To Apply:

Please submit the following information to Denise Lindley at Limited_Submissions@unc.edu by 5:00pm, Tuesday July 11, 2017 in ONE file (Word or PDF):

1. Biosketch or CV of PI. Please limit to five pages.
2. Two-page maximum project summary
3. List of potential collaborators (internal and external to UNC) and email confirmations that they agree to be included on the proposal.
4. Names of three internal (to UNC) faculty who could speak knowledgeably about the project, in the event of an internal review. Please do not include the names of faculty named on the project, chairs or deans, direct reports or others who have a conflict of interest.

Bridges to the Doctorate (R25) Purpose

The NIH Research Education Program (R25) supports research education activities in the mission areas of the NIH. The over-arching goal of this National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) R25 program is to support educational activities that enhance the diversity of the biomedical research workforce.

To accomplish the stated over-arching goal, this FOA will support creative educational activities with a primary focus on Courses for Skills Development and Research Experiences.

The Bridges to Doctorate Program is intended to provide these educational activities to Master's level students to increase transition to and completion of Ph.D.'s in biomedical sciences. A program application must include each educational activity, and describe how they will be synergized to make a comprehensive program.

This program requires partnerships between master's degree-granting institutions with doctorate degree-granting institutions.

Additionally, recruitment and retention plans are required as part of the application.
The NIH Research Education Program (R25) supports research educational activities that complement other formal training programs in the mission areas of the NIH Institutes and Centers. The over-arching goals of the NIH R25 program are to:

1. Complement and/or enhance the training of a workforce to meet the nation’s biomedical, behavioral and clinical research needs;
2. Enhance the diversity of the biomedical, behavioral and clinical research workforce;
3. Help recruit individuals with specific specialty or disciplinary backgrounds to research careers in biomedical, behavioral and clinical sciences; and
4. Foster a better understanding of biomedical, behavioral and clinical research and its implications.

The over-arching goal of this National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) R25 program is to support educational activities that enhance the diversity of the biomedical, behavioral and clinical research workforce. To accomplish the stated over-arching goal, this FOA will support creative educational activities with a primary focus on:

1. **Courses for Skills Development**: For example, advanced courses in a specific discipline or research area, or specialized research techniques.

2. **Research Experiences**: For example, for graduate and medical, dental, nursing and other health professional students: to provide research experiences and related training not available through formal NIH training mechanisms; for postdoctorates, medical residents and faculty: to extend their skills, experiences, and knowledge base.

**Background**

Every facet of the United States scientific research enterprise—from basic laboratory research to clinical and translational research to policy formation—requires superior intellect, creativity and a wide range of skill sets and viewpoints. NIH’s ability to help ensure that the nation remains a global leader in scientific discovery and innovation is dependent upon a pool of highly talented scientists from diverse backgrounds who will help to further NIH’s mission.

Research shows that diverse teams working together and capitalizing on innovative ideas and distinct perspectives outperform homogenous teams. Scientists and trainees from diverse backgrounds and life experiences bring different perspectives, creativity, and individual enterprise to address complex scientific problems. There are many benefits that flow from a diverse NIH-supported scientific workforce, including: fostering scientific innovation, enhancing global competitiveness, contributing to robust learning environments, improving the quality of the researchers, advancing the likelihood that underserved or health disparity populations participate in, and benefit from health research, and enhancing public trust.

In spite of tremendous advancements in scientific research, information, educational and research opportunities are not equally available to all. This program encourages institutions to diversify their student and faculty populations and thus to enhance the participation of individuals currently underrepresented in the biomedical, clinical, behavioral and social sciences research enterprise, as described in NOT-OD-15-053.

**Programmatic Approach**
The Bridges to the Doctorate Program provides an opportunity to develop new, or expand existing, effective institutional programs aimed at a key juncture within higher education, namely the transition from a master's degree to a doctorate degree in biomedical sciences. NIGMS anticipates that carefully planned interventions at this key point of the educational pathway will increase the supply of biomedical science graduates, a necessary step in enhancing the diversity of the NIH-funded biomedical workforce.

Bridges applications are intended to reflect the plans and priorities of the participating institutions as well as the collective plans and priorities of the partnerships/consortia. Participating institutions should create a partnership program, or enhance an existing program, that will focus attention and adequate resources on the institution(s) granting associate degrees and so enhance competitiveness of their science graduates and science programs. Collaborative agreements should be designed to fit the needs and situations of the institutions involved.

The Bridges to the Doctorate Program recognizes the heterogeneity of institutional settings and institutional missions. Therefore, each application must conduct a self-assessment of each participating institution that includes baseline data on enrollment, transfer, research training, and subsequent graduation of its UR students in biomedical sciences. Specific aims must be based on this self-assessment and must be consonant with the purpose of the Bridges to Doctorate program. The doctorate partner institution should demonstrate that it has the resources needed to support Bridges students upon and after transfer, to facilitate the student’s successful doctorate degree completion. This FOA requires a multiple PD/PI application (See Sections III.1 and IV.2).

**Goals and Outcomes:** The goal of the Bridges to the Doctorate Program is to develop a diverse group of highly trained biomedical scientists to address the nation’s biomedical workforce needs. The short-term and intermediate-term goals of the program are to increase the number of students who transition from a master's program to a doctorate program in the biomedical sciences. At the institutional level, the program expects that at least 60% of Bridges-supported students, upon or before graduation from the master's degree program, transition to doctorate degree programs in the biomedical sciences, and at least 60% of trained Bridges students successfully complete their doctorate degree in the biomedical sciences. NIGMS anticipates that Bridges grantees will improve upon these outcomes.

Research education programs may complement ongoing research training and education occurring at the applicant institution, but the proposed educational experiences must be distinct from those training and education programs currently receiving Federal support. R25 programs may augment institutional research training programs (e.g., T32, T90) but cannot be used to replace or circumvent Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award (NRSA) programs.

To view the full solicitation, please click on the link below.

**Award budget:** up to $300,000 / year for up to five years
**Estimated Number of Awards:** The number of awards is contingent upon NIH appropriations and the submission of a sufficient number of meritorious applications

**Limit on Number of Proposals per Organization (UNC): 1**
Applicant organizations may not submit more than one Bridges to Doctorate application as the lead institution; organizations can be the lead on one application and partner on one or more applications submitted by other Lead Institutions.

Please do not hesitate to contact Denise Lindley with questions or assistance at Limited_Submissions@unc.edu or 962-7503.