisfy the payback requirements and the relative ease with which these requirements can be fulfilled.

Background

During your period of postdoctoral support under an NRSA program, NIH provides you with a stipend and perhaps funds for travel, tuition and fees. The aim of the support is to facilitate your upward move toward an independent research career and/or a position in academic medicine. Continued activities which move you toward that goal satisfy payback. Most commonly, trainees satisfy their payback obligation by completing a minimum of two years of training. Only the first year of training incurs a Payback obligation. The second year of training pays back the first year, so if you receive two full years of NRSA training you will have completed your Payback obligation.

Each month of qualifying Payback activity pays back a month of NRSA support and, in general, must be for twelve continuous months for at least twenty hours per week. Special exceptions to these requirements may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

If you receive training and subsequently change your career goals before completing the required time in activities that qualify for payback, you must reimburse the US Government for the investment made to your career by repayment of the stipends received (plus interest in
some cases). Special exceptions are rarely granted but may be considered in extraordinary circumstances.

What Activities Qualify for Payback?

A number of health-related research and teaching activities qualify as Payback:

1. **Research-Related Activities**

Any activity which involves the design of experiments, development of protocols, collection and interpretation of data, review or administration of original research, providing scientific direction, guidance to research, and analytic or other technical activities conducted in direct support of research may qualify if a doctorate degree or relevant research experience is a prerequisite for the activity. Such activity may take place in agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration, National Institutes of Health, or National Science Foundation, or in a commercial setting including biotechnology or pharmaceutical companies.

2. **Teaching**

Any instructional activity which takes place in an organized educational or other instructional environment qualifies as payback. Such activities are generally carried out in a formal didactic setting such as a university, college, professional school, research institute, teaching hospital, elementary/primary school, and secondary school, but other activities will be considered if they are consistent with the certifying institution's policy on the definition of teaching responsibilities. Acceptable teaching activities must have a biomedical or health-related focus.

3. **Health-Related Activities**

This incorporates a broad range of activities related to the description, diagnosis, prevention or treatment of disease from the most basic biomedical or behavioral research to the most applied or clinical research. In addition to fields usually considered to be directly related to human disease, activities in other fields such as agriculture, environmental sciences, biotechnology, and bioengineering will also be considered health-related.

What Activities Do Not Qualify for Payback?

Clinical practice or any activity unrelated to biomedical or health-related research or teaching do not qualify.

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