



Memorandum

To: Chairman Imbasciani and Members of the ICOC
From: Rosa Canet-Avilés, Vice President, Scientific Programs & Education
Jennifer Lewis, Senior Director Grants Management & IT
Re: Proposed Supplement to Support CIRM Training Scholars Program
Date: September 28, 2023

Background

In December 2022, the University of California Office of the President (UCOP) entered into new bargaining agreements with both the predoctoral Graduate Student Researchers (GSRs) and Postdoctoral Researchers unions that resulted in an increase in annual stipends. These new agreements went into effect as of April 2023 and will further increase beginning October 2023 through October 2025 for GSRs and through October 2026 for postdoctoral researchers.

Since Proposition 14 was ratified, CIRM has invested \$189M in Education programs that support students at every stage of professional development from high school through clinical fellows through the Bridges (EDUC2), SPARK (EDUC3), Scholars (EDUC4) and COMPASS (EDUC5) programs. CIRM has developed the annual budget (including stipends) for these programs based on cost comparators with the National Institutes of Health (NIH). However, based on evidence from the UCOP union negotiations and discussions with CIRM awardees, NIH stipends lack regular costs of living adjustments for inflation. Therefore, CIRM staff conclude that the UCOP agreements are representative of the considerations needed to attract students in California to these training programs.¹

Proposed Revisions

CIRM staff have reviewed the Education portfolio and determined that the new union agreements with UCOP will only impact the EDUC4 program that serves predoctoral (GSRs) and postdoctoral students. During this review, CIRM staff concluded that the current award amount of \$5M will be insufficient to provide the funds to support the increase in allowable stipends by UCOP for the remaining 3 years of the awards. We believe this could result in a decrease in trainees enrolling and completing the Scholars program.

Proposed Supplement Award

- All current Scholars Training Program awardees will be awarded a supplement and will receive the funds from appointed qualified Trainees.
- Total Supplement to support for 18 awards for the remaining 3 years of duration of the program is \$6,727,347 based on:
 - Stipend increase for GSR trainees of \$9,167 per year plus \$917 indirect costs
 - Stipend increase for postdoctoral trainees of \$13,484 per year plus \$1,348 indirect costs
 - Estimate of 5 GSRs and 5 postdoctoral trainees per year
 - Remaining program duration is 3 years
 - 18 EDUC4 awards issued, resulting in a total increase of \$2,722,599 for GSRs and \$4,004,748 for postdoctoral trainees

¹ Gewin, V. (2023) 'Postdoctoral researchers warn NIH that cost-of-living pressures are gutting the workforce', Nature. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-023-02202-7>.

- Any unused funds would be returned to CIRM.

Requested Action: CIRM requests the Board approve an additional allocation of \$6,727,347 to support the 18 supplement awards.