

Division of Training &
Workforce Development

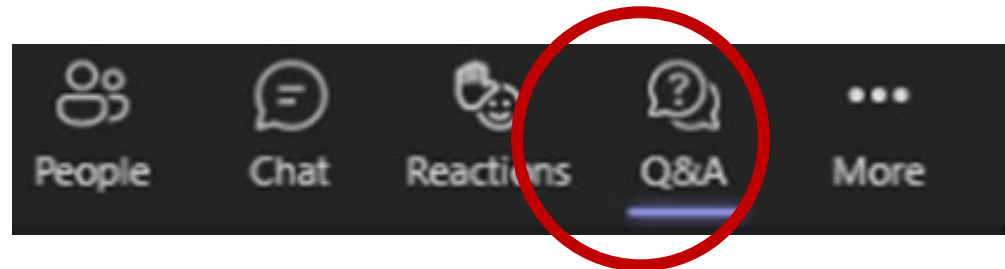
National Institute of
General Medical
Sciences

Science Education Partnership Award (SEPA) (**PAR-27-077**)

Program: Lataisia Jones, Moushumi Paul,
Anissa Brown, Behrouz Davani

Webinar Information

- This webinar is being recorded and will be posted on the [NIH Nexus Calendar of Events](#) - [SEPA webinar page](#).
- Please type your questions in the Q&A box instead of the chat box.
- If time permits, there will be an open Q&A period at the end of the webinar.



Disclaimer

- This presentation and accompanying slides are for informational purposes only.
- They serve as an overview and are not meant to be comprehensive in coverage of all required components of an application.
- For any submission, applicants are responsible for following instructions detailed in:
 - SF424 Guide
 - The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), and
 - Any Related Notices

***Each NOFO has unique requirements – please read and follow them closely
(and reach out to NIH staff with questions)***

Outline

- Introduction to the SEPA Program
- Application Preparation
- Peer Review
- Human Subjects
- Budget Overview
- General Tips and Advice

Introduction to the SEPA Program

Participating NIH Institutes, Centers and Offices (ICOs)

- National Institute of General Medical Sciences ([NIGMS](#))
- National Human Genome Research Institute ([NHGRI](#))
- National Institute on Aging ([NIA](#))
- National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases ([NIAID](#))
- National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering ([NIBIB](#))
- National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research ([NIDCR](#))
- National Institute on Drug Abuse ([NIDA](#))
- National Institute of Mental Health ([NIMH](#))
- National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities ([NIMHD](#))
- National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health ([NCCIH](#))
- All applications to this funding opportunity announcement should fall within the mission of the Institutes/Centers. The following NIH Offices may co-fund applications assigned to those Institutes/Centers.
- Office of Research on Women's Health ([ORWH](#))
- Office of Data Science Strategy ([ODSS](#))

NIGMS SEPA Program Team

Program Officers:

- Lataisia Jones, PhD
- Moushumi Paul, PhD
- Anissa Brown, PhD, Branch Chief, Post-Doctoral, Early Career, Workforce Development Branch (PEWD)

Leadership:

- Behrouz Davani, PhD, Branch Chief, Cross-Disciplinary Pathway Programs Branch (CPP)



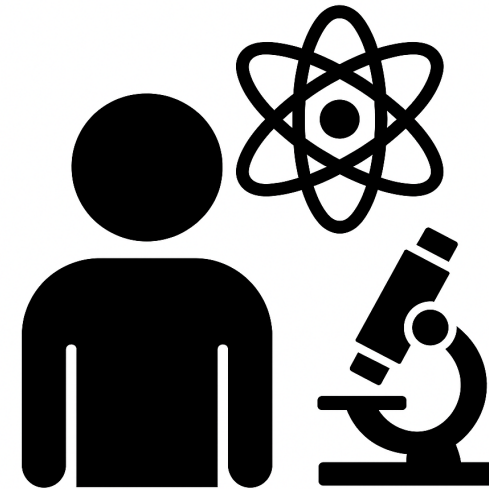
NIGMS_SEPA@mail.nih.gov

SEPA Program Goals

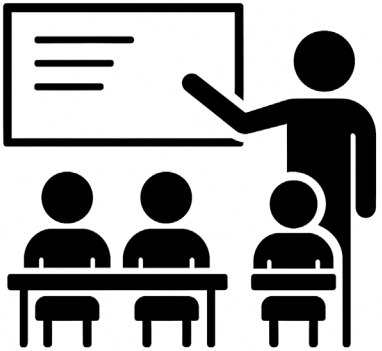
To support educational activities that **increase understanding of biomedical research** among pre-college (pre-kindergarten to grade12) individuals.



To encourage **awareness of and continued interest** in careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).



SEPA Project Settings



Classroom-based education projects for pre-kindergarten to grade 12 (pre-college) students and teachers.

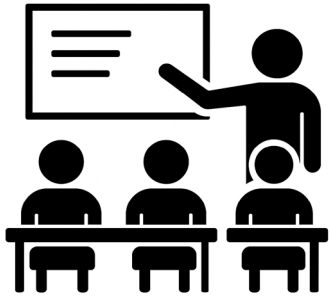
Informal science education (ISE) projects conducted outside traditional classroom settings.



Relevant Topics:

- Any area of science within the NIH mission
- The scientific interests of participating NIH ICOs are in the NOFO

SEPA Supported Activities



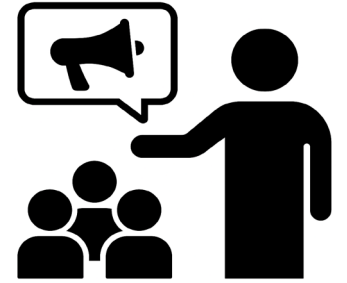
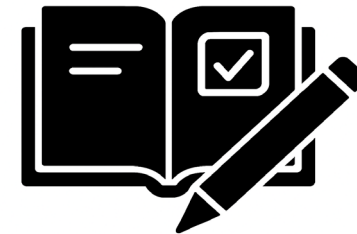
**Courses for
Skills
Development**

**Research
Experiences**



**Mentoring
Activities**

**Curriculum or
Methods
Development**



Outreach

**Projects that support quantitative and computational skills
development are strongly encouraged**

Institutional Eligibility

Sector	Eligible Entity Types
Education	Public & Private Higher Education Institutions; Public, Private, and Charter K-12 Schools; Independent School Districts
Government	State, County, City, & Township Governments; US Territories/Possessions; Federally & Non-Federally Recognized Tribal Governments
Nonprofit & Faith	501(c)(3) and Non-501(c)(3) Nonprofits; Faith-based or Community-based Organizations; Public/Indian Housing Authorities
For-Profit	Small Businesses; For-Profit Organizations (all sizes)
Other	Native American Tribal Organizations; Regional Organizations; Focused Research Organizations

Foreign institutions and components are not eligible

PD/PI Eligibility & Leadership Roles

SEPA Awards are expected to have strong science education and administrative leadership

PDs/PIs:

- Should be established investigators in the targeted scientific area
- Should provide both scientific and administrative leadership
- Are expected to monitor the program, assess outcomes, and submit required reports

Additional Eligibility Information

- An individual may serve as the PD/PI on no more than one active SEPA at a time.
- New applications are allowed if the project is distinct and there is no more than 6 months overlap with the current SEPA;
Renewals are not allowed
- Institutions with an active SEPA may submit additional applications if they address a different biomedical research area and have different PDs/PIs.
- Organizations serving as SEPA contractors or consortium partners may apply if the proposed project is independent of the existing SEPA and has a different PD/PI.

Program Faculty and Participants

- Researchers and mentors should have research expertise and experience relevant to the proposed program.
- Participants in SEPA programs are pre-college students and teachers.
- The organization is responsible for establishing clear eligibility and participant selection criteria consistent with applicable law.
- Unless strongly justified on the basis of exceptional relevance to NIH, research education programs should be used primarily for the education of U.S. citizens and permanent residents.

Application Preparation

Application Due Dates

Due Date	Scientific Merit Review	Advisory Council Review	Earliest Start Date
September 25, 2026	March 2027	May 2027	July 2027
January 25, 2027	July 2027	October 2027	December 2027
May 25, 2027	November 2027	January 2028	April 2028
September 25, 2027	March 2028	May 2028	July 2028

Additional Due Dates in 2028 and 2029. NOFO expires May 26, 2029.

Advice to Applicants

- Study the entire NOFO and related Notices carefully.
- Complete all the required registrations for the submitting organization.
- Pay attention to Section V - review criteria
- All instructions in the [How to Apply - Application Guide](#) must be followed.

Application Preparation: Research Strategy Components

Research Strategy section must be used to upload the Research Education Program Plan, which must include the following components described below:

- Proposed Research Education Program
- Program Director(s)/Principal Investigator(s)
- Program Faculty
- Program Participants
- Institutional Environment and Commitment
- Plan for Instruction in the Responsible Conduct of Research
- Evaluation Plan
- Dissemination Plan

Applicants with a prior SEPA, or active SEPA ending before next funding cycle, are strongly encouraged to utilize their SEPA-generated infrastructure, partnerships, and evaluation tools for the new SEPA.

Research Education Program Requirements



Rationale

- Strongly justified
- Addresses the biomedical training gap
- Supported with literature & baseline data
- Demonstrate program need



Objectives

- Specific and measurable short- and long-term goals
- Align with SEPA goals
- Evidence-based educational approach
- Regional or national impact



Scientific Focus

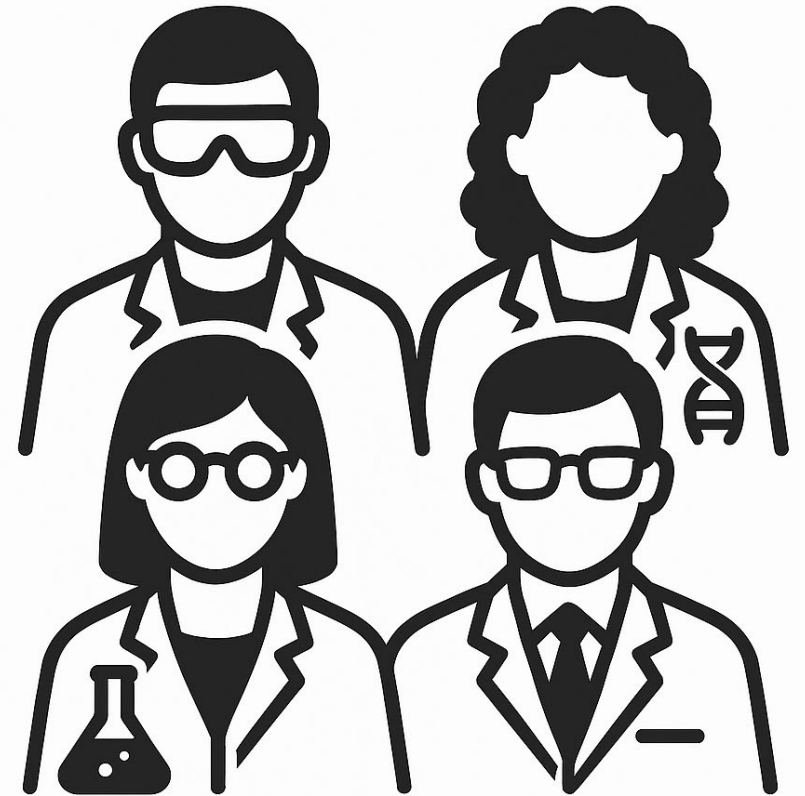
- Align with NIH [Institute/Center priorities](#)
- Relevance (if applicable) to the broader biomedical research enterprise

Program Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI)

Describe arrangements for administration of the program.

Provide evidence that the PD/PI is actively engaged in research and/or teaching in an area related to the mission of NIH, and can organize, administer, monitor, and evaluate the research education program.

For programs proposing multiple PDs/PIs, describe the complementary and integrated expertise of the PDs/PIs, their leadership approach, and governance for the planned project.



Program Faculty



SEPA Program faculty collaborate with the PD/PI (as applicable) to:

- Design and deliver educational activities
- Mentor and support program participants

Faculty should:

- Have expertise aligned with the proposed program
- Demonstrate a history of/strong potential for success in assigned roles

Near-peer mentors (if included):

- Roles in supporting participants
- Recruitment and training for mentoring responsibilities

Program Participants

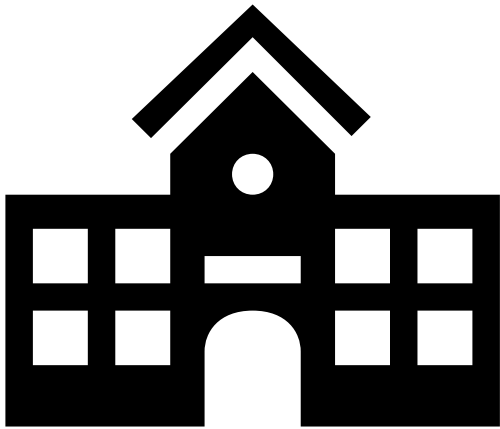
Describe the eligibility and participant criteria.

Describe the program **target audience** such as:

- Students and their grade levels
- Teachers



Institutional Environment & Commitment



- Describe any additional aspects of the Institutional Environment & Commitment not addressed under “Facilities & Other Resources” or the required “Institutional Commitment Letter of Support”.
- Appropriate institutional commitment should include the provision of adequate staff, facilities, and educational resources that can contribute to the planned research education program.

This section should not duplicate information provided elsewhere.

Plan for Instruction in the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)

RCR **must** address:

- Format of instructions
- Subject Matter
- Faculty Participation
- Duration of Instruction
- Frequency of Instruction

Student or teacher laboratory internships **must** include participant training plans to improve the culture and practice of laboratory safety through the implementation of [best safety practices in the laboratory](#).

Evaluation Plan

Applications must include a plan for ongoing evaluation of supported activities:

- Specify Baseline metrics
- Measures to gauge the success of the research education award in achieving its objectives
- Obtain feedback from participants to identify weaknesses and provide suggestions for improvement
- Assessment of program effectiveness in terms of impact on the participants' understanding of biomedical research and awareness of related careers within the topic area of the proposed program and relevant to the grade level of the participants

Dissemination Plan

National Dissemination:

- Share program results and educational resources to support replication and adaptation at other institutions.

Dissemination Strategies May Include:

- Publicly available online curricula and educational materials
- Presentations at scientific meetings and workshops
- Other broad outreach activities

SEPA Website Requirements:

- Launch within 6 months of the award date
- May be a new website or a SEPA section of an existing site
- Must be free and publicly accessible
- Home page must acknowledge NIH, NIGMS, and SEPA
- Publications resulting from SEPA support must include the required funding acknowledgment

Other Key Parts of the Application

Letters of Support:

- Institutional letter of support is required.
- Applicants are encouraged to include 1-page letters of support from key partners and stakeholders.

Resource Sharing Plan:

- Generally, not applicable.
- When relevant, applications are expected to include a software dissemination plan if support for development, maintenance, or enhancement of software is requested in the application.

Data Management and Sharing:

- Not Applicable

Advisory Committee:

- Not Required

Peer Review

Review Updates

- All applications will be reviewed at the Center for Scientific Review (CSR).
- CSR has created review homes for educational applications and established recurring special emphasis panels to review them. These panels will cluster applications with similar review criteria and in similar scientific areas to ensure that the applications are evaluated appropriately.
- Questions about review should be directed to the Scientific Review Officer (SRO) assigned to your application.

Review of Applications

- Please read the review criteria described in Section V of the NOFO while preparing your application.
- Review panel will assess your application based on Section V Application Review Information.
- Make sure **all the required** information is included.

Scored Review Criteria

(Section V of NOFO)

- Significance
- Investigator(s)
- Innovation
- Approach
- Environment



Additional Review Items

Additional Review Criteria

Contribute to the overall impact score but do not get separate scores.

- **Protections for Human Subjects**
- **Inclusion of Human Subjects Policies**(generally not applicable)
- **Vertebrate Animals**(generally not applicable)
- **Biohazards** (generally not applicable)
- **Training in Methods for Enhancing Reproducibility**
- **Resubmissions** (not allowed)
- **Renewals** (not allowed)
- **Revisions** (when applicable)

Additional Review Considerations

Do not contribute to score but must be resolved prior to funding.

- **Training in the Responsible Conduct of Research**
- **Applications from Foreign Organizations** (generally not applicable)
- **Select Agent Research** (generally not applicable)
- **Resource Sharing Plans** (generally not applicable)
- **Budget and Period of Support**

Human Subjects

Human Subjects Research

- Research involving a living individual about whom an investigator:
 - Obtains information or biospecimens **through intervention or interaction** with the individual, and uses, studies, or analyzes the information or biospecimens; or
 - Obtains, uses, studies, analyzes, or generates **identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens**.
- **Interventions and clinical trials are not allowed on SEPA awards**
- [Decision Tool](#): Am I Doing HS Research?

Types of Human Subjects Research

Examples of Human Subjects Research

- Testing a new educational technique
- Conducting a focus group
- Conducting a survey
- Interviewing
- <https://grants.nih.gov/sites/default/files/human-subjects-research-infographic.pdf>

Determine if Exempt or Non-Exempt HS Research

- Some research involving children cannot be considered exempt HS research
- <https://grants.nih.gov/sites/default/files/exempt-human-subjects-infographic.pdf>

Check with your institutional review board (IRB) and Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) Resources prior to submission

Human Subjects - Helpful Hints

NIH Inclusion Plans

- [NOT-OD-25-131: Revision: NIH Policy and Guidelines on the Inclusion of Women and Minorities as Subjects in Clinical Research](#)
- [NOT-OD-18-116: Revision: NIH Policy and Guidelines on the Inclusion of Individuals Across the Lifespan as Participants in Research Involving Human Subjects](#)

Valuable NIH resources:

- [HS Research Tools Page](#)
- [Training and Resources](#)

Note: Program evaluations that use Randomized Control Trial (RCT) methodology are **NOT** clinical trials.

Budget Overview

Budget: Level of Effort

Direct costs are limited to \$250,000, excluding consortium F&A costs, per year (5 years).

The PD/PI must devote a minimum of 2.0 person months per year. Up to 4.8 person months PD/PI effort per year can be requested with justification.

In the case of multiple PD/PI (MPI) projects, each PD/PI must devote a minimum of 2.0 person months per year. Up to 4.8 person months per year can be requested for the combined MPI effort.

Budget: Program-Related Expenses

Ensure costs are reasonable, allocable, necessary, and consistently treated.

Provide adequate budget justifications to explain the relevance of costs to the proposed SEPA project.

Research proposed costs in advance – check with your Office of Sponsored Programs, or equivalent office for institutional cost policies.

Consultant costs, equipment, supplies, travel for key persons, and other program-related expenses may be included in the proposed budget.

These expenses must be justified and must not duplicate items generally available at the applicant institution.

Budget: Personnel Costs

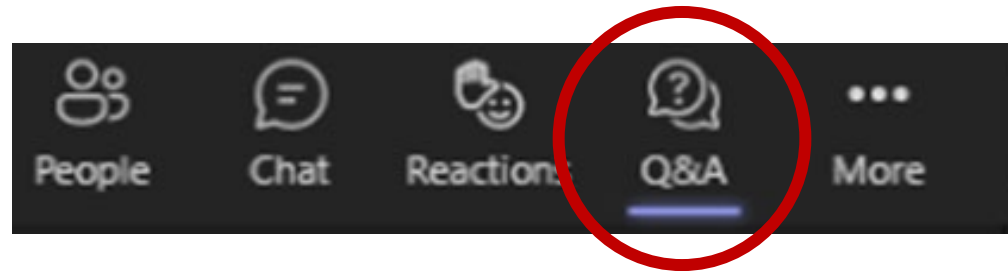
Individuals designing, directing, and implementing the research education program may request salary and fringe benefits appropriate for the person months devoted to the program

Salaries requested may not exceed the levels commensurate with the institution's policy for similar positions and may not exceed the congressionally mandated cap

If mentoring interactions are considered a regular part of an individual's academic duties, then any costs associated with the mentoring are not allowable costs from grant funds

Additional Budget Questions?

Please use the chat box to submit your budget-related questions. Our Grants Management team will compile the questions, provide responses, and we will add them to the FAQs page for the SEPA program.



General Tips and Advice

Avoid Administrative Withdrawal

NOTE: Application will be withdrawn prior to peer review if improper Appendix or Hyperlinks are used, or if any required attachments and content are missing.

APPENDIX: Do not use the Appendix to circumvent page limits. Follow all instructions for the Appendix as described in the SF424 (R&R) Application Guide.

Hyperlinks and URLs

- Are not permitted in the Research Plan/Approach
- They may be used in citing relevant publications in biosketches and publication lists.
- <https://grants.nih.gov/grants-process/write-application/how-to-apply-application-guide/format-attachments>

Tips for Preparing Your Application

Submit
early!

- Always **read and study the entire Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)** – purpose, guide notices, review criteria, etc., and follow all instructions.
- Follow the instructions outlined in the NOFO
 - Have clear goals and feasible plans related to the NOFO.
 - Tailor materials to the application – for example, biosketch, letter of reference.
- Program Officers and Scientific Review Officers are a resource to applicants
 - Contact PO **early** in the process - send **biosketch** and **specific aims** page.
 - Helpful to determine **eligibility** and **responsiveness** of proposal to the Institute or Center's (IC's) mission and priorities
 - Reach out **after summary statement** is released to discuss next steps
 - Contact SRO for compliance questions
- Go for it – don't self-eliminate (and resubmit if needed)

IC Contacts

National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS)
Email: NIGMS_SEPA@mail.nih.gov

National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI)
Email: nhgri-research-funding@mail.nih.gov

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)
Email: NIDA_training@nida.nih.gov

National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH)
Email: nccihderinquiries@mail.nih.gov

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)
Email: NIMHTraining@mail.nih.gov

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID)
Email: AITrainingHelpDesk@niaid.nih.gov

Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH)
Email: orwhcareers@nih.gov

National Institute on Aging (NIA)
Email: NIATraining@mail.nih.gov

National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering (NIBIB)
Email: NIBIBResearchEducation@nih.gov

ODSS - Office of Data Science Strategy
E-mail: ds-workforce@nih.gov

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Thank You!



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