

DIVERSITY IN CANCER RESEARCH PROGRAM



The American Cancer Society has long been committed to launching the best and brightest minds into cancer research. But another important aspect that is vital to ensuring scientific excellence is a research community that is made up of a diverse group of people. Diversity in science is critical because it invigorates problem-solving, drives innovation – and ultimately accelerates our fight for a cure.

Specific populations that are underrepresented in science, including grant funding, are African Americans and Black people, Hispanics and Latinos, Indigenous people, and Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders. Fewer than 2% of applicants for the National Institute of Health’s principal grant program come from Black/African Americans, and fewer than 4% from Hispanic/Latino populations¹. To help improve diversity and inclusion in the cancer research field, the American Cancer Society has established the Diversity in Cancer Research (DICR) Program. A more inclusive research environment will more effectively address health disparities and could lead to targeted recruitment efforts focused on bringing people of color into clinical research protocols. The initiatives of this overarching program include DICR Internships and DICR Institutional Development Grants.

1. <https://extramural-diversity.nih.gov/diversity-matters/underrepresented-groups>

“I am fully committed to advancing the science of minority health and health disparities, and ACS has played a huge role in the advancement of my research.”

-Monica Hooper, PhD



DICR INTERNSHIPS:

- Over the next 10 years, this program will offer paid biomedical research internship opportunities for people whose racial or ethnic background is underrepresented in the field. Interns will receive hands-on experience, while receiving mentorship from leading scientists in the field. Our goal is to train 100 interns per year, over a 10-year period.
- Eight universities will launch the 10-week summer cancer research experience in 2021. They are Emory University in Atlanta, Georgetown University in Washington D.C., the University of Chicago, the University of Colorado in Denver, the University of Kentucky in Lexington, the University of Maryland in Baltimore, the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, and Washington University in St. Louis.
- Additional funds will also allow us to expand our Diversity in Cancer Research internship program from a one-year internship opportunity to a three-year program. Current program costs average \$5,000 per intern, with each institution hosting four interns. The program also provides an additional \$500 per participant to support career development and networking activities. Additional funds would allow us to support transportation and housing costs for students who do not live in the same city where the internship is being offered.
- We are seeking \$5 million to fund the program for 10 years. To make the most impact possible, it is critical to ensure that we can sustain the program and ensure these efforts become a movement, not a moment.

DICR INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS:

- The American Cancer Society has committed to a \$12 million investment in diversity grants at four Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) medical schools. These institutional development grants will fund a four-year pilot program that aims to increase the pool of minority cancer researchers by identifying talented students and faculty from HBCUs. This program will inform efforts to develop a national program to boost cancer research career development at minority-serving institutions (MSIs).
- These grants are designed to build capacity and enhance the competitiveness of faculty at minority-serving institutions when applying for nationally competitive grant support and aid in faculty development and retention.
- In 2021-2022, we will pilot-test the program at these four Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) medical schools:
 - Morehouse School of Medicine (Atlanta, GA)
 - Charles Drew Medical School (Los Angeles, CA)
 - Howard University (Washington, D.C.)
 - Meharry Medical School (Nashville, TN)
- Pilot-testing the program mechanism in these four institutions will inform how we design a competitive national Diversity in Cancer Research Institutional Development Grants (DICR-IDG) program, to be launched in 2023. During 2021-22, we will partner with these institutions to perform a needs assessment to better understand faculty and student cancer research career development needs.
- We need to grow the institutional grant program nationally to make the most impact on increasing diversity in cancer research. Additional funds will allow us to expand the institutional development grant program to include other minority-serving institutions. Current program costs average around \$3 million per institution.

To learn more, please contact: