

NIH INTRAMURAL RESEARCH PROGRAM UNPAID DESIGNATION
(SPECIAL VOLUNTEER, GUEST RESEARCHER, ON-SITE RESEARCH COLLABORATOR)
CENTRAL APPROVAL REQUEST FORM
[Issued on 1/13/2026, revised on 8/13/2026]

These unpaid designations are under the authority/oversight of the NIH Deputy Director for Intramural Research (DDIR) and as such are exclusively for use within the Intramural Research Program (IRP); there are no exceptions for use of these designations in non-intramural settings/offices. There is no title bestowed to the individual through the [Special Volunteer \(SV\)](#), [Guest Researcher \(GR\)](#), or [On-Site Research Collaborator \(RC\)](#) assignments. Individuals may not list these unpaid designations as titled experiences/positions in CVs/resumes. Individuals on unpaid designations may not function as spokespersons of NIH. Individuals must immediately resign their assignment and return any/all NIH property if they relocate outside of the United States or no longer meet any other eligibility requirements. Individuals on unpaid designations may not take Government Furnished Equipment (GFE) on international travel. For full eligibility criteria, see the attached policy.

This form must be prepared and submitted by appropriate administrative staff within the Institute, Center, or Office (ICO), and not the person being assigned an unpaid designation (requestor). The completed form must be sent to SV-GR-RC-Requests@nih.gov for approval at least 3 months prior to the planned start date, following Scientific Director (SD) or Clinical Director (CD) approval at the ICO level.

Note: This request form does not replace any of the required applicable forms indicated for each unpaid designation in their respective NIH Policy Manual Chapters (SV/GR: <https://policymanual.nih.gov/2300-308-1> Appendices; RC: <https://policymanual.nih.gov/2300-308-4> Appendices plus Memorandum of Understanding/agreement detailing collaboration and each party's contribution, and clearance by the ICO's Deputy Ethics Counselor and technology transfer office).

1. Name of unpaid designation candidate:

2. NIH IRP Principal Investigator (PI) sponsor:

Note: Only individuals with the following official Intramural Professional Designations (IPD) granted through the Office of Intramural Research (OIR) qualify as IRP PIs: Senior Investigator, Senior Clinician, Senior Scientist, Investigator and Assistant Clinical Investigator; in addition, certain IC Directors/Clinical Directors/Scientific Directors who have been OIR-sanctioned for the IPD of Adjunct Investigator.

3. NIH IRP PI email address:

4. IC Administrative Officer (AO):

5. IC AO email address:

6. NIH Institute, Center, or Office (ICO):

7. Type of request:

8. Unpaid designation assignment category:

Note: Receiving NIH extramural funding is incompatible with the Special Volunteer assignment. Paid employees of outside organizations who are not on sabbaticals or leaves of absence cannot have an SV assignment unless their voluntary service is on their own time. See the NIH Policy Manual Chapters linked above for fully eligibility criteria for the unpaid designations.

9: The ICO hereby confirms that no foreign/non-U.S. funding is involved in this proposed unpaid designation assignment.

CONFIRMED

10. Citizenship status:

11. If foreign national, specify country of citizenship:

Unpaid designation assignments are not allowed for foreign nationals from Countries of Particular Concern or Special Watch List Countries as defined [here](#). For foreign nationals, the ICO hereby confirms that the individual is not from a Country of Particular Concern or Special Watch List Country.

CONFIRMED

N/A (U.S. Citizen or U.S. Lawful Permanent Resident)

12. The ICO hereby confirms that the requestor will reside in the U.S. during the duration of this assignment:

CONFIRMED

Place a checkmark by the relevant sections (A, B, C, or D) and complete the respective questions that apply to this request. For some cases, such as a trainee who already departed <2 years ago, section B would need to be filled in addition to D, for instance.

Note: Foreign nationals may not use personal funds to support their stay in the U.S. during their assignment in an unpaid designation. Incoming trainees who would otherwise be eligible for an IRTA/CRTA/VF must be fully funded by appropriate U.S. institutional sources in accordance with respective [IRTA/CRTA/VF stipend levels](#) to be eligible for an unpaid designation assignment. See the attached policy for more information.

(A) FOR INCOMING TRAINEES

13. Trainee type:

14. Academic/medical institution:

15. Description of institutional funding sources (specify if any are from NIH grants):

16. External (non-NIH) funding amount (monthly/annually): \$ _____ / \$ _____

(B) FOR DEPARTING NON-FTE TRAINEES

Note: Departing Postbaccalaureate IRTA/CRTAs who have completed an exceptional third year may not transition to an unpaid designation assignment.

17. Current NIH fellowship category:

18. Future position after departing NIH:

19. Location of future position:

20. Description of funding source(s) related to future position (specify if any are from NIH grants):

(C) FOR DEPARTING NIH FTE STAFF (INCLUDING CLINICAL FELLOWS & RESEARCH FELLOWS)

Note: Retiring Senior Investigators, Senior Clinicians, and Senior Scientists, after verification of such IPD by OIR, who will reside in the U.S. or U.S. territories may be assigned and renewed in unpaid designations with direct ICO SD/CD approval only and do not use this form. Any such individuals who will reside outside the U.S. or U.S. territories require direct ICO SD/CD approval and final central NIH committee approval through this form; provided, however, that no Government Furnished Equipment (GFE) may be taken internationally. Scientist Emeritus appointments require direct ICO SD/CD approval and DDIR approval, and do not utilize this form.

21. Current IPD:

22. Future position after departing NIH:

23. Source of institutional funding for future position (specify if any are from NIH grants):

(D) FOR ALL OTHERS

24. Employment status / Position title or description with employer:

25. Employer information, including city/state:

26. Source of institutional funding for current position (specify if any are from NIH grants):

27. Duration of request (MM/DD/YYYY to MM/DD/YYYY):

Note: Departing Postbaccalaureate IRTAs/CRTAs (excluding those that have completed a third year) and Predoctoral IRTAs/CRTAs/VFs may be assigned as an unpaid designation for a maximum of six months. Departing Postdoctoral IRTAs/CRTAs/VFs and FTE staff may be assigned as an unpaid designation for a maximum of one year. Renewals and exceptions to the limitations listed will only be contemplated due to strong justifications. See the attached policy document for further information.

28. Hours per week on the unpaid designation tasks:

29. Would this individual be physically on-site at an NIH campus/facility for any time during the assignment?

YES

NO

30. Will this individual require NIH Government Furnished Equipment (GFE)?

YES

NO

31. Human subjects research (definitions listed at **32. Note:**, below): SVs are automatically covered by the NIH Institutional Review Board (IRB) if they are working on an NIH protocol. For GRs or RCs, will the individual be conducting/continuing any human subjects research as part of his/her NIH activities or under an NIH protocol? This may be on an NIH study, or as part of a project that the individual is involved in at an external institution.

YES

NO

N/A (SV request working on an NIH protocol)

32. Note: Human subjects research activities include:

- a. Obtaining the informed consent of research participants.
- b. Interacting or intervening with human subjects for research purposes.
- c. Collecting, using, studying, analyzing or generating identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens for research purposes.
- d. Using, studying, analyzing or generating coded data or biospecimens for research purposes and having access to the code key.
- e. **For departing NIH trainees and staff:** Using, studying, or analyzing coded/deidentified data or biospecimens for research purposes, without having access to the code key, yet still being able to reidentify participants due to your past involvement in the NIH protocol.

If you answered **yes** to question **#31**, you must contact the Office of IRB Operations (irb@od.nih.gov) within the Office of Human Subjects Research Protections prior to conducting/continuing any human subjects research, to determine appropriate IRB oversight.

33. Justification for unpaid designation request:

Note: Provide a detailed description of the planned assignments and include how a denial of this request would impact the federal government/NIH. For departing trainees, the PI must include an explanation why other available resources, such as a Box account or data sharing via NIH Form-3000, are insufficient to complete the NIH work. For previously departed trainees/staff, the justification must include a history of any past NIH positions (FTE, non-FTE, contractor, etc.) and unpaid designation assignments that the candidate has had.

33. Signatures and Approvals:

If approved by the OIR or Office of Intramural Training and Education (OITE), the ICO may proceed with the processing of the unpaid designation assignment, including the completion forms NIH 590 and NIH 590-2. The SD/CD signature may be delegated only to the OIR-sanctioned Deputy SD or Deputy CD. The ICO is responsible for ensuring the PI sponsor and the person on the unpaid designation assignment are aware of the contents of this form and maintain all eligibility criteria. Any changes that impact the person's eligibility to maintain the planned assignment must be communicated immediately to SV-GR-RC-Requests@nih.gov and the assignment must be rescinded/resigned/terminated by the ICO or, if appropriate, assessed for transfer to another unpaid designation category.

Signature of Unpaid Designation Candidate

Date

Printed Name:

NIH IRP Principal Investigator Sponsor

Date

Printed Name:

ICO Scientific Director/Clinical Director

Date

Printed Name:

Approval

Disapproval

OIR/OITE Designee

Date

Printed Name:

Approval

Disapproval