

California Initiative to Advance Precision Medicine (CIAPM) Request for Applications: Doctoral Student Representative Precision Medicine Research

Frequently Asked Questions (Last Updated on 1/14/2026, Updates are shown in red bold font below and denoted with *Update*)

Please find the RFA here: [CIAPM Request for Applications for Doctoral Student Representative Precision Medicine Research](#). Applicants are encouraged to email ciapm@chhs.ca.gov with specific questions.

1. Q: Can I submit an application as a current doctoral student, but be supported as a post-doctoral fellow completing a postdoc?

A: This RFA is intended for doctoral students. Therefore, when the award starts awardees must still be a doctoral student at a non-profit California academic research institution and in good academic standing. Institutions are the recipients of CIAPM funding and should ensure applicants and awardees from their institutions are in good academic standing, compliant with institutional policies and applicable law. If the awardee transitions to a postdoctoral fellowship within California during the 2.5-year funding period, it may be possible, but is not guaranteed, for the awardee to continue to be supported by CIAPM for the remainder of the funding period. Please see “Eligibility” on Page 1 of the RFA, “If the awardee moves to a different California non-profit academic research institution during the award period, funding can follow the awardee, subject to CIAPM funding availability and discretion.”

2. Q: Is U.S. citizenship or permanent residency required to be an eligible applicant?

A: The applicant must be a current PhD, DrPH, MD-PhD, or other doctoral-level student conducting research at a non-profit California academic research institution and in good academic standing. Institutions are the recipients of CIAPM funding and must ensure applicants and awardees from their institutions are in good academic standing, compliant with institutional policies and applicable law.

3. Q: I am currently receiving funding for my doctoral research. Does that make me ineligible?

A: Applicants who are currently receiving full-time doctoral student research funding for an individual grant award (e.g. through an active NIH F30/F31 or similar award) are ineligible to apply. Applicants who are currently on institutional training grants (e.g. through an active NIH T15/T32 or similar award) are eligible to apply. Sponsoring institutions should

ensure student support remains consistent with institutional and programmatic policies, including for awardees on institutional training grants or similar funding.

4. Q: I am a first year PhD student rotating in labs and won't be considered to be in full-time research until June, am I still eligible?

A: If you meet the eligibility criteria from pages 1 and 7-8, under “Eligibility”, you are eligible. Please note that “applicants should have identified a specific research project and a faculty mentor(s) that will supervise and support the research.” Please also note that “at the time of award, individuals are required to pursue their research training on a full-time basis, normally defined as 40 hours per week or as specified by the sponsoring institution in accordance with its own policies.”

5. Q: Are medical students eligible?

A: This award is for full-time doctoral student research. At the time of award, individuals are required to pursue their research training on a full-time basis, normally defined as 40 hours per week or as specified by the sponsoring institution in accordance with its own policies. For combined degree students (e.g. MD-PhD students), only the time devoted to full-time doctoral research leading to the doctoral research degree will be supported. Please see “Application Instructions: Eligibility” on Page 7-8 of the RFA.

6. Q: Does the applicant themselves need to be from an underrepresented background?

A: No, applicants are not themselves required to be from an underrepresented background (please review Eligibility on page 7-8). Please note that “the training plan may include a description of how the applicant’s background and lived experience informs their research interests and training plan” (page 11). This is applicable regardless of whether the applicant’s background and lived experience is itself underrepresented in research. Although researchers from diverse backgrounds more often propose research topics related to population health and minoritized communities and publish on research topics that often reflect their communities (page 4-5), applicants who do not themselves come from underrepresented backgrounds can certainly still propose and conduct research that prioritizes underrepresented populations. CIAPM encourages applications from all eligible applicants.

7. Q: Is a student eligible if their mentor PI is also applying to CIAPM’s other open RFA?

A: Yes, there is no restriction for mentor PIs concurrently applying to the Partnerships RFA. Individuals may concurrently serve as PI on a Partnerships grant and as the doctoral

student mentor PI in both the application and awarded stage. Please note that the projects must still be distinct from each other. Please see eligibility parameters on pages 1 and 7-8.

8. Q: Is my project responsive to the RFA?

A: To ensure your project is responsive to the RFA, please read the RFA requirements carefully here: [CIAPM Request for Applications for Doctoral Student Representative Precision Medicine Research](#) and reach out to CIAPM staff at ciapm@chhs.ca.gov.

9. Q: Is a certain population considered underrepresented?

A: Please see the Project Plan instructions on Page 9 of the RFA, “The applicant must demonstrate that the study population is, or includes, populations that are underrepresented in research studies, such as racial and ethnic minoritized populations, older adults, pregnant and lactating individuals, LGBTQ+ populations, persons with physical or developmental disabilities, intersecting identities among these communities, and people whose demographic characteristics better match the disease burden or health condition.” Applicants are expected to demonstrate that their study population is underrepresented in research studies.

10. Q: Is the webinar recording available?

A: Yes, see here: [Doctoral RFA Informational Webinar](#).

11. Q: Can my faculty mentor write my letter of recommendation?

A: No. Please see page 12 under the Letter of Recommendation instructions: “The letters should be from individuals not directly involved in the application, but who can speak to the applicant’s potential and are familiar with the applicant’s background, qualifications, education/training, and interests.”

12. Q: Does mixed methods or qualitative work have a place here?

A: Yes, please see page 9 under the Project Plan instructions: “The precision medicine approach should include quantitative and/or qualitative data about a person and their lived experiences and may include social determinants of health and community-engaged research approaches.”

13. Update Q: Are indirect costs allowable?

A: No, indirect costs are not allowable. The allowable costs are listed on page 12 of the RFA under "Budget": "CIAPM will reimburse the institutional stipend not to exceed \$40,000/year, tuition, fees, and institutional allowance (e.g. health insurance) not to exceed \$18,000/year, and \$4,000/year for research/professional development (includes

~\$1500/award period for CIAPM convenings)." Sponsoring institutions should ensure student support remains consistent with institutional and programmatic policies.

14. *Update* Q: How does the total allowable budget break down over the project term?

A: Projects must be 2.5 years long (see page 1 of the RFA under "Project Budget"). The total award amount is capped at \$155,000; \$62,000 maximum for Year 1, \$62,000 maximum for Year 2, and \$31,000 maximum for the additional 6-month period.

15. *Update* Q: Should I use the Non-Fellowship or Fellowship format of the biosketch? Do I have to use the newest format (required by NIH starting January 25, 2026, through SciEncv), or may I use the old format?

A: Please use the fellowship form, and we'll accept the old fellowship form.