

July 1, 2020

Dear Colleague,

I am writing to ask you to encourage your strong assistant professors to consider applying to the Burroughs Wellcome Fund Investigators in the Pathogenesis of Infectious Disease (PATH) program this year. (Eligibility ends with promotion to associate professor, with or without tenure.)

PATH is a career development program that supports assistant professors after they have gained independence and a good record of productivity. A great PATH application focuses on experimental ideas whose answers could change how we understand the intersection of host and pathogen biology. While many applications propose relatively incremental work, as though the aims had been assembled for an R01, PATH provides a remarkable opportunity to think bigger. Our support gives awardees an infusion of flexible dollars, fueling creative expansion of an investigator’s scientific reach.

Like most things in science, a proposal to BWF requires that ideas are built on a firm foundation. Preliminary data often helps, but PATH’s focus is on big questions—just right for faculty who may have been out of the lab for the past few months because of the COVID-19 shutdown.

PATH is a highly competitive grant program, and we designed the pre-proposal so that the time spent thinking about it would vastly outweigh the time spent writing it. I hope you will encourage your junior faculty to take a fresh look at the program and consider putting in a proposal. More information can be found at <https://www.bwfund.org/grant-programs/infectious-diseases> . The proposal is due on July 31, 2020.

Sincerely,

Victoria McGovern, PhD  
Senior Program Officer  
Burroughs Wellcome Fund