



Elevating Women In Science

A Report On The Kenneth Rainin Foundation's
Progress From 2012-2024



Kenneth
Rainin
FOUNDATION

Introduction

The huge institutionalized systems for advancing research and delivering health care are overwhelmingly white, male and driven by conscious and unconscious bias. Women have played pivotal roles in scientific research and innovations but are largely underrepresented in leadership and faculty roles. Despite advances and more women entering science, gender bias and gaps persist. These disparities shape how biomedical research is conducted, for whom and in what settings. Addressing them is crucial to discovering breakthroughs for patients and achieving our goal of curing Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD).

The Kenneth Rainin Foundation's equity journey in our Health Program started in 2017 with a commitment to addressing barriers that limit opportunity for women in science. Our goal is to achieve greater parity for women among our Health grantees and we've been testing strategies along the way. Our Scientific Advisory Board has been essential to exploring how to advance women working in research through our grantmaking and programming.

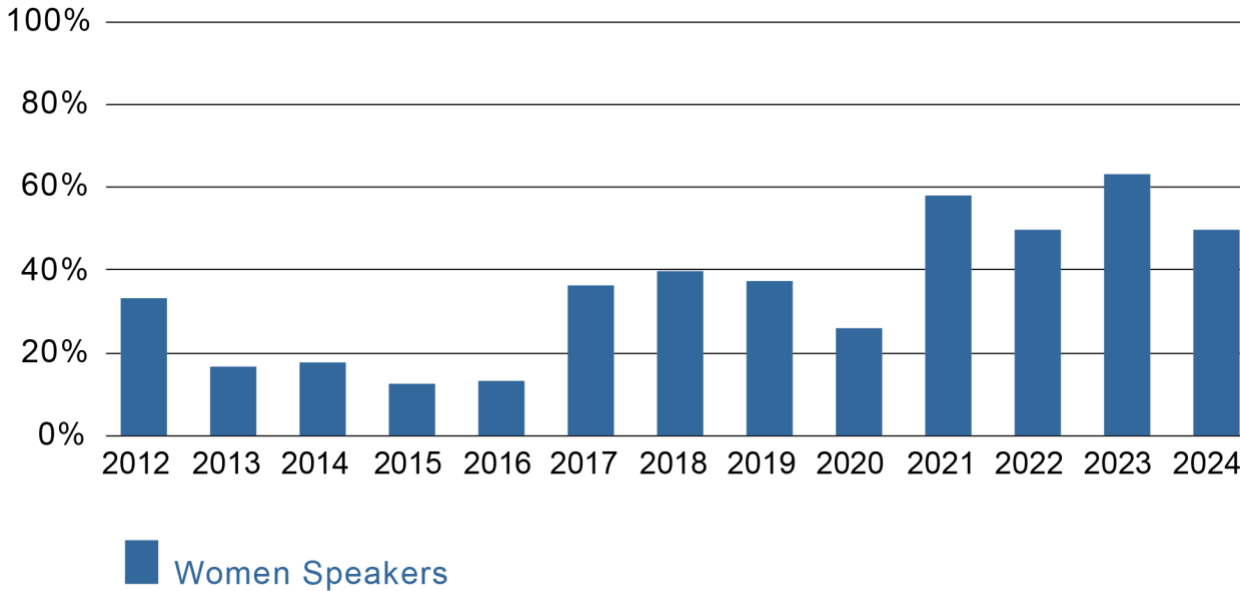
Our Health grantmaking enables researchers worldwide to test ideas, gather data and collaborate to advance the understanding of IBD. We believe that early support for innovative ideas can lead to improvements in preventing, predicting, diagnosing and treating this complex disease.

Building more equitable programs and practices involves collecting and analyzing demographic data to examine outcomes and inform our ongoing efforts. We acknowledge that gender is not binary and have been collecting data on a range of gender identities, but currently only have data to report on men and women. On the following pages, we share data from our Innovations Symposium and grantmaking programs to be transparent about our progress.

Innovations Symposia Speakers

Our annual Innovations Symposium brings together researchers, trainees and clinicians to encourage dialogue and build bridges that enhance IBD research. One of the ways in which we are attempting to elevate women in science is by making sure that we have a more balanced set of speakers at this event. The percentage of women speakers at the Symposium has trended upwards since 2015 with slight dips in 2020, 2022 and 2024. While we encountered a smaller number of leading women scientists available for speaking opportunities in 2024, we are also examining if our invitation process may have contributed to this decline. Supporting and inviting early career researchers to attend the Symposium is one strategy to help address this challenge in the long-term.

Innovations Symposium 2012-2024 Percentage Of Women Speakers



Innovations Symposium 2012-2024

Number of Women Speakers

Year	Number of Women Speakers	Total Speakers, All Genders
2012	2	6
2013	1	6
2014	3	17
2015	1	8
2016	2	15
2017	8	22
2018	6	15
2019	6	16
2020	6	23
2021	7	12
2022	6	12
2023	7	11
2024	8	16

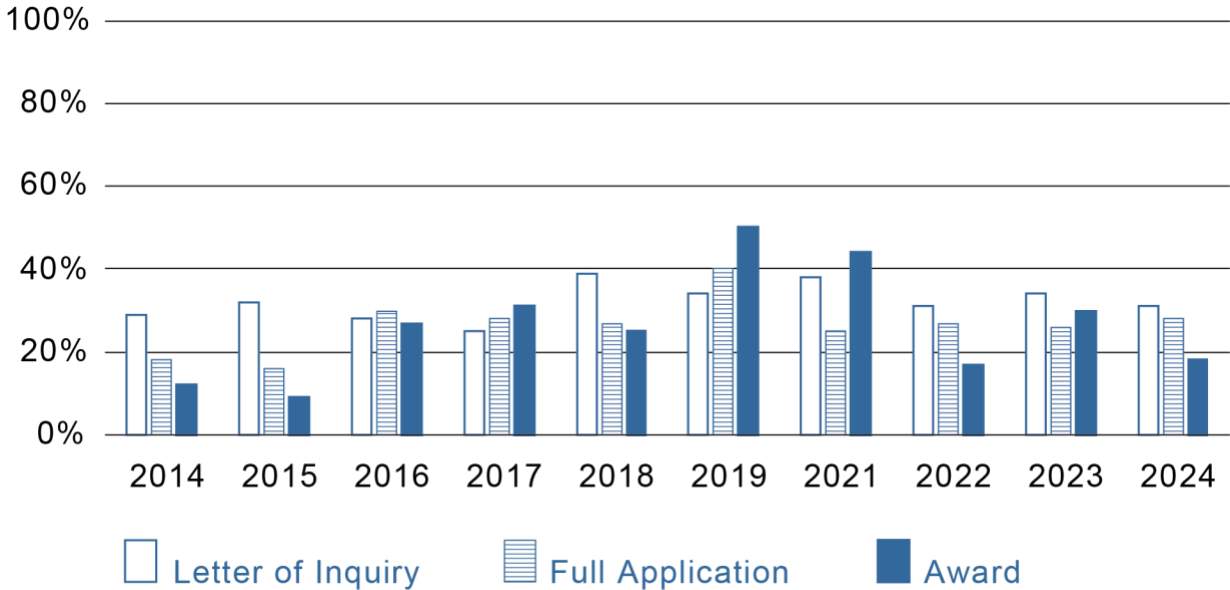
Funded Awardees

The Health Team tracks gender identity data across our grant application process to understand the percentage of women investigators who submit Letters of Inquiry (LOIs) compared to how many are invited to submit full proposals and then receive funding. We strive to maintain the initial percentage at each stage, with mixed results.

Innovator Awards

- In 2014, almost 30% of the Principal Investigators who submitted LOIs were women, yet only around 12% of them received grants.
- In 2019 the reverse was true—over 30% of Principal Investigators who submitted LOIs were women, 40% were invited to submit full proposals, and 50% of the awarded grantees were women.
- In 2024, 38% of those who submitted LOIs identified as women, 26% were invited to submit full proposals and 18% were funded.

Innovator Awards: 2014-2024 Percentage Of Women Throughout The Application Cycle



Note: The 2020 Innovator Awards cycle was cancelled.

Innovator Awards: 2014-2024
Application Cycle Totals, All Genders

Year	Letter of Inquiry	Full Application	Award
2014	232	17	8
2015	113	19	11
2016	116	20	30
2017	152	39	13
2018	150	26	8
2019	111	25	8
2021	184	22	9
2022	131	39	17
2023	150	35	17

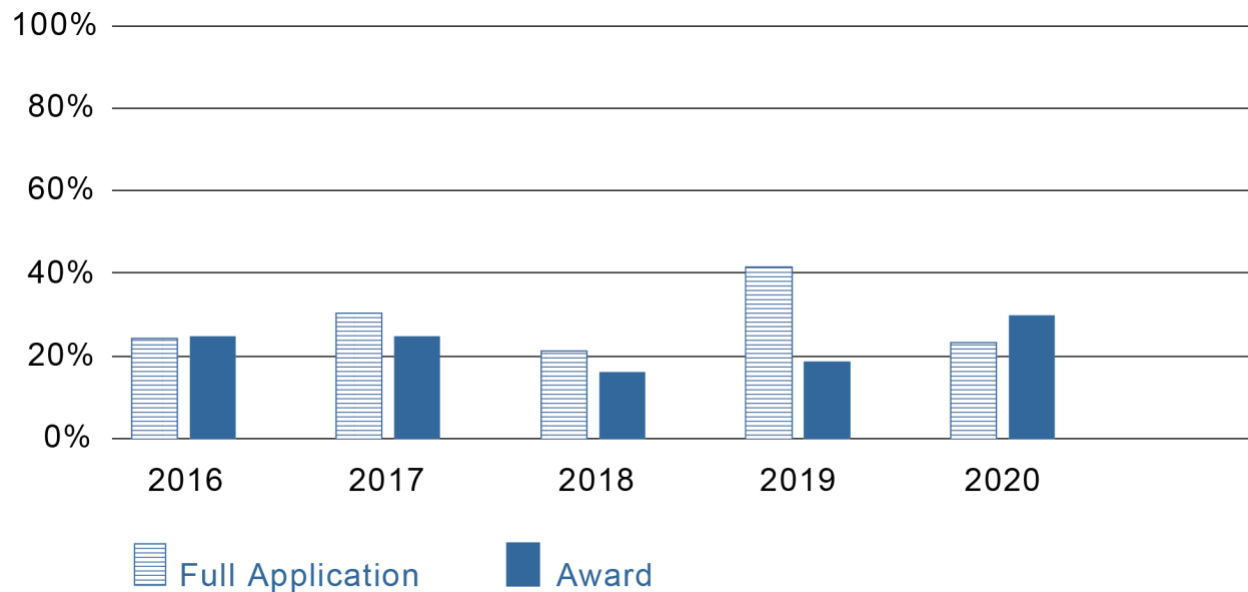
Note: The 2020 Innovator Awards cycle was cancelled.

Synergy Awards

In 2022, we consolidated our Innovator Awards and Synergy Awards into one grant program—the Innovator Awards. The Synergy Awards had a two-stage application process and supported collaborative research projects. The data in the chart below reflect when either the principal investigator or co-investigator identified as a woman.

Synergy Awards: 2016-2020

Percentage Of Women Throughout The Application Cycle



Synergy Awards 2016-2020

Application Cycle Totals, All Genders

Year	Full Application	Award
2016	19	3
2017	9	3
2018	31	4
2019	37	6
2020	38	7

Note: The 2021 Synergy Awards cycle was cancelled.

Conclusion

The Kenneth Rainin Foundation's commitment to equity extends across our organization and includes a sustained process of internal learning. We remain committed to increasing the representation of women in our grantmaking and programs, as well as elevating underrepresented researchers. Advancing equity in biomedical research will lead to better science, and we strive to invest in and represent the highest possible caliber of science.

Addressing the persistent gender bias and gaps that affect medical research requires ongoing focus. While we recognize that we have made progress, our data show that we must continue doing more.

Our ongoing efforts include:

- Working in partnership with our peers to address broad institutional obstacles to change.
- Collaborating with our Scientific Advisory Board to examine our practices and how we can contribute more to advancing racial and gender equity in biomedical research.
- Exploring strategies that focus earlier in the academic and research pipeline.
- Ensuring that our peer reviewers receive training around unconscious bias.
- Holding ourselves accountable to the data and to achieving better results and being transparent about our progress.

We pledge to continue learning as much as we can, having meaningful and difficult conversations with our colleagues, advisors and grantees, and sharing what we are learning to benefit the field.

Learn More

[Explore the Rainin IBD research portal](#) to learn more about the Rainin Foundation's research grantees and funding areas, as well as our vision and strategy for solving IBD.