

NIH RESEARCH FUNDING FOR EARLY CAREER INVESTIGATORS*

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Abstract

This presentation introduces the reader to the things to consider when finding funding and was presented by Judith Greenberg (NIH).

1 Overview

- Applying for an NIH grant: The basics
- Special programs for early-career investigators
- Resources

2 Applying for an NIH grant: The Basics

- Start with a great idea!
 - Is it novel?
 - Does it address an important problem?
 - Will scientific knowledge be advanced? Will it move the field forward?
- Be realistic, not overly ambitious
- Write a focused, clear, understandable application; link hypotheses and approaches to specific aims - Presentation is important
- Discuss rationale, potential obstacles, alternative approaches
- Propose alternative interpretations; don't appear too wedded to your hypothesis
- Don't assume reviewers know as much as you do about your project
- Get advice from mentors; ask colleagues (outside your immediate research area) to read drafts
- Learn as much as you can about the grants process
- Look at study section descriptions and rosters <http://cms.csr.nih.gov/1> - you may request assignment
- Find out whom to contact for information and when – program officer, grants management officer, scientific review officer
- If you don't get funded on the first try, don't give up! Pay attention to critiques, and revise and resubmit

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¹<http://cms.csr.nih.gov/>

3 What is a new investigator?

- Never had an R01 or equivalent grant from NIH
- For some programs, must be within 10 years of latest degree

4 Special programs for early-career scientists

- Kirschstein-NRSA Individual Fellowships (F32)
- Career Development Awards (K)
- NIH Director's New Innovator Award (DP2)
- NIH Research Supplements to Promote Diversity

4.1 Kirschstein-NRSA Individual Fellowships (F32)

- Individual postdoctoral research training support
- Must be US citizen, non-citizen national, or US permanent resident at time of award
- Provides stipend and institutional allowance for up to 3 years
- Research supervised by faculty mentor

URL: http://grants1.nih.gov/training/F_files_nrsa.htm²

4.2 Selected Career Development Awards (K)

- To provide support and “protected time” (3-5 years) for an intensive, supervised career development experience in the biomedical, behavioral, or clinical sciences leading to research independence
- To provide support for newly independent scientists who can demonstrate the need for a period of intensive research focus as a means of enhancing their research careers
- To provide support and “protected time” to individuals with a clinical doctoral degree for an intensive, supervised research career development experience in the fields of biomedical and behavioral research, including translational research
- To attract to NIH-relevant research those investigators whose quantitative science and engineering research has thus far not been focused primarily on questions of health and disease
- To provide an opportunity for promising postdoctoral scientists to receive both mentored and independent research support from the same award

URL: <http://grants.nih.gov/training/careerdevelopmentawards.htm>³

4.2.1 Pathway to Independence Award (K99/R00)

- Designed to facilitate a timely transition from a mentored postdoctoral research position to a stable independent research position at an earlier stage than the norm
- Up to 5 years of support consisting of 2 phases
- Phase I provides 1-2 years of mentored support for highly promising, postdoctoral research scientists
- Phase II provides up to 3 years of independent support contingent on securing an independent research position

URL: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/new_investigators/pathway_independence.htm

²http://grants1.nih.gov/training/F_files_nrsa.htm

³<http://grants.nih.gov/training/careerdevelopmentawards.htm>

4.3 NIH Director's New Innovator Award (DP2)

- To stimulate highly innovative research
- To support promising new investigators
- One application receipt period per year
- 10-page application
- Awards provide up to \$1.5 million in direct costs for 5 year project period

URL: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/new_investigators/innovator_award/index.htm⁴

4.4 NIH Research Supplements to Promote Diversity

- For individuals from under-represented groups or disadvantaged background
- Provides supplements to R01 and other grant mechanisms to support individuals at various career stages from high school through investigator

URL: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-08-190.html>⁵

5 But remember...

The R01 is still the major source of support for early-career investigators and is the “gold-standard.”

6 Some good news for new investigators

- NIH has set a target for the number of awards to new investigators
- NIH Enhancing Peer Review Report (2008) also recommends
 - Establishing an Early Stage Investigator (ESI) designation
 - Clustering the reviews of ESI applications

7 Web resources – Read and ask questions

- <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/oer.htm>⁶ – contains many documents explaining grant processes, mechanisms, special programs, tips for writing applications
- http://grants.nih.gov/grants/new_investigators/index.htm⁷
- <http://crisp.cit.nih.gov>⁸ - lets you search abstracts of funded grants
- <http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/guide/index.html>⁹ – announces special programs and initiatives
- <http://cms.csr.nih.gov/ResourcesforApplicants/PolicyProcedureReview+Guidelines/Guidelines+for+Review+of+Specific+Applications/> - lets you see what reviewers are looking for (note links for review of applications from new investigators and for specific grant mechanisms)

⁴http://grants.nih.gov/grants/new_investigators/innovator_award/index.htm

⁵<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-08-190.html>

⁶<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/oer.htm>

⁷http://grants.nih.gov/grants/new_investigators/index.htm

⁸<http://crisp.cit.nih.gov/>

⁹<http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/guide/index.html>

¹⁰<http://cms.csr.nih.gov/ResourcesforApplicants/PolicyProcedureReview+Guidelines/Guidelines+for+Review+of+Specific+Applications/>

8 And don't forget...

- Contact NIH program officers – identify from NIH home page <http://www.nih.gov/>¹¹
- Talk to your institution's sponsored research office
- Consult your former advisers and current senior colleagues

¹¹<http://www.nih.gov/>