

ISEE workshop offers insights on NIEHS grant awards

By *Caroline Dilworth*

A preconference workshop at the International Society for Environmental Epidemiology annual meeting in Seattle (see related [story](#)) helped students and new researchers understand how to navigate the National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant funding system. Workshop attendees also received more specific information about environmental epidemiology grant opportunities.

“The workshop was a great opportunity for NIEHS staff to meet emerging researchers and start forming relationships that will hopefully span a career,” said [Gwen Collman, Ph.D.](#) (<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/research/supported/dert/od/collman/index.cfm>), NIEHS Division of Extramural Research and Training director.

NIH grant funding basics

[Lisa Steele, Ph.D.](#)

(<http://www.csr.nih.gov/photodisplay/finalroster.aspx?f=Lisa&l=Steele&e=steeleIn&srg=IRAP>)

, scientific review officer for the NIH Infectious, Reproductive, Asthma, and Pulmonary Conditions Study Section, explained how grants are reviewed at the Center for Scientific Review. She also introduced attendees to the center’s Early Reviewer [Program](#) (<http://public.csr.nih.gov/ReviewerResources/BecomeAReviewer/ECR/Pages/default.aspx>), which allows qualified early-stage scientists without prior experience with the center to participate in the peer review process, so that they may become well-trained reviewers and more competitive as applicants. The program also helps enrich the existing pool of NIH reviewers.

[Lisa Chadwick, Ph.D.](#)

(<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/research/supported/dert/geh/chadwick/index.cfm>)

, health scientist administrator in the NIEHS Genes, Environment, and Health Branch, provided participants with information on funding mechanisms relevant to early-stage researchers, including [fellowships](#)

(<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/careers/research/trainingfrom/fellowships/index.cfm>)

for predoctoral and postdoctoral students, and career development [awards](#)

(<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/careers/research/trainingfrom/career/index.cfm>)

NIEHS Scientific Review Branch Chief [Alfonso Latoni, Ph.D.](#)

(<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/research/supported/dert/srb/index.cfm>)

, detailed how career awards and other review activities are conducted at NIEHS. Throughout the workshop, presenters stressed the value of having mentors with a proven track record and relevant expertise, as well as a strong research plan.

Opportunities for environmental epidemiology

[Kimberly Gray, Ph.D.](#)

(<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/research/supported/dert/phb/gray/index.cfm>)

, health scientist administrator in the NIEHS Population Health Branch, shared a broad overview of programs and specific research opportunities relevant to environmental epidemiology, along with [Gary Ellison, Ph.D.](#)

(<http://epi.grants.cancer.gov/staff/ellison.html>)

, of the National Cancer Institute. Gray highlighted the NIEHS Research to Action [program](#)

(<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-12-153.html>)

, which encourages community-academic partnership to address environmental concerns of communities. She also reviewed the NIEHS Outstanding New Environmental Scientist [award](#)

(<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-ES-13-014.html>)

, supporting research and career enhancement of exceptional early stage researchers in the environmental health field.

[Claudia Thompson, Ph.D.](#)

(<https://www.niehs.nih.gov/research/supported/dert/phb/thompson/index.cfm>)

, chief of the Population Health Branch, closed the workshop, remarking that attendees should feel free to reach out to NIEHS staff in the future. “Interacting with students and new researchers is a really enjoyable part of our job,” she said.



After participating in the grant workshop, Chadwick co-chaired a microbiome symposium at ISEE. (Photo courtesy of Joe Balintfy)



Dilworth, right, shown with presenter Lu Chen, Ph.D., from New York University, opened the workshop with an overview of the grant process. (Photo courtesy of Joe Balintfy)

Attendee Shelley Ehrlich, M.D., Sc.D., from Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, appreciated the opportunity to attend the event. "I really enjoyed the workshop — it was very helpful," she said.

(Caroline Dilworth, Ph.D., is a health scientist administrator in the Population Health Branch, where she co-directs the extramural environmental epidemiology program.)

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