

Frequently asked questions

[RFA-MH-12-130](#)

Basic research on decision making: Cognitive, affective, and developmental perspectives (R01)

The RFA mentions a wide variety of possible topics and approaches.

What are you really looking for?

The core goal of this RFA is to increase investigations into decision-making, across multiple levels of analysis. Applications that respond to this FOA are expected to propose projects that will further our understanding of the basic behavioral and social mechanisms and processes involved in decision making, and contribute to unifying scientific inquiry across a wide range of biological, behavioral, and social science disciplines that examine judgment and decision making.

The only firm limitation is that the project fall within the scope of basic behavioral and social science research ([b-BSSR](#)), as described here <http://oppnet.nih.gov/about-faqs.asp>.

The best way for you to receive additional guidance is to send a draft Specific Aims page to Dr. Janine Simmons, OppNet's leader for this RFA, at janine.simmons@nih.gov.

Does my application need to include a developmental/lifespan component?

No, the project is not required to have a developmental/lifespan perspective to be considered responsive to the RFA. This is one of several approaches to the study of decision-making that would be of interest to OppNet.

Does my application need to include a neurobiological approach?

No, the project is not required to include neurobiological measures to be considered responsive to the RFA. This is one of several levels of analysis that is welcome, but not necessary to a successful application.

Is my application basic or applied research?

The OppNet website provides [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about this distinction. Please start with this information and then read the referenced webpages in their entirety.

Can b-BSSR be conducted in clinical settings and in studies with disease outcomes?

Yes. While b-BSSR does not address disease outcomes per se, as suggested above, b-BSSR can be conducted in a broad variety of settings, including general population and clinical samples. It can also be embedded within studies that include disease (or risk-factor) outcomes, as long as the focus of the study is on basic behavioral or social processes, basic biobehavioral or biosocial interrelationships, or methodology and measurement relevant to BSSR research.

<http://oppnet.nih.gov/about-faqs.asp>

http://obssr.od.nih.gov/about_obssr/BSSR_CC/BSSR_definition/definition.aspx

Can NIH Program Officials look at our Specific Aims in advance of submission?

We would be happy to provide preliminary comments on your Specific Aims and provide feedback on likely responsiveness to the RFA. Please send your Aims electronically to Dr. Janine Simmons, whose e-mail address appears at the end of this document and in the original RFA under [Scientific Contacts](#). Please keep in mind that the official review for scientific merit is conducted by the reviewers on the RFA-specific special emphasis panel without input from NIH or OppNet program staff.

What if my project is applied research, does not connect to basic questions about decision making, or is otherwise not appropriate for this RFA?

This RFA by no means expresses the entirety of NIH interests in decision-making. Approximately 70% of NIH funding goes to unsolicited applications that are submitted through the standard investigator initiated process. Dr. Janine Simmons, whose e-mail address appears below and in the RFA under [Scientific Contacts](#), will direct you to the appropriate NIH Program Official from the 27 Institutes, Centers, and Offices (ICOs) that have scientific interests in decision-making beyond the scope of this OppNet RFA.

What does it mean that the RFA appears to come from both NIMH and OppNet?

For administrative reasons, OppNet cannot issue its RFAs directly. For each OppNet RFA, one NIH Institute fills in for this administrative purpose. This decision-making RFA reflects the interests of 27 NIH ICOs; NIMH issued the RFA on behalf of all of them.

RFA responsiveness and funding decisions are determined solely by multiple OppNet program directors with OppNet goals in mind. Further information regarding OppNet's priorities can be found here <http://oppnet.nih.gov/about-mission.asp>.

If your application is recommended for funding, OppNet will assign your project to the most scientifically appropriate IC, one of the 24 NIH ICs that participate in OppNet. It will not necessarily be NIMH. No action will be required on your part.

What must foreign institutions do differently for this RFA?

Foreign institutions are eligible for this FOA. The Fogarty International Center provides a wealth of information that you should read: <http://www.fic.nih.gov/Grants/Pages/Foreign.aspx>.

You must provide a statement in your application explaining why the science of your application could not be done by a domestic investigator. Without this statement, we will not be able to make an award to your institution.

Before you apply, consider whether your application presents special opportunities for furthering research programs through the use of unusual talent, resources, populations, or environmental conditions that are not readily available in the United States or that augment existing U.S. resources. Also, in order to receive NIH funding, your research should benefit the health of the American population, as well as your local population: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/foreign/special_guidance.htm

What study section should I request?

Should I request assignment to a specific NIH institute?

There is no need to request a study section. All applications submitted to this RFA will be reviewed together in a single Special Emphasis Panel convened just for this purpose. In addition, there is no need to request assignment to a specific Institute. All applications will be assigned to NIMH as the host IC for administrative purposes on behalf of OppNet. Your application does not need to fit the mission of the NIMH; but it **must** fit the [mission of OppNet](#). If your application is recommended for funding, OppNet will assign it to the scientifically appropriate institute with no action required on your part.

What will happen once I submit my application?

First, your application will be assigned automatically for review purposes to a Special Emphasis Panel that the NIH Center for Scientific Review (CSR) will convene in spring 2012. Please read the review criteria in the RFA carefully. It includes RFA-specific criteria beyond NIH's standard R01 review criteria:

- How does the proposed research advance basic behavioral and social science research (b-BSSR) under the NIH definition?
- If the proposed research occurs in a specific context (e.g., clinical, disease-specific), how can its novel results inform basic social and behavioral research at large?

Second, your application automatically will receive a NIMH application number and be assigned to Dr. Janine Simmons as Program Official. Dr. Simmons and the OppNet working group for this RFA will evaluate your application for responsiveness. Questions about responsiveness can also be addressed *prior to* submission, by providing Dr. Simmons with a draft Specific Aims page. The following pieces of information about the elements of responsiveness are provided in the RFA:

- Applications in response to this OppNet initiative must clearly focus on the [basic behavioral and social](#) mechanisms and processes involved in decision making.
- OppNet uses the [NIH definition of basic behavioral and social science research](#) (b-BSSR) to determine application responsiveness.

Applications that are incomplete and/or nonresponsive will not be reviewed. The Principal Investigators of non-responsive applications will be notified by OppNet that their applications have been withdrawn. These applications may be resubmitted to the NIH through the R01 Parent Announcement as “New” applications.

How many applications does OppNet plan to fund?

OppNet intends to award between 5 and 15 research grants. The number of awards is contingent upon NIH appropriations, the submission of a sufficient number of meritorious applications, and the budgets of those projects proposed for funding. Please note that these are 3-year R01 awards; the budget for each year may not exceed \$500,000 direct costs per year. Regardless of the amount, each application should have a well-justified budget appropriate for the proposed scope of work. The following will be considered in making funding decisions: scientific and technical merit of the proposed project as determined by scientific peer review; availability of funds; and relevance of the proposed project to OppNet’s program priorities. Unfunded RFA applications may be resubmitted as new applications to another FOA or activity code; for guidance, see [NOT-OD-09-100](#).

Who do I contact regarding OppNet’s RFA-MH-12-130?

OppNet RFA leader

Janine Simmons, M.D., Ph.D.

janine.simmons@nih.gov

Who do I contact for more information on OppNet?

OppNet Facilitator

William Elwood, Ph.D.

william.elwood@nih.gov

National Institutes of Health | Department of Health and Human Services

OPPNET

 Basic Behavioral & Social Science Opportunity Network

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