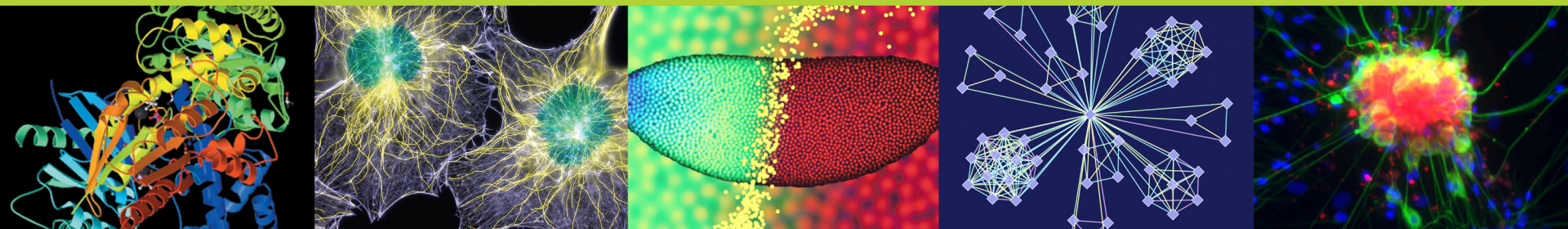


Alexandra Ainsztein, PhD  
Program Director  
NIGMS

# NIH Research Enhancement Award (R15)



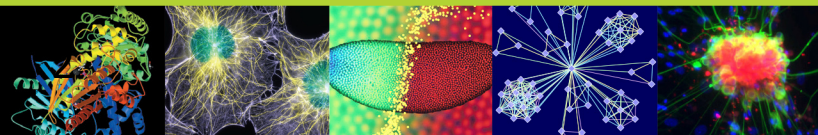
# R15 grant mechanism is used to fund...

- Academic Research Enhancement Award (**AREA**) for Undergraduate-Focused Institutions

[PAR-18-714](#) and [PAR-19-133](#)

- Research Enhancement Award Program (**REAP**) for Health Professional Schools and Graduate Schools

[PAR-19-134](#) and [PAR-19-135](#)



# Is AREA or REAP right for me?

Is the PI's **primary appointment** in a [Health Professional School](#) or [Graduate School](#)?

Yes

Has the umbrella institution (**both HPS and non-HPS components**) received NIH funding totaling **no more than \$6M** per year (in both direct and F&A/indirect costs) in 4 of the last 7 years? [Need help determining funding level?](#)

Yes

REAP

No

Ineligible for R15 Program

No

Does your School within the parent umbrella institution have a greater undergraduate to graduate student enrollment?

Yes

Has the individual non-Health Professional component of the parent umbrella institution received **no more than \$6M** per year (in both direct and F&A/indirect costs) in 4 of the last 7 years? [Need help determining funding level?](#)

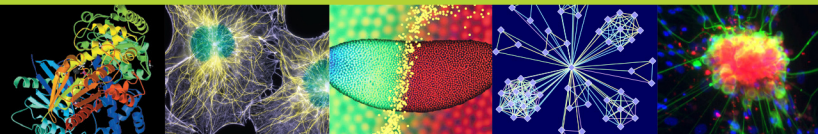
Yes

AREA

No

Ineligible for R15 Program

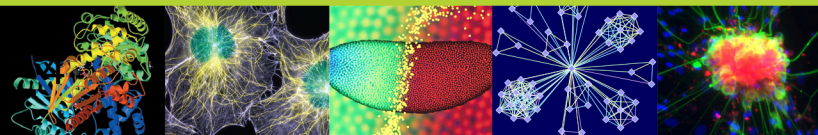
No



# R15 basics

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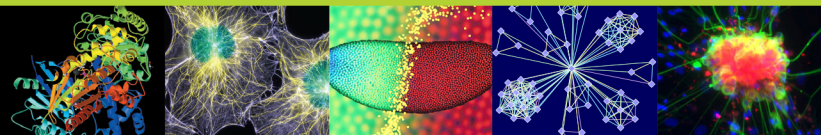
- Research grant mechanism for small scale research projects at under-resourced institutions
- 3 year project period
- Up to \$300,000 direct cost over 3 years
- 12 page Research Strategy
- Grants are renewable



# Applications and Awards

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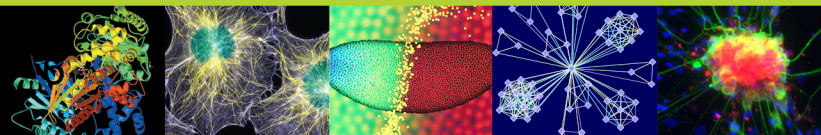
- ~1,872 applications are received in FY2019
- ~ 345 awards
- ~ \$94,500,000
- No set aside funds
- Each NIH institute decides the number and size of R15 awards they support
  - NCATS and FIC do not participate



# Program goals

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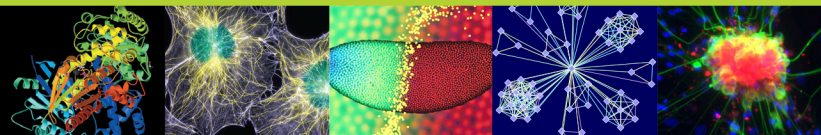
1. Support useful, interesting, publishable research
2. Strengthen research environment of institutions that have not been major recipients of NIH funding
3. Expose students in such environments to primary research
  - Goal = consider research careers
  - Metric  $\neq$  students eventually get R01



# AREA program-specific

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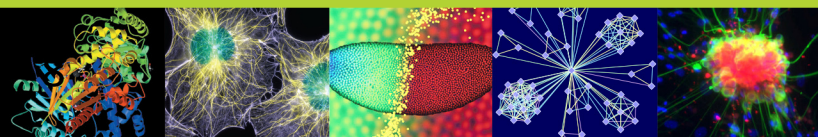
- The majority of the research team must be undergraduates
- Allows graduate student support, but emphasis is on undergraduates
- Supports faculty and research at non-health professional schools



# Can I have an ineligible-collaborator?

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- **Yes!**
- **However....** Be mindful of the intent and unique goals of the R15
  - Majority of research should be directed by PI at grantee institution
  - Student profile & student inclusion are for applicant/eligible component not collaborator site
- **Collaborators add expertise, but be selective**

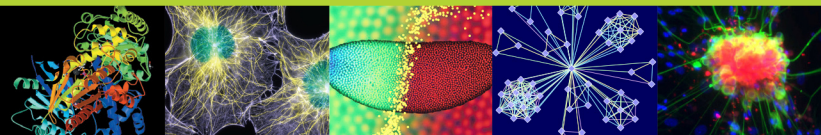




# Provost Letter - required

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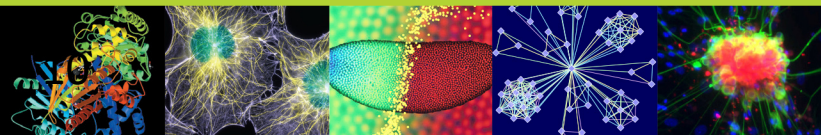
- Both AREA and REAP require a signed letter from the Provost or similar official verifying eligibility as specified in the appropriate FOA
- Applications submitted without this letter will be withdrawn and returned without review.



# The Art of Crafting a R15

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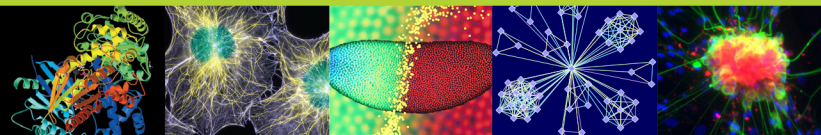
- Pick a compelling research topic
  - Interesting questions & publishable data
- Make the plan feasible with
  - Resources (facility and personnel)
  - Effort
  - Students
- Appropriate scope
- Describe your environment



# Research Strategy

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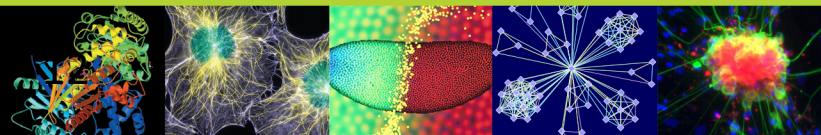
- **Should touch all review criteria & program goals**
- Preliminary data
  - Ask yourself “would I want to see the data?”
  - Does not including data impact the Significance or Approach?



# How students will be involved?

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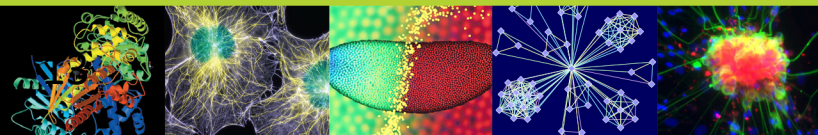
- Examples provided in both FOAs
- Describe involvement & supervision of students
  - Think mentoring not didactic training
  - Present at (lab) meetings & (campus) conferences
  - (Help) design experiments
  - Collect & analyze data
  - Draft articles



# Student involvement should be meaningful

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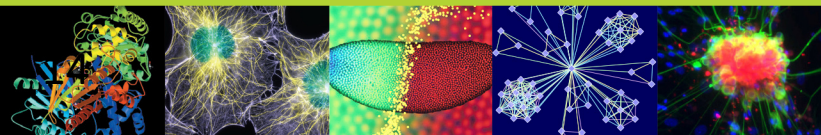
- Include number of students
- Quality of student involvement
  - It is not sufficient to say “there will also be a couple undergrads (with an unspecified or insignificant role)”
  - There should be mention of how students will be recruited to the lab and what type of student (freshman – senior levels).
- Appropriate compensation = commitment



# The Budget

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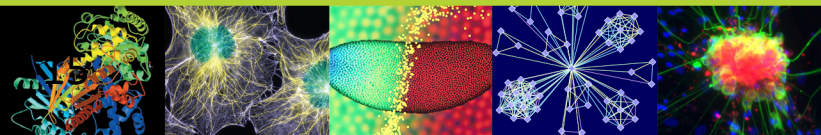
- No specific restrictions in any category
- Can support a wide range of expenses
  - Student wages
  - Collaborator salaries (subawards)
  - Travel
- Keep R15 criteria in mind
  - Most funds should remain at the R15 institution



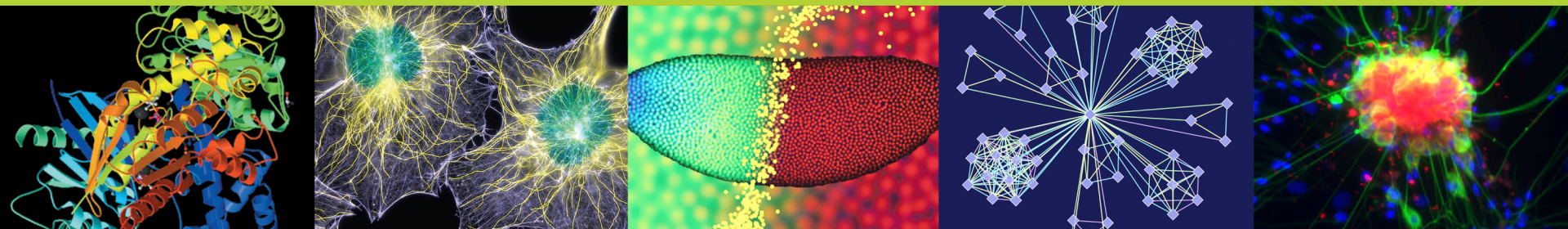
# There is no magic formula

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- Do not treat a successful [or not] application as an iron-clad template [of what not to do]
  - How many students
  - How many papers
  - What % of a collaborator
  - What % of special facilities
  - What amount or type of institutional support
  - What type of environment



# Questions?





# How to identify the right NIH contact ?

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- [NIH RePORTER](#) Matchmaker tool searches for funded grants
- Colleagues, friends, other researchers in your field
- [R15 website](#)  
(<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/r15.htm>)

