Building Your Research Career: Optimizing Funding & Grant Development

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Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

Agenda

- **Building Your Grant/Research Career: Key Points to Consider**
- **Understand Funding Landscape:**
  - Federal (NIH)
  - Non-federal and Institutional Funding
- **Strategize Your Application: Asses & Optimize Funding Options**
  - Deciphering a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
  - Using NIH Tools & Resources
  - Contacting the Scientific/Program Officers
- **Develop a Competitive Proposal**
  - Mentored (K) vs. Non-mentored (R) Application
  - Best Practices Tips & Guidance
- **Make a Compliant Submission:**
  - Systems and Resources

Building Your Grant Career: Transition to Research Independence

- ***Be persistent, build a grant career track***
- ***Most NIH proposals are not funded at the first try! Resubmit and/or repurpose to maximize your effort! No scientific or budgetary overlaps!***
- Establish a **diverse mentoring team**
- Get **feedback** from your experienced colleagues/collaborators
- Develop/strengthen **grant writing and grantsmanship skills**
- Improve **leadership and project management skills**
- Build connections with the **Scientific/Program Officers**
- **Read** the funding opportunity announcement
- Learn about the **sponsor's review process and scoring criteria**
- Pay attention to **scientific rigor & reproducibility**
- Read **sample awards - funded & unfunded**!
- Acquire **grant review** experiences and participate in **training programs**
- Learn about your **institutional grant administration** & **submission policy**

Funding Types & Resources



Consider Your Needs!

- ✓ **Career stage?**
- ✓ **Career goals?**
- ✓ **Project topic?**
- ✓ **Project type (clinical/basic/translational)?**
- ✓ **Project stage (pilot/established)?**
- ✓ **Project duration?**
- ✓ **Award amount?**
- ✓ **Compliant with your institutional policies?**

NOFO = Notice of Funding Opportunity
RFA = Requests for Applications
RFP = Requests for Proposals

Funding Sources & Points to Note!

- ✓ **Institutional**: MSK-GCRT Pilot Funding
- ✓ **Federal Funding**: *e.g.*, NIH
- ✓ **Private Sponsors**: *e.g.*, Foundations, Associations

Limited Competition: Funding agency accepts only a limited number of nominated application(s) from eligible institutes; Institution nominates candidate(s) by internal review & selection; Only nominated candidates can apply!

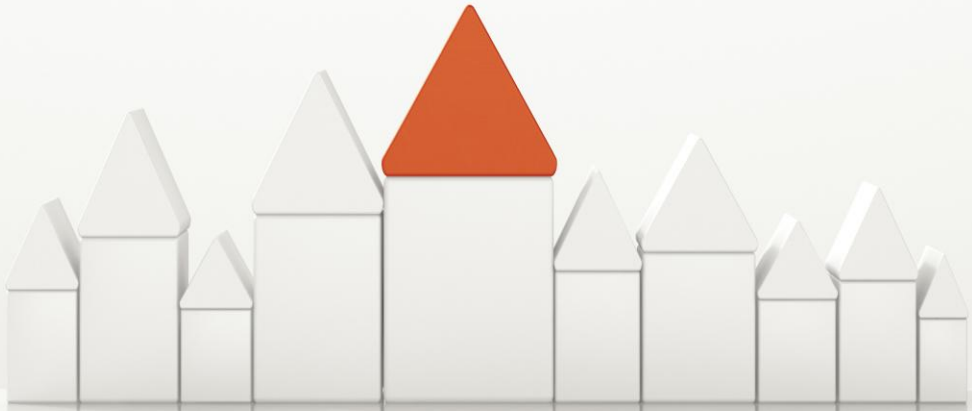
Different funding agencies have different:

- Funding mission and visions
- Eligibility, including citizenship requirement
- Effort requirements
- Application package
- Award amount
- Number of support years
- Submission requirements
- Review criteria and review process/panel



NIH Funding Databases & Subscriptions

- NIH Find Grant Funding | grants.nih.gov – *search with keywords!*
- NCI Funding for Global Cancer Research and Training - Subscribe for email updates from CGH.
- Email Updates and RSS Feeds | Grants & Funding - Subscribe to NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts for weekly notices.
- Highlighted Topics | Grants & Funding - Subscribe | Grants & Funding



Subscribe to Funding Newsletter for NIH Fogarty International Center (FIC) Global Health Researchers

Fogarty Funding
Funding Newsletter
Funding Strategy
Funding Collaborations
NIH Global Health Funding
Non-NIH Funding
Non-NIH Travel Support
Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases (GACD): Multimorbidity Research Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Funding Newsletter for Global Health Researchers

Fogarty's bi-weekly **Funding Newsletter for Global Health Researchers** provides updates about funding opportunities, notices and announcements from Fogarty, NIH and other organizations that may be of interest to those working in the field of global health research.

Subscribe to Fogarty Funding News

Manage your subscription or unsubscribe

Recent Funding Newsletters

- Funding News - Week of June 15, 2026
- Funding News - Week of June 1, 2026
- Funding News - Week of May 18, 2026
- Funding News - Week of May 4, 2026
- Funding News - Week of April 20, 2026
- Funding News - Week of April 6, 2026
- Funding News - Week of March 23, 2026
- Funding News - Week of March 9, 2026
- Funding News - Week of February 23, 2026
- Funding News - Week of February 9, 2026
- Funding News - Week of January 26, 2026
- Funding News - Week of January 12, 2026
- Funding News - Week of December 29, 2025

Other Fogarty and NIH Funding Resources

- All Fogarty Funding Opportunities
- All NIH Funding Opportunities and Notices
- Subscribe: NIH Guide to Grants and Contracts
- NIH Grants and Funding Information Status

Related

- Fogarty Funding Opportunities
- *Global Health Matters* Newsletter

Funding from Other Organizations

- Non-NIH Funding - Grants and Fellowships
- Non-NIH Travel Support

Finding Non-federal Funding: Other Free Resources

- Philanthropy News Digest (PND)-Stay up to date | Email signup | Candid
- Fellowship Finder | Graduate College
- Your institutional resources, newsletters
- Information from MSK-GCRT Program

Non-NIH Funding – Find by Career Stages!



- ✓ *Many non-federal sponsors do NOT have any citizenship or geographic restrictions.*
- ✓ *Some might have special terms & conditions, e.g., in relation to K-awards.*
- ✓ *Read the funding announcement carefully to assess your eligibility.*
- ✓ *Many are targeted for specific diseases or conditions, and applicant's career stage.*

Cancer Research Sponsors with Broad Research Interests

ACS

- **American Cancer Society -** As the nation's largest private, not-for-profit source of funds for scientists studying cancer, the American Cancer Society remains committed to funding basic, translational, clinical, and cancer control research now and in the future. **Register for ACS Grant Writing Workshop on August 7th!**

AACR

- **American Association for Cancer Research -** The AACR gives direct grants for basic, translational, clinical, and population research, targeting innovative science that has the potential to have a major impact in the fight against cancer. **AACR BIG CAT**

ASCO

- **American Society of Clinical Oncology -** Since 1984, their Grants & Awards Program has awarded more than $158 million in funding through over 2,600 grants and awards to medical students, residents, fellows, scientists, and oncologists in 79 countries. **Global Oncology Young Investigator Award | ASCO**

CRI

- **Cancer Research Institute -** CRI has invested hundreds of millions of dollars to support research conducted to understand the immune system and how it can be harnessed to conquer all cancers**. Irvington Postdoctoral Fellowship**

Schlumberger Foundation's Faculty for the Future Program - open for Women Citizens from Developing Countries

Many Private Sponsors Have Targeted Priorities

Check with your institutional grant office to ensure you will be eligible to apply & if the funding agency's terms & conditions are compliant with your organization!

- 2025 Call for AAS Fellowship Nominations | The AAS
- Funding Opportunities / RFPs - Cures Within Reach
- Fellowships - Global Forum on Bioethics in Research (GFBR)
- 2026 call for applications: UNESCO-Equatorial Guinea Fellowship
- Calls 2018 for Applications Open – for Research Collaboration Projects - Danida Fellowship Centre
- Research Grant Programs | IASLC
- Fellowship Grant-Association of Women Surgeons
- Global Health Research Professorships (Cohort 9) | NIHR
- Funding Calls - Africa Research Excellence Fund

NIH Grant Funding System: Useful Resources

- New to NIH | Grants & Funding
  - ✓ Glossary | grants.nih.gov

- Research Training and Career Development | Grants & Funding
  - ✓ Individual Career Development | Grants & Funding
  - ✓ Career Planning for Trainees and Fellows – NCI

- NIH Grants Conference & PreCon Events | Grants & Funding

- **Developing an application:**
  - ✓ Sample Applications and Documents | Grants & Funding
    - ✓ NIA Award Sample Applications | National Institute on Aging
  - ✓ Plan to Apply | Grants & Funding
  - ✓ Write Application | Grants & Funding
  - ✓ Apply for a Grant | NIAID Training & Resources
  - ✓ Grant Writing Webinar Series for Institutions Building Research and Research Training Capacity | NIGMS
  - ✓ Review | Grants & Funding

- **News & Updates - NIH Extramural Nexus (News) | Grants & Funding**
  - ✓ Subscribe for NIH Extramural Nexus **Join or Leave EXTRAMURALNEXUS**

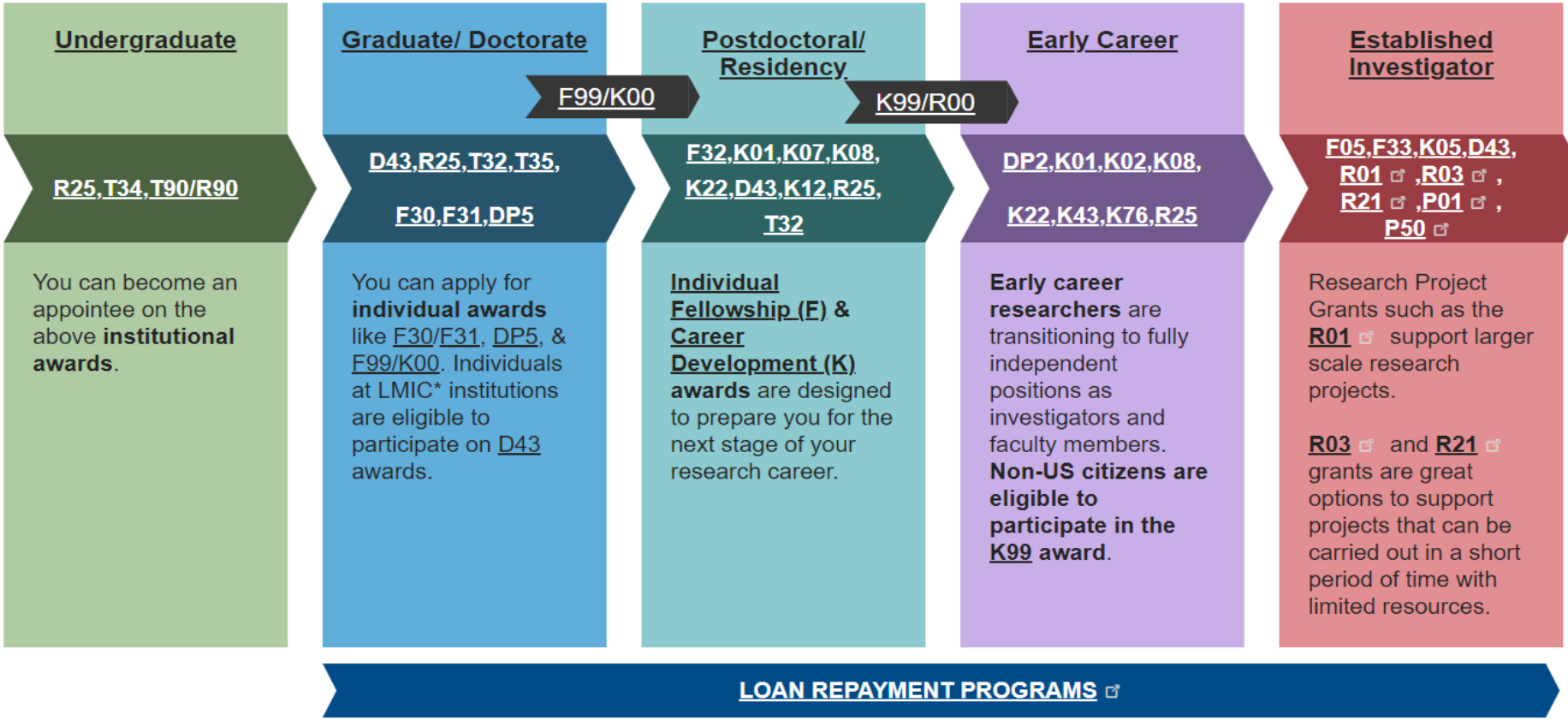
NIH Institutes, Centers and Offices

NIH Institutes and Centers (IC) - *All ICs do not participate in all NIH funding opportunities! Which IC could be a good fit for your proposal?*

NIH has 27 **Institutes/Centers (ICs)** responsible for the award, administration, and monitoring of grant supported activities. Awarding IC designates point of contact for advice and interpretation of grant requirements. Each IC has its specific funding mission – check out **IC specific goals**.



NIH Funding Programs by Career Stage



*LMIC = Low-and-Middle-Income Country

[Research Training and Career Development | Grants & Funding]



Strategize Your Application: Assess & Optimize Funding Options

Assessing NOFO – Active? Due Dates? Resubmission?

A **Notice of Funding Opportunity** (**NOFO**) is a publicly available document by which a Federal agency makes known its intentions to award discretionary grants or cooperative agreements, usually as a result of competition for funds.

Key Dates

Posted Date	October 15, 2024
Open Date (Earliest Submission Date)	November 03, 2024

Application Due Dates			Review and Award Cycles		
New	**Renewal / Resubmission / Revision (as allowed)**	**AIDS - New/Renewal/Resubmission/Revision, as allowed**	**Scientific Merit Review**	**Advisory Council Review**	**Earliest Start Date**
December 03, 2024	December 03, 2024	December 03, 2024	March 2025	May 2025	July 2025
December 03, 2025	December 03, 2025	December 03, 2025	March 2026	May 2026	July 2026
December 03, 2026	December 03, 2026	Not Applicable	March 2027	May 2027	July 2027

All applications are due by 5:00 PM local time of applicant organization.

Applications are encouraged to apply early to allow adequate time to make any corrections to errors found in the application during the submission process by the due date.

Expiration Date	December 04, 2026

Select the Correct NOFO!

This NOFO does not allow clinical trials!

Funding Opportunity Title	Emerging Global Leader Award (K43 Independent Clinical Trial Not Allowed)
Activity Code	K43 International Research Career Development Award
Announcement Type	Reissue of PAR-21-252
Related Notices	See Notices of Special Interest associated with this funding opportunity • **January 28, 2026** - NIH Removing AIDS Application Due Dates from NOFOs. See Notice NOT-OD-26-029. • **November 24, 2025** - Notice of Rescheduled NIDCR Pre-Application and Technical Assistance Webinars on Applying for Fellowship (F) Awards and Career Development (K) Awards. See Notice NOT-DE-26-013. • **September 25, 2025** - Notice of NIDCR Pre-Application and Technical Assistance Webinars on Applying for Fellowship (F) Awards and Career Development (K) Awards. See Notice NOT-DE-26-012. • **March 31, 2025** - This funding opportunity was updated to align with agency priorities. Carefully reread the full funding opportunity and make any needed adjustments to your application prior to submission. • **April 4, 2024** - Overview of Grant Application and Review Changes for Due Dates on or after January 25, 2025. See Notice NOT-OD-24-084. • **August 31, 2022**- Implementation Changes for Genomic Data Sharing Plans Included with Applications Due on or after January 25, 2023. See Notice NOT-OD-22-198. • **August 5, 2022**- Implementation Details for the NIH Data Management and Sharing Policy. See Notice NOT-OD-22-189.
Funding Opportunity Number (FON)	PAR-24-296

Assessing NOFO -Targeted IC? Clinical Trial?

All ICs do not participate in all NOFOs. Assess which IC(s) could be good fit for your project. *Your project can be co-funded by two ICs!*

Components of Participating Organizations

Fogarty International Center (FIC)

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)

National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI)

National Institute on Aging (NIA)

National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD)

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)

National Cancer Institute (NCI)

All applications to this funding opportunity announcement should fall within the mission of the Institutes/Centers. The following NIH Offices may co-fund applications assigned to those Institutes/Centers.

Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH)

Funding Opportunity Title

Emerging Global Leader Award (K43 Independent Clinical Trial Required)

Activity Code

K43 International Research Career Development Award

This NOFO is only open to projects that include clinical trial!

Announcement Type

Reissue of PAR-21-251

Related Notices

See Notices of Special Interest associated with this funding opportunity

- **April 06, 2026** - Implementation of Changes for Basic Experimental Studies with Humans. See Notice NOT-OD-26-067.
- **January 28, 2026** - NIH Removing AIDS Application Due Dates from NOFOs. See Notice NOT-OD-26-029
- **March 31, 2025** - This funding opportunity was updated to align with agency priorities. Carefully reread the full funding opportunity and make any needed adjustments to your application prior to submission.
- **April 4, 2024** - Overview of Grant Application and Review Changes for Due Dates on or after January 25, 2025. See Notice NOT-OD-24-084.
- **August 31, 2022**- Implementation Changes for Genomic Data Sharing Plans Included with Applications Due on or after January 25, 2023. See Notice NOT-OD-22-198.
- **August 5, 2022**- Implementation Details for the NIH Data Management and Sharing Policy. See Notice NOT-OD-22-189.

Funding Opportunity Number (FON)

PAR-24-295

Human Subjects & Clinical Trials: DidYou Select the Correct NOFO?

- **Types of NIH Projects:**

- NIH categorizes all projects into three types:
  - **Non-human subjects**
  - **Human subject non-clinical trial**
  - **NIH-defined clinical trial**

- **Determine** Human Subject Involvement via this Biospecimens Flowchart
- **Find Out**: DoesYour Human Subjects Research Study Meet the NIH Definition of a Clinical Trial?

NIH Definition of Clinical Trials:



Read the NOFO : Understand Priorities, Requirements & Assess Your Chances!

Get ready to reach out to the Scientific/Research Contact(s)!

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Section III. Eligibility Information

Foreign Organizations/International Collaborations

Non-domestic (non-U.S.) Entities (Foreign Organizations) **are** eligible to apply.

Non-domestic (non-U.S.) components of U.S. Organizations **are** eligible to apply.

Foreign components, as defined in the NIH Grants Policy Statement, **are** allowed.

Section VII. Agency Contacts

Application Submission Contacts

eRA Service Desk (Questions regarding ASSIST, eRA Commons, application errors and wa issues)

Finding Help Online: https://www.era.nih.gov/need-help (preferred method of contact)
Telephone: 301-402-7469 or 866-504-9552 (Toll Free)

General Grants Information (Questions regarding application processes and NIH grant resc
Email: GrantsInfo@nih.gov (preferred method of contact)
Telephone: 301-480-7075

Grants.gov Customer Support (Questions regarding Grants.gov registration and Workspace
Contact Center Telephone: 800-518-4726
Email: support@grants.gov

Scientific/Research Contact(s)

Pre-application questions should be directed to the FIC Scientific/Research Contact

Christine Jessup, PhD
Fogarty International Center (FIC)
Telephone: 301-496-1653
Email: Christine.Jessup@nih.gov

Xenia Tigno, Ph.D., M.S. (Epi)
ORWH - Office of Research on Women's Health
Phone: 301.480.1145
E-mail: xenia.tigno@nih.gov

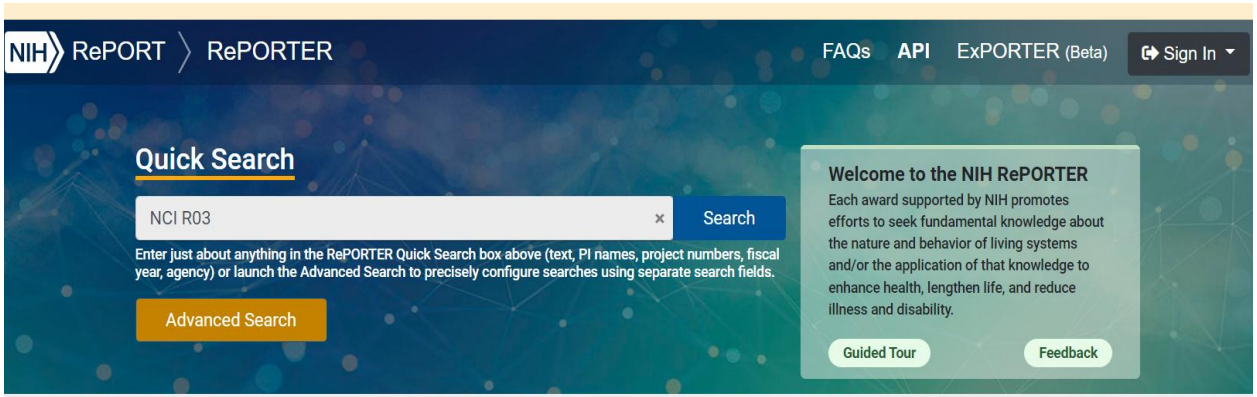
Stacey Chambers
NINDS - NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS AND STROKE
Phone: 301-496-0690
E-mail: sc395c@nih.gov

Shoba Thirumangalathu, PhD
NIDCR - NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF DENTAL & CRANIOFACIAL RESEARCH
Phone: (301) 594-0652
E-mail: shoba.thirumangalathu@nih.gov

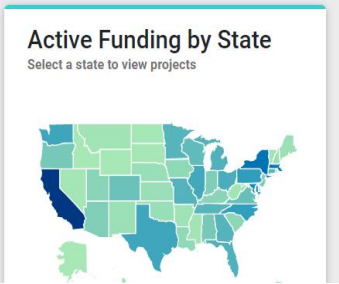
Sudha Sivaram, DrPH, MPH
National Cancer Institute (NCI)
Telephone: 240-276-5804
Email: sudha.sivaram@nih.gov

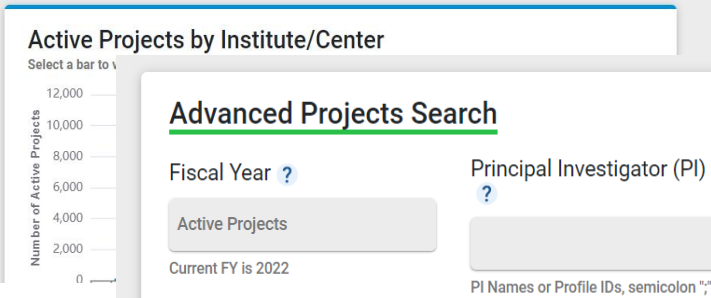
Fatou Jallow, PhD
National Cancer Institute (NCI)
Telephone: 240-620-0808
Email: Fatou.jallow@nih.gov

NIH Reporter: Tool to Find Funded Awards



NIH RePORTER

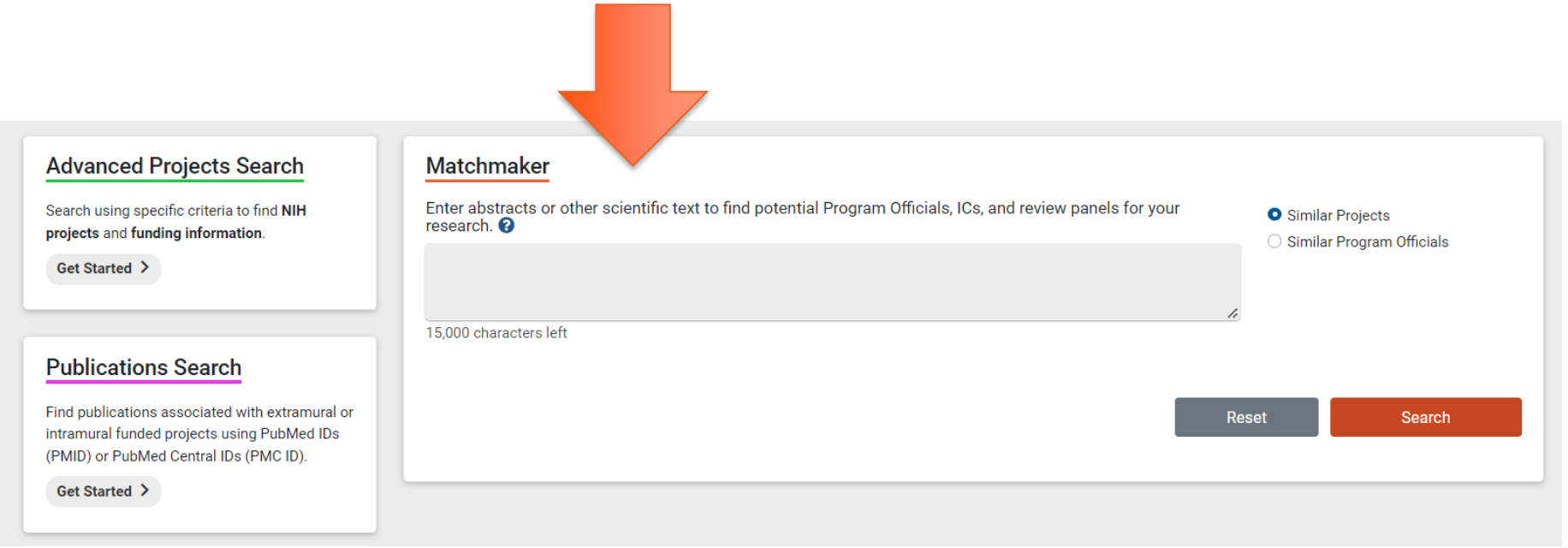






NIH Matchmaker:
Tool to Find Funded Awards Related to Your Topic

Enter your abstract or specific aims into **Matchmaker** to find similar projects and potential **Program Officials (POs/Scientific or Research Contacts), I/Cs, and review panels** for your research.



- ✓ Let NIH Matchmaker find your 'perfect match' - Penn State Health News
- ✓ guide-to-using-nih-matchmaker-tool.pdf

NIH Tools: Use ART to Find a Suitable Study Section!

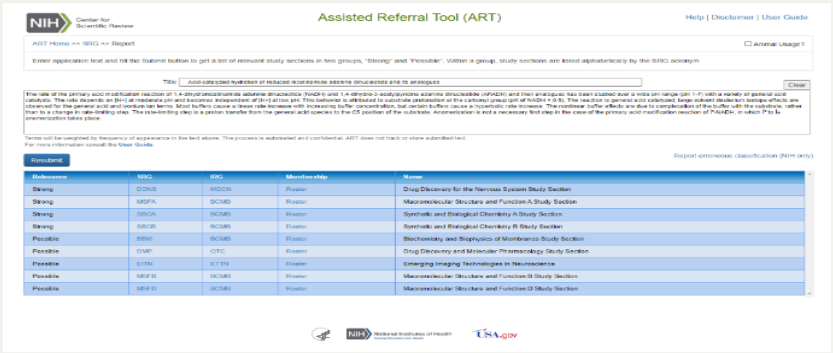
- ✓ NIH encourages you to submit an **Assignment Request Form** with your application.
- ✓ Try the **Assisted Referral Tool** to suggest review panels based on Specific Aims.

Assisted Referral Tool (ART)



The Assisted Referral Tool (ART) was developed by the NIH Center for Scientific Review (CSR) to recommend potentially appropriate study section. The information you provide ART is only used to recommend study sections and is not stored or persisted. The recommendations made by ART are solely for the benefit of the user.

Assisted Referral Tool



About ART: ART User Guide

Recent updates: Data refresh-Feb 2021

- Full list of Study Sections in this release of ART

Regular Standing Study Sections | NIH Center for Scientific Review

How to Build Connections with NIH Scientific/Research Contacts or Program Officials (POs)

POs are Scientific Contacts:

Understand NIH Staff Roles

- Write funding opportunity announcements
- Verify that your idea/aims fit(s) within the mission and priorities of an NIH IC
- Discuss whether your research is considered a clinical trial
- Attend scientific review meetings & deeply understand the topics
- Make funding recommendations
- Provide scientific guidance to investigators pre- and post-award
- Monitor the programmatic, scientific, and/or technical aspects of awards
- Work in partnership with grants management staff on post-award admin, including review of progress reports

Making first impression: Do your homework prior to reaching out! Reach out to them at the planning stage.

Where to find the PO contact?

- ✓ **Each NOFO contains the IC-specific contacts of the corresponding PO(s). Refer to section VII of the NOFO for Scientific/Research Contact(s).**
- ✓ **While applying, you can select suitable IC based on the PO feedback/enthusiasm.**

POs Can Be Lifelong Champions for Your Career Development!

Find NIH Tips for Reaching Out to the POs!

- Try to **cultivate** a career-long, reciprocal relationship with the NIH POs.
- You can contact **multiple POs** via single email.
- Make sure to convey that you did your **background work** before contacting.
- **Email** should include:
  - Biosketch and well-defined Specific Aims as attachments
  - Project title & brief description
  - Competitive advantage of your project
  - Summary Statement (if resubmission)
  - Specific scientific or strategic questions, as for example,
    - R or K? Aims too narrow or diffuse?
    - Feedback on your suggested Study Section choice?
    - Choice of mentor(s) and/or co-mentor(s)?
    - Resubmit or start fresh? Do your revisions work?

Request for a brief virtual meeting to discuss questions & feedback!

Deciphering NIH Career Development (K) & Research (R) Awards



Utilize NIH New Early-Stage Investigators (ESIs) Benefits When You Apply for Independent Research Grant (R01/equivalent)

- **New Investigator:** Has not previously competed successfully for a substantial research grant from NIH; NIH funds New Investigators according to the ICs' programmatic and strategic interests.

- **Early-Stage Investigator (ESI):** New Investigator who has completed their terminal research degree or end of post-graduate clinical training, whichever date is later, within the past **10 years**; ESI status is determined automatically by eRA Commons functionality.

R01-equivalent ESI applications with meritorious scores will be prioritized for funding by the recipient IC.

- **Apply within ESI timeframe.**
- **Check ESI targeted NOFOs.**

Check ESI Status Infographic

Points to Note:

- ✓ **Find NIH grants that retain ESI status.**
- ✓ **Find if you are eligible for ESI extension & how to request an extension.**
- ✓ **Find ESI FAQ**
- ✓ **Determine ESI Status & learn about multi-PI and multi-project applications.**

- ✓ **Discuss with the NOFO Program Official (PO)** for ESI eligibility and extension for your application.
- ✓ **Resubmission:** If you have ESI on an A0 and then your ESI status expires, your A1 will still be reviewed as ESI application if you submit the A1 within 13 months of the original A0.

Mentored/Training Awards vs. Research Grants

Career Development Awards (CDAs)



<u>For mentored applications</u>, the candidate sections/mentoring/training components are as important as the scientific sections.

Research/Non-mentored Awards

R01 Expectations:

- Strong preliminary data
- Compelling hypothesis
- Innovative science
- Applicant track record & expertise

What Reviewers' Look for:

- Should this work be performed?
- Will the work be completed within the proposed time & budget?
- Does the PI have required skills & experiences to achieve proposed aims?

ESI Tips:

- Apply within the ESI eligibility/extension period!
- Consider resubmission timeline!

NIH K43 Emerging Global Leader Award: Key Points

Read the NOFO and check the FAQ:

- **Different NIH ICs have different eligibility guidelines & requirements for application. Follow your selected IC-specific instructions shared at the NOFO.**
- **"Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the FIC Scientific/Research contact prior to preparing an application to discuss their eligibility."**
- Only LMIC citizens (from eligible LMIC institutions) are eligible.
- Applicant must also hold an **academic junior faculty position or research scientist appointment** at the LMIC applicant institution and must have been in this position for at least one year at the time of applying.
- A candidate **cannot submit two Ks** simultaneously.
- The **proposed topic** should be relevant to the priority health needs of the LMIC as well as the funding mission of the selected IC as described at the NOFO.
- Before submitting the application, the candidate must identify a **primary LMIC mentor** based at the applicant LMIC institution and a **primary U.S. mentor** based at a collaborating U.S. institution who, together, will supervise the proposed career development and research experience.
- Candidates are required to **commit a minimum of 75% of full-time professional effort** to their career development and research training.

Mentored Ks: Purpose & Relevance

Purpose - To help promising postdocs and/or early-stage faculty to achieve research independence via:

- ✓ Training and mentoring support
- ✓ Protected time for clinicians/researchers
- ✓ 3 – 5 years of salary, research & other program related support

Expectations:

- ✓ Applications should propose targeted activities and research projects that will propel awardees to become **competitive principal investigators for new research project grant (e.g., R01) funding.**

Impact:

- ✓ Enhanced capabilities & experiences in advanced research methodology, analysis and data management, grants managements, responsible conduct of research, scientific presentation, and manuscript and grant writing, and leadership
- ✓ Strengthening your grant track record
- ✓ Higher chances of getting R01/equivalent awards
- ✓ Negotiation for independent position

Search Current and Recent K43 Awards - Fogarty International Center

NOTE:

- ➢ **Some NIH R21, R03 and Non-NIH CDAs might have conflicting terms & conditions with NIH Ks.**
- ➢ **Learn about the terms & conditions before applying!**

How to get a K award: It's not just about the science - PMC (nih.gov)

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

NIH Small RPGs: R03 and R21 (Retain N/ESI Status)

✓ **Retain ESI status**
✓ **Read NOFOs for Specific Instructions**
✓ **K-applicants & awardees must check eligibility guidelines**

R03

- Pilot or feasibility studies
- Surveys
- Descriptive studies
- Secondary analysis of existing data
- Small, self-contained research projects
- Up to two years, non-renewable
- $50K direct cost/year

R21

- Novel scientific ideas, model systems, tools, agents, targets, and technologies that have the potential to substantially advance biomedical research
- High risk high gain projects
- Up to two years, non-renewable
- $275,000K direct cost/year

Read Comparative Overview of R01, R21 and R03

Develop a Competitive Application



Assess Eligibility, Deliverability & Fundability

- **Read the Funding Opportunity Announcement to understand the sponsor's funding mission, vision & requirements.**
- **Assess if the funding mechanism aligns with your project aims AND career goals.**
- **Check funded & unfunded applications (with Summary Statement in case of NIH). Utilize resources at the funding agency's webpage(s).**

  - ✓ **Eligibility:**
    - ✓ What factors you need to consider?
  - ✓ **Deliverability:**
    - ✓ Are you compliant with the minimal effort percentage requirements?
    - ✓ Are your aims achievable & deliverable within the proposed timeline and budget?
  - ✓ **Fundability:**
    - ✓ What are your chances of getting funded?
    - ✓ What types of projects are funded by the sponsor?
    - ✓ How much time you need to develop a strong proposal (*e.g.*, preliminary data needed)?

Some Best Practice Tips…

- ✓ **Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes**
  - Define **specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, & timebound (SMART)** out comes.
  - Connect each goal to the funder's objectives.
  - **Align your aims with the funder's priorities.**
- ✓ **Use clear, concise, and engaging language**; avoid jargon. Use high impact **key words**.
- ✓ **Adhere strictly to guidelines**: deadlines, page limits, document formatting.
- ✓ **Base arguments on evidence**: data, case studies, and measurable outcomes.
- ✓ **Avoid over ambitious project! Reviewers value realistic and achievable goals.**
  - Your aims must be feasible & achievable within the award period.
  - Your budget must be reasonable and consistent with your aims & approach.
- ✓ **Avoid** scientific and budgetary overlaps (effort overlap) between two awards.

Pay Attention to the Sponsor's Requirements

Make a coherent & convincing story as planned with your mentor(s) and follow sponsor guidelines!

Tell Your Story! It's all about You!

- ***Who are you:*** Bio-sketch/Track Record
- ***Where do you work:*** Facilities & Resources, Institutional Support/Commitment
- ***Who is in your network:*** Mentors, Advisors, Collaborators – Statements & Reference Letters
- ***What is the background of the study:*** Scientific Premise & Preliminary Data
- ***What are the project goals/objectives:*** Specific Aims
- ***How will you achieve that:*** Research Strategy, Rigor, Reproducibility & Transparency
- ***What are your training & career development plans (Candidate Section):*** Background, Career Goals, Commitment, Training Activities, Mentorship
- ***How much money will you need:*** Budget – Allowable, Allocable, Reasonable, Consistent
- ***Will you use human subjects or animals:*** Compliance, IRB, IACUC

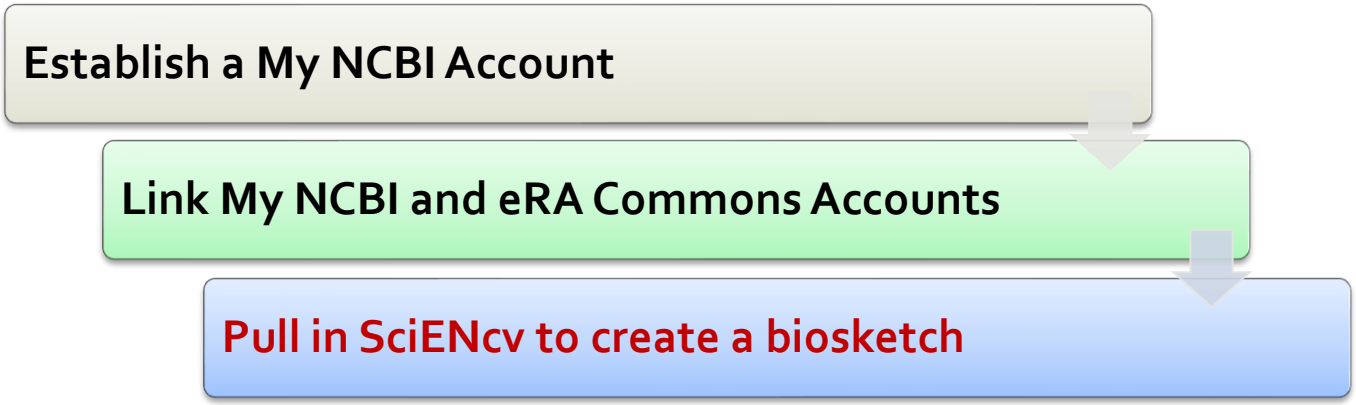
***Follow NOFO-instructions on the page limits & formatting.**

***Check if the sponsor has any instructions about the use of Large Language Models and Generative AI in proposals writing & peer review.**

Create Compliant NIH Biosketch: Use MyNCBI & SciENcv

NIH Biosketch Format Pages, Instructions and Samples: Applicants must use the Common Forms for Biographical Sketch, NIH Biographical Sketch Supplement, and Current and Pending (Other) Support.

MyNCBI: An online system integrated with PubMed to track literature searches, collections of citations, and public access compliance.
Science Experts Network Curriculum Vitae **(SciENcv)** is an electronic tool that helps researchers create and maintain biosketches that are submitted with grant applications and annual reports. It eliminates the need to repeatedly enter biosketch information.



Tutorials: SciENcv Tutorial; Biosketch Creation Tutorial; Creating a NIH Biosketch and Other Support with SciENcv; NLM: SciENcv Tutorial

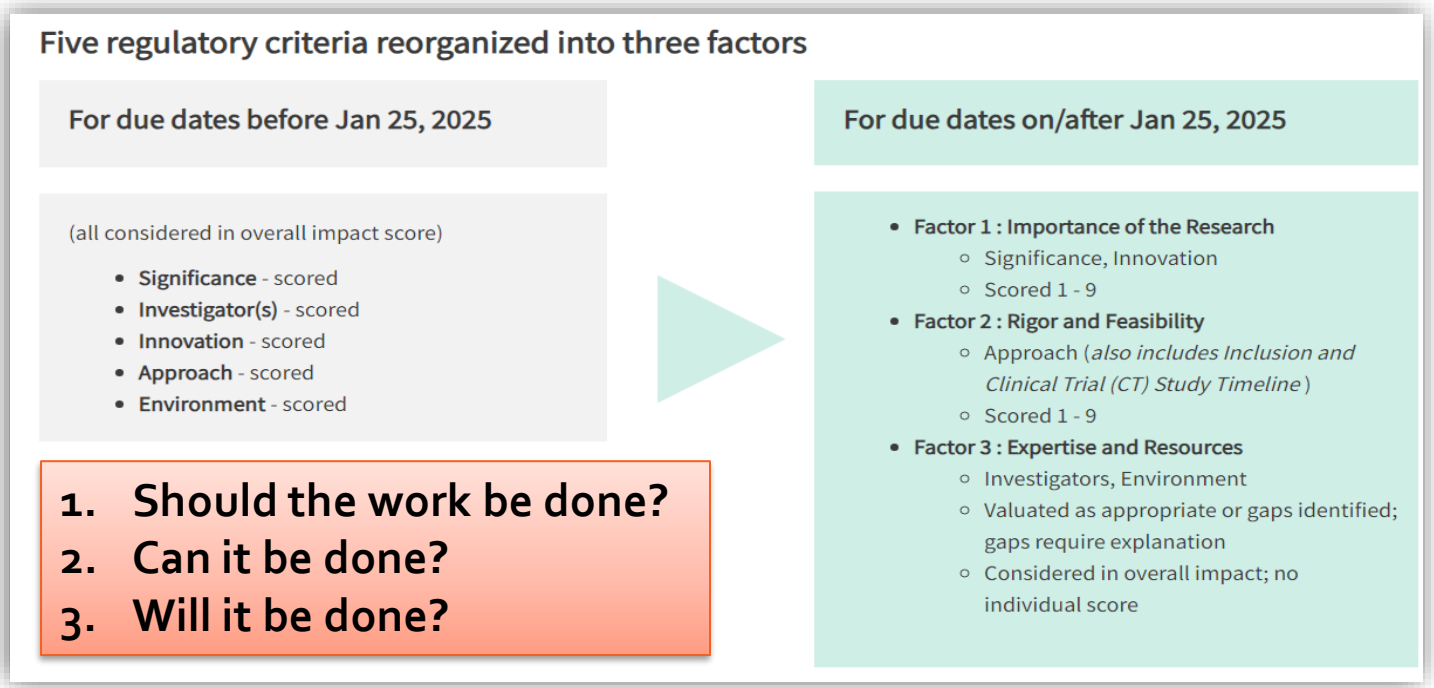
Strategize Specific Aims

This 1-page document is the central part of your grant - it is the abbreviated version of your entire grant.

- ✓ Identify the **critical knowledge gap & a central hypothesis**.
- ✓ Solve a **specific problem** & address a **critical barrier** to progress in the field**. What's new?** *e.g.*, challenge an existing paradigm or develop new technology
- ✓ Sell your **Competitive Advantage – why do you stand out? As a candidate? Access to any unique resources? Special collaboration?**
- ✓ Design **independent & deterministic** Aims and make sure that each **tee up** a journal article.
- ✓ Subsection your Aims (ex. **Aim 1** / **Method** / **Deliverable** / **Impact**).
- ✓ Make sure they are **deliverable** within **proposed timeline and budget**.
- ✓ Don't confuse Aims with Methods - Aims **test** your hypothesis / Methods are **how** you will accomplish the Aim.
- ✓ Close on **Significance**. Summarize the expected **outcome(s)** and **impact**.
- ✓ Use **simple and precise language,** avoid too many **scientific jargons**.

Learn about the Sponsor's Review Criteria

Link: NIH Simplified Review Framework (effective from 1/25/2025)



- ✓ Know your audience!
- ✓ Learn about the review process and scoring criteria at your selected NOFO/RFA.
- ✓ Highlight important verbiage.
- ✓ Use formatting, graphics - guide your reviewers' attention to land at places you want. Make it easy for reviewers' eyes.
- ✓ Use clear & precise language.
- ✓ Private funding agencies' review panels may include non-scientific members, e.g. survivors, caregivers, community advocates *etc*.

Mentor Selection for CDAs

Select Your Primary Mentors and Co-mentor(s) carefully! Does your mentors have:

- ✓ Expertise in relevant field(s) where you need mentoring/training for independence?
- ✓ Commitment and availability - bandwidth to mentor?
- ✓ Strong publication record?
- ✓ Well-funded and with federal (NIH) funding experience?
- ✓ Mentoring track record (preferably experience in K-mentoring)?
- ✓ Any publication with you?
- ✓ Experience in basic/translational research (if you're are a clinician proposing for basic/translational study)?
- ✓ Experience in clinical trial (if you are proposing a clinical trial project)

Learn about Team Roles and Agreements | NIH: NIAID

Try to form a diverse and complementary mentoring team who can provide expert advice & mentoring support in all aspects of your K-proposal.

Pay attention to the NOFO guidelines for mentor(s), co-mentor(s)!

Read the NOFO sections under:

- ✓ **Application & Submission Information**
- ✓ **Review criteria**

Mentor Selection: Unique Factors for NIH K43

- ✓ Before submitting the application, the candidate must identify a primary mentor based at the applicant LMIC institution and a primary mentor based at a collaborating U.S. institution who, **together**, will supervise the proposed career development and research experience.
- ✓ The LMIC primary mentor must hold a primary appointment at the LMIC applicant institution and should not be a U.S. citizen who holds a joint appointment at the LMIC institution.
- ✓ The institutional affiliations of the mentors should be clear from the biosketches, mentor support letters, and institutional letters.
- ✓ These primary mentors should be active researchers in the proposed research and be committed both to the career development of the candidate and to the direct supervision of the candidate's research.
- ✓ Additional mentors can be from other LMIC or high-income countries. The candidate must work with all mentors (primary and co-mentors) in preparing the application.
- ✓ The mentor(s) or mentoring team must demonstrate appropriate expertise, experience, and ability to guide the applicant in the organization, management and implementation of the proposed research and clinical trial.

Develop a Strong Mentoring & Training Plan

Are your project goals aligned with your training goals?

Identify areas where you will need training for developing your scientific and technical skills and clarify via schematics!

- ✓ Didactic training (short/long courses, seminars/conferences, technical training)
- ✓ Hands-on training (in-lab experience)
- ✓ Leadership skills (lab-management, mentoring skills, career development activities)
- ✓ Writing and presenting (conference presentations, publications, grant-writing)

- ➢ Which mentor(s) or advisor(s) will guide with each area?
- ➢ What resources are available (*e.g.*, training, courses, core facilities)?
- ✓ Include timeline, meeting schedule with mentor(s), evaluation

Strategize Candidate Section: *Tell Your Story, Be Memorable!*

- ***Read instructions and review criteria for "Candidate Section" at the NOFO.***
  - Many K43 application components are similar to other K-awards.
  - Check K43 NOFO for special instructions!

- **Use schematics/charts/tables to enhance the proposal impact!**

A. Candidate's Background:

- ✓ Your commitment to a research career in global health in the LMIC setting
- ✓ Justification for the need for an additional mentored research experience to achieve impendence
- ✓ How your prior training relates to the K43 objectives and your long-term career plans

B. Candidate's Goals & Objectives:

- Demonstrate if you have received training or will participate in courses such as: data management, epidemiology, study design (including statistics), drug development, etc., as well as the legal and ethical issues associated with research on human subjects and clinical trials.
- Address both scientific and non-scientific training for professional development.
- Describe long term and short-term goals across timeline, maybe in schematics!
- Confirm on commitment to effort percentage on training and research plan!

C. Candidate's Plan for Career Development/ Training Activities During Award Period:

- Candidate and mentor are jointly responsible for developing this systematic & detailed section!
- Add schematics on timeline for training, research, teaching and service!
- Table on advisory committee expertise and roles followed by each member's role!
- Master/Summary tables tying aims with all types of training objectives & roles of advisory committee!
- Show a logical progression to your research independence.

Avoid Common Mistakes or Weaknesses

- **Is your project distinct from your mentor's project?**
  - How the current work will be the foundation for your future grants?
- **Did you highlight the competitive advantage?**
  - What is unique? What motivated you to be in the line of research?
- **Are your Aims & Strategy consistent with the proposed timeline and budget?**
  - Poor Research Plan indicates poor Mentoring Plan!
- **Did you provide clear visuals on milestones for completing each aspect of your training plan?**
  - Your training plan must align with your project goals.
- **Mentors' Plans/Statements and the Letters of Support from Collaborators and/or Consultants:**
  - Detailed enough?
  - Consistent with the rest of your application sections?
  - On time?

Understand Team Roles and Agreements on an NIH Award

Make a Compliant Submission: Systems and Resources



What is the eRA Commons?

eRA Commons is an online interface used to manage and share grants administration information with the NIH.

- **Manage personal profile**
- **Update contact information**
- **View summary statements**
- **Track the status of grant applications**
- **View the notice of award (NoA)**
- **Submission of Just-in-Time documents (JIT)**
- **Submission of annual progress report (RPPR)**
- **Submission of final close out reports**

All investigators must have an **eRA commons user ID** in order to be key personnel on an NIH supported application.

Contact your institute's grant administration team in advance to receive instructions and approval for submission to federal or non-federal agencies.



New to eRA Commons?
eRA Training - eRA Commons Tutorials

Summary

- ✓**Start early**! At least 6 – 8 months in advance!
- ✓**For R01/equivalent application, check on your ESI status/**extension.
- ✓**Consider resubmission timeline**, if applicable.
- ✓**Design a strategy**
  - –**Contact NIH POs** at the planning stage!
  - –**Identify** your mentor(s) and if applicable, co-mentor(s)!
  - –**Discuss** the training and research plan with the mentors!
  - –Avoid **over ambitious** project!
- ✓Make sure your research plan and **budget** are consistent and aligned.
- ✓Budget must be allowable, allocable, reasonable and consistent.
- ✓**Make error-free submission:**
  - ✓**Acquire institutional approval (if needed) prior to submission.**
  - ✓**Submit well ahead of the sponsor due date and time.**

Additional Resources: Training & Writing

- **Cancer Training at NCI**
  - Events and Trainings - NCI
  - NCI Rising Scholars: Cancer Research Seminar Series
- **NCI Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities (CRCHD)**
- **Understanding Research Career Development (K) Award Specifics**
  - Read Application Advice for K-Awards | NIAID
- **SBIR Application Process & Resources - NCI (cancer.gov)**
  - SBIR Peer Learning & Networking Webinars - NCI (cancer.gov)
- **Specific Aims:**
  - How to draft a specific aims page
  - The Anatomy of a Specific Aims Page (biosciencewriters.com)
- **Application Resources - ASCO**
- **Thirty-two steps for getting your R01: advice to early career investigators**

Find NIH Samples: Applications, Attachments, & Other Documents

NIH Recent Notices & Policy Updates

- **NOT-OD-26-018:** NIHs Implementation of Common Forms for Biographical Sketch and Current and Pending (Other) Support for Due Dates on or after January 25, 2026
- **Reference Letters | Grants & Funding** - Instructions for Career Development Applicant Referees (DOCX, 17 KB) - Updated November 2024
- **NOT-OD-25-132: Supporting Fairness and Originality in NIH Research Applications** - NIH will not consider applications that are either substantially developed by AI, or contain sections substantially developed by AI, to be original ideas of applicants. **NIH will only accept six new, renewal, resubmission, or revision applications from a PI or MPI for all council rounds in a calendar year.**
- **NOT-OD-25-127: Implementation Update**: Terminating or Suspending Dangerous Gain-of-Function Research in Accordance with the Executive Order on Improving the Safety and Security of Biological Research
- **New NIH Public Access Pages to Support the 2024 NIH Public Access Policy | Grants & Funding** - The NIH Public Access Policy is in effect and manuscripts accepted for publication in a journal on or after July 1, 2025, must be submitted to PubMed Central for public availability without embargo upon the official date of publication. NIH launched a series of new and revised Public Access Policy pages to support the policy.

Questions & Contacts

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Thank You!