



Program for Artificial Intelligence Readiness (PAIR) FAQs

This page includes collections of answers to our most Frequently Asked Questions about the AIM-AHEAD PAIR program. View the AIM-AHEAD General FAQs [here](#).

Frequently Used Links:

-PAIR Cohort 2 CFP: <https://www.aim-ahead.net/pair-cohort-2-cfp/>

-PAIR HelpDesk: <https://helpdesk.aim-ahead.net/ticket/create/PAIR>

-InfoReady for submission:

<https://aim-ahead.infoready4.com/#freeformCompetitionDetail/1952956>

Program Overview

AIM-AHEAD PAIR Program-Related FAQs

What is the purpose of the AIM-AHEAD PAIR Program?

The AIM-AHEAD Program for AI Readiness (PAIR) leverages AIM-AHEAD's capabilities to jump-start AI for health equity research in eligible institutions (as defined in the Eligibility Section). Low-resource organizations encounter substantial challenges stemming from their limited experience in AI/ML research related to health equity, a lack of adequate AI/ML infrastructure, insufficient collaboration across disciplines, and limited grant funding. PAIR is specifically crafted to strengthen the foundational elements of these organizations, paving the way for sustainable success in research endeavors. Through a two-phase funding model, PAIR will facilitate the connection between institutions and AIM-AHEAD resources, along with experts in AI/ML and health equity research, and grant-writing coaches. This collaborative effort aims to establish AI/ML health equity research labs, fostering cross-disciplinary teams dedicated to conducting research projects and proficient grant writing.

What does the PAIR Program offer participating institutions?

- Grant-funding (up to \$250,000)
- Grant Writing Training
- Research Planning & Proposal Training
- Mentorship (from AI Experts)
- NIH Proposal Preparation

What is the duration of the PAIR Program?

Institutions selected for Phase 1: *12 Months*

Institutions selected for Phase 2: *12 Months*

Phase 1 is tentatively scheduled to run from March 2025 to March 2026.

How often will the PAIR Program be awarded?

PAIR is expected to launch a new cohort every year. More details regarding 2026 Cohort will be coming soon.

How is the PAIR Program CFP different from the Data Infrastructure Capacity Building Program CFP for the first phase?

The PAIR Program aims to provide comprehensive support to multidisciplinary teams from eligible institutions through the establishment of an AI Health Equity Lab at your institution. The Data Infrastructure Capacity Building Program is a different program that focuses on 4 specific focus areas that participants select from with different objectives and outcomes. Applicants are encouraged to apply to both.

Can one institution receive multiple AIM-AHEAD awards in a given year?

Yes, the same institution can apply for all AIM-AHEAD CFPs.

Will the PAIR Program produce any publications?

Publications are case by case. If research is ready for publishing, then yes. It is not expected that all participants will have a publication at the end of Year 1.

What are the expected outcomes for the PAIR Program?

Phase 1 Outcomes

1. Institutional support & Teaming
2. Research project development
3. Data resource selection and feasibility

Phase 2 Outcomes

1. Research project Idea is Finalized
2. Implementation of the Project
3. Completed Proposal for NIH Submission
4. New AI/ML Research Lab

Who will be the mentors/program consultants?

Program provides three different types of mentors and consultants:

1. AI Machine Learning Experts
2. Subject Matter Expert (e.g., Health Equity or Public Health Expert)
3. Grant Writing Coach

Can institutions identify their mentor or partner with AI-intensive institutions?

Awardees are welcome to nominate experts, which a committee will evaluate and make the matching decision. As we are targeting low-resourced institutions who are low in AI capacities, their choice of experts might not be the best fit.

Eligibility

AIM-AHEAD PAIR Eligibility-Related FAQs

Is my Institution Eligible to Apply?

Please read the PAIR Cohort 2 CFP for details on eligibility criteria.

Are institutions that are not minority-serving institutions (MSIs) eligible to apply?

Yes, they are eligible.

If my institution already has an existing PAIR award from a previous cohort, can I apply for a new cohort with a new team?

If your institution already has an existing PAIR award, you are NOT eligible to apply for a new cohort, even if you apply with a different project/team.

What if my institution does not have a negotiated NIH IDC number?

Please reach out to PAIR helpdesk as early as possible. Do not wait until the last day of submission.

Are we required to have datasets to apply? Will new data sources be provided?

You are not required to have datasets to apply. Awarded teams will have access to datasets through AIM-AHEAD. You are welcome to bring your own datasets as well.

Does my current research interest have to involve AI?

It depends on your background (e.g., healthcare, AI, computer science, etc). As long as you are interested in advancing health equity using AI, then you are welcomed to explore the PAIR program. Additionally, if you do not have any AI machine experience but want to partner with faculty who do, you are welcomed. The same concept applies to individuals with an AI machine background but does not have experience in healthcare. Minimum is 2 faculty members.

Can my institution participate if we already have an existing AI Lab?

If your lab is not doing health equity research, then yes. Generally, the lab should be in need of help with successfully launching AI for health equity. Please submit specific inquiries to the PAIR Help Desk for further information.

What kind of team is needed to apply for the PAIR Program?

An institution may propose a single team with key personnel from the institution itself or affiliated institutions, including at least 2 but no more than 3 Co-PIs, each from a distinct discipline. To meet the program's goals, each team is encouraged to have at least one investigator with a background in a health-related field and one investigator with a computer science background with basic knowledge of AI.

If my department is limited in terms of faculty backgrounds, can I partner with a sister institution to meet the multidisciplinary team requirements?

The applicant institution is encouraged to partner with multiple disciplines or departments within the institution. Please refer specific inquiries to the [PAIR helpdesk](#).

Will the team be considered multidisciplinary if the members are from the same department? For example, a bioengineer and a computer scientist?

Yes, as long as they have different skill sets or areas of expertise, this will be considered multidisciplinary. We recommend the team consists of one faculty with some health background and one with some AI background to avoid any gaps. New ideas are welcomed.

How many faculty are needed to form a team?

Minimum requirement is 2 faculty. Maximum is 3, if the budget allows.

Can two or more institutions “team up” and apply together? Are “joint” submissions welcomed?

No. There is one institution per application. An institution may suggest one team with key personnel from the same institution or affiliated institutions. The PAIR Program consists of one university/institution with representatives from multiple disciplines or departments within the institution.

Can team members be subcontracted from another institution?

No. Please refer to the AIM-AHEAD website for other CFPs that welcome multi-institution collaborations.

Can a team be composed of different campuses that are part of the same university?

Yes, this is fine. As long as your institution DUNS number is the same, they will be considered the same institution.

Are individuals that are in the process of obtaining Permanent Resident status eligible to apply?

No, these individuals are not eligible as they have not obtained Permanent Resident status at the time of application.

Are Research 1 Universities eligible to apply for PAIR Cohort 2?

Yes, these institutions would be eligible to apply.

Can a basic scientist serve as a Co-PI alongside a Co-PI from data/computer science?

Yes, the goal is to have a multidisciplinary team.

Can faculty members with multiple appointments be considered for this program—with their chosen university?

Yes. The Co-PIs must be from the same institution. You are not allowed to build a team across appointments.

Is an investigator with a current R01 eligible, or is this program only for early career investigators without previous or current extramural funding?

Yes, such an investigator would be eligible.

How do I know if my institution is considered an “organization facing challenges in developing research capacities for AI/ML” or “low-resourced?”

There are no strict criteria; however, we encourage you to include information that highlights your institution's specific needs.

Application

AIM-AHEAD PAIR Applications-Related FAQs

What is the Application Submission Deadline?

Submission Deadline is: January 15th 2025 at 5:00pm (EST)

How do I submit the application?

Please submit your application on the link here:

<https://aim-ahead.infoready4.com/#freeformCompetitionDetail/1952956>

Please submit the single word document or PDF file to the online submission system.

When will I be notified if I was selected to participate in PAIR?

Awardees will be announced on February 26, 2025.

How many institutions will be selected for the PAIR program Phase 1?

15 Institutions for this round of funding.

What happens if one institution submits multiple applications?

Reach out to your institution's Sponsored Research Program office to see if any other PI plans to submit a proposal for PAIR. It is encouraged that all interested parties from the same institution form a team and submit one application on behalf of the institution. *Only one application per institution* (normally identified by having a unique DUNS number or NIH IPF number) is allowed.

Who should represent/participate on behalf of the institution?

The institution's key personnel should be composed of individuals who plan to remain at the institution for an extended period of time.

Does the university need to register on AIM-AHEAD Connect? Should non-key personnel create an account?

Only the investigators are required to create accounts. Non-key personnel are encouraged to create an account

Can a senior staff scientist apply for this grant? Can a fellow trainee be recruited after the grant is obtained or before the application?

It depends on the institution. Minimum 2 faculty members. Must apply as a team of multi-disciplinary researchers. Please submit specific inquiries to the PAIR helpdesk on AIM-AHEAD Connect.

Who should submit the proposal on behalf of the institution?

Applications are submitted on the [AIM-AHEAD InfoReady platform](#). Applicants can decide who will submit the application on the institution's behalf. Please specify the Contact PI.

What major items are needed for the application?

Please refer to the "Proposal Requirements for Phase 1" section of the Cohort 2 CFP for details on the documents required for application submission.

Should activities for Phase 2 be included in our application proposal?

No, the application is solely for Phase 1 and should only include Phase 1 activities.

How many letters of support are required for a team with multiple PIs?

It is recommended that every PI on the team submits a letter from their own department chair or dean. However, one letter of support from a higher institutional authority (e.g. Vice President of Research) will be sufficient. The goal is commitment from the institution—thus multiple letters of support is a plus for the application.

What if my institution does not have a negotiated NIH IDC number?

Please reach out to PAIR via [helpdesk](#) as early as possible. Do not wait until the last day of submission.

What are the required elements in the Project Plan?

Please refer to the "PAIR Application Title Page & Project Plan Template" document in the [Application Templates folder](#).

Is there a clinic to evaluate the project synopsis (whether it suits the program objectives)?

Applicants are welcome to email pair-admin@aim-ahead.net to evaluate your project synopsis.

Applicants are required to define outcome measures for rigorous evaluation. Should these evaluation measures be developed internally by the applicant team, or does this evaluation need to be conducted externally?

The outcome measures are to be developed by the research team but will be refined during Phase I of the PAIR program.

How should applicants determine the milestone date/deadline for the AI, team science, and grant writing training?

PAIR Cohort 2 Phase 1 is tentatively scheduled from March 2025 to March 2026. Applicants are encouraged to create a high-level timeline for milestones and outcomes. Please see the sample timelines in the [PAIR Application Templates folder](#)

Should the proposal be organized as a formal research proposal or like a research program (which can include training for students)?

The proposal should be organized as a formal research proposal. See “Project Plan” requirements outlined in the CFP (<https://www.aim-ahead.net/pair-cohort-2-cfp/>).

Where can I find more information/help with the submission process?

Questions regarding the submission process may be directed to:

<https://helpdesk.aim-ahead.net/>

The application refers to a “target demographic.” What is meant by this term?

The target demographic refers to the population or group your research will focus on or impact. For example, if your research will focus on a disease state that disproportionately affects a particular racial/ethnic population, that population would be your “target demographic.”

PAIR Program Participants

AIM-AHEAD PAIR Participant-Related FAQs

In addition to faculty, who can participate on the PAIR Program projects?

Undergraduate, Graduate, and Post-Doc students are welcomed to participate on teams. Modest postdoc/graduate student support is allowed.

Can high school students participate on the PAIR Program team or projects?

High school students cannot be included in the budget, but are welcomed to work on projects. Send inquiries regarding high school students to PAIR help desk for more information-- as AIM-AHEAD has summer opportunities they may qualify for. Generally, all funds should be spent at the same institution.

Can teams include individuals outside of academia (e.g., industry)?

Only as non-key personnel (as collaborators).

Can we include research coordinators for Phase 1?

Research Coordinator are welcome to participate on teams. Modest support is allowed.

Can community members (e.g., patient stakeholders) be added to the study team as co-PIs or just as community collaborators?

They can be added as collaborators but not as Co-PIs.

PAIR Program Grants & Budget

AIM-AHEAD PAIR Grant & Budget-Related FAQs

What is the maximum percentage of indirect cost this program allows?

There is no maximum percentage. It will depend on the negotiated NIH IDC. If your institution does not have a NIH IDC, please reach out to the program [help desk](#) immediately.

For budgeting, does the NIH indirect rate for training grants or research grants apply?

The indirect rate for research grants applies.

Will the grant include both direct and indirect costs?

Yes, the \$100k includes both direct and indirect costs. PAIR will cover the costs for grant-writing training, mentorship, and other necessary resources to enhance project success. Specific budget questions can be directed to the [PAIR help desk](#).

What types of costs can be included in the budget?

The program budget goal is to build capacity. The budget can include salary support and training (e.g., PI salary and Faculty salary). *Not included in the budget* are hardware purchases (e.g., expensive equipment and datasets) or student tuition and fees. PAIR will provide the costs for data, grant-writing training, and other necessary resources to be successful.

What types of costs are excluded in the budget?

Expenses omitted from the budget include hardware purchases (e.g., expensive equipment and datasets), student tuition and fees, and food (for travel). PAIR will provide the costs for data, grant-writing training, and other necessary resources to be successful.

What types of costs will the PAIR Program cover in addition to the grant funding?

The PAIR Program will provide the costs for data, grant writing training, and other resources that are key to success.

Are consultant salaries allowed in the PAIR Program budget?

No, consultant fees are not allowed in the PAIR Cohort 2 budget.

Are Post-Doc or Research Assistant Salaries allowed in the PAIR Program budget?

Salary support is mainly for faculty who are committed to the university and capable of building long-term capacity at the institution. Modest postdoc/graduate student support is allowed (primarily in Phase 2, if applicable).

Should the application budget include just Phase 1 costs?

Yes, as the application is just for Phase 1 of the program.

[PAIR Program Grant Writing & Training](#)

AIM-AHEAD PAIR Grant Writing & Training-Related FAQs

Who will serve as the experts/coaches for PAIR Cohort 2?

Please visit the following page for details:

<https://connect.aim-ahead.net/program/p/PAIRCohort2>.

What type of training grants will be given (e.g., R01, R21, K)? Is this according to the career level?

Yes, we will introduce different funding mechanisms, some of which have eligibility requirements based on the stage of career.

What other funding mechanisms are offered outside of NIH?

One objective of PAIR is to increase proposal submissions from low resourced institutions to NIH. Although we are targeting NIH, we will introduce other funding mechanisms such as foundations, CDC, and FDA.