**Opportunity Summary:**

The purpose of the FIRST Cohort is to transform culture at NIH-funded extramural institutions by building a self-reinforcing community of scientists committed to diversity and inclusive excellence. This Common Fund program provides funding for NIH-funded universities to hire a cohort of faculty members in a specific discipline, with the specific goal of fostering a diverse and inclusive environment for biomedical research. Implementing and sustaining cultures of inclusive excellence within the program has the potential to be transformational for biomedical research at the awardee institutions and beyond. This community will be built through recruitment of a diverse group of early-career faculty who are competitive for an advertised research tenure-track or equivalent faculty position and who have demonstrated strong commitment to promoting diversity and inclusive excellence.

The FIRST program will test the primary hypothesis that a cohort model of faculty hiring, sponsorship, continual mentoring, and support for professional development, embedded within an institution implementing evidence-based practices to create academic cultures of inclusive excellence, will achieve significant improvements in metrics of institutional culture and scientific workforce diversity. In addition, the program will test the impact of the cohort on institutional culture change.

The new faculty hires comprising a FIRST Cohort are expected to be clusters of scientists (no fewer than three scientists per cluster) within several scientific areas. For example, an institutional cohort might be comprised of multiple smaller clusters of scientists within various scientific disciplines, such as neuroscience, cardiovascular disease, cancer, minority health, health disparities, community-based participatory research, behavioral, social, population science, or other research areas within the NIH mission. By incentivizing hiring of a co-localized cohort, this initiative offers an added benefit of engaging both university-level and departmental leadership and leveraging departmental faculty to form an extended network for the cohort to access.

NIH will encourage FIRST awardee institutions to enhance the diversity of the FIRST Cohort by actively recruiting candidates from groups identified as underrepresented in the biomedical, clinical, behavioral, and social sciences, described in NOT-OD-20-031.

Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to participate in the pre-application Technical Assistance webinar on 1/25/2021 from 2:00-4:00 pm ET. Prospective applicants are encouraged to send questions, preferably at least 24 hours prior to the webinar, to the Scientific/Research Contact, Dr. Sanya A. Springfield, at FIRSTNIH@nih.gov.

**Eligibility & Requirements:**

- If the applicant institution has a FIRST CEC Award, they will not be eligible to receive a FIRST Cohort Award.
- For effective leadership, individuals designated as PD(s)/PI(s) must be meaningfully committed to the program. Specifically, a minimum of 20% or 2.4 person months of effort per year is expected for the contact PD(s)/PI(s), with a maximum of three person months effort per year.
- For HRIs, the faculty cohort must be comprised of no fewer than 10 scientists and for LRIs, no fewer than 6 scientists.

**Internal Nomination Process:**

Interested applicants should submit the following documents:

1. JHU Limited Submission Cover Sheet
2. Proposal (maximum of three pages of text only, single spaced: 12-pt font and one-inch margins), including any experience with recruiting diverse faculty and/or creating mentorship programs.
   (Note: figures, tables, and other reference material may be included in addition to the 2 pg. text limit)
3. Curriculum Vitae of investigator, including current external research support and publications
4. Budget (two pages maximum)

Questions? Comments? Email the Research Development Team at resapp@jhu.edu.