

National Institutes of Health (NIH) Career Development Awards (K series)

The overall goal of the NIH Research Career Development program is to help ensure that a diverse pool of highly trained scientists is available in appropriate scientific disciplines to address the Nation's biomedical, behavioral, and clinical research needs. In addition to this opportunity, NIH Institutes and Centers (ICs) support a variety of other mentored career development programs designed to foster the transition of new investigators to research independence.

Career Development Awards provide support for senior postdoctoral fellows or faculty-level candidates. These awards are designed to promote the career development of specific groups of individuals based on their past training and career stage. The objective is to bring individuals to the point where they are able to conduct their research independently and are competitive for major grant support. Carefully review funding opportunity announcements (FOAs) to determine which ICs will participate and to review eligibility criteria.

| Award | Description of Award |
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| K01 | <p>Mentored Research Scientist Development Award</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support and provide 3-5 years of “protected time” for intensive research career development under the guidance of an experienced mentor or sponsor in the biomedical, behavioral, or clinical sciences, leading to research independence. ○ Expectation is that through this sustained period of research career development and training, awardees will launch independent research careers and be competitive for new research project grant (e.g., R01) funding. ○ Although all NIH ICs use this support mechanism, some may use the K01 award for individuals who propose to train in a new field or for individuals who have had a hiatus in their research career because of illness or pressing family circumstances. Other ICs use the K01 award to increase research workforce diversity by providing enhanced research career development opportunities. |
| K02 | <p>Independent Scientist Award</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support and provide 3-5 years of salary support and “protected time” for newly independent scientists who demonstrate the need for a period of intensive research focus as a means of enhancing their research careers. ○ Foster the development and experience of outstanding scientists and enable them to expand their potential to make significant contributions to their field of research. ○ Each award program is tailored to meet the individual needs of the scientist. |

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| <p>K08</p> | <p>Mentored Clinical Scientist Research Career Development Award</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prepare qualified individuals for careers that have a significant impact on the health-related research needs of the Nation. ○ Provide opportunity for promising medical scientists with a clinical doctoral degree and demonstrated aptitude to develop into independent investigators. ○ Provide opportunity for faculty members to pursue research aspects of categorical areas applicable to the awarding unit, and aid in filling the academic faculty gap in shortage areas within health profession institutions. ○ Support and provide 3-5 years of salary support and “protected time” to individuals with a clinical doctoral degree for didactic study and/or mentored research for an intensive research career development experience in biomedical and behavioral research, including translational research, leading to research independence. ○ May be used by candidates with different levels of prior research training and at different stages in their mentored career development. For example, a candidate with limited experience in a given field of research may use an award to support a career development experience that includes a designated period of didactic training followed by a period of closely supervised research experience. A candidate with previous research experience and training may not require extensive additional didactic preparation, and may use an award to support a career development experience that focuses on an intensive, supervised research experience. |
| <p>K23</p> | <p>Mentored Patient-Oriented Research Career Development Award</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support career development of investigators with a clinical doctoral degree who have committed to focus their research endeavors on patient-oriented research (POR). ○ Support and provide 3-5 years of salary support and “protected time” to ensure a future cadre of well-trained scientists conducting NIH-supported POR. ○ Support supervised study and research for clinically trained professionals who have the potential to develop into productive clinical investigators. ○ The specific objectives of the award are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage research-oriented clinicians to develop independent research skills and gain experience in advanced methods and experimental approaches needed to become independent investigators conducting POR. ▪ Increase the pool of clinical researchers who can conduct patient-oriented studies, capitalizing on the discoveries of biomedical research and translating them to clinical settings. ▪ Support the career development of investigators who have committed to focus their research endeavors on POR. |

Midcareer Investigator Award in Patient-Oriented Research**K24**

- Support those with mid-career (typically Associate Professor) health-professional doctorates, enabling them to
 - Devote more time to augment their capabilities in POR.
 - Mentor clinical residents, clinical fellows, and/or junior clinical investigators in the conduct of POR.
- Provide protected time to mid-career (typically Associate Professor) clinical investigators who have their own independent peer-reviewed research support so that they can mentor junior clinical investigators (particularly K23 grantees) in POR and to stabilize the careers of these investigators so that they can continue to conduct POR and mentor others in POR.
- A K24 award recipient who continues to have an independent peer-reviewed patient-oriented research program and continues to mentor new investigators can continue to contribute to the overall goals of the program after being promoted to Full Professor.
- Goal is to increase the pool of clinical researchers who can conduct POR, successfully compete for peer-reviewed grants, and mentor the next generation of clinical investigators.
- Recipients are expected to obtain new or additional independent peer-reviewed funding for POR as PD/PI and establish and assume leadership roles in collaborative POR programs. In addition, it is expected that there will be an increased effort and commitment to mentor beginning clinician investigators in POR to enhance the research productivity of both the K24 investigator and increase the pool of well-trained clinical researchers.

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| K99/R00 | <p>NIH Pathway to Independence Award</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To support the initial phase of a Career/Research Transition award program that provides 1-2 years of mentored support for highly motivated, advanced postdoctoral research scientists. Award is intended to foster the development of a creative, independent research program that will be competitive for subsequent independent funding and that will help advance the mission of the NIH. ○ The purpose is to increase and maintain a strong cohort of new and talented, NIH-supported, independent investigators. This program is designed to facilitate a timely transition of outstanding postdoctoral researchers from mentored, postdoctoral research positions to independent, tenure-track or equivalent faculty positions, and to provide independent NIH research support during the transition that will help these individuals launch competitive, independent research careers. ○ The objective is to help outstanding postdoctoral researchers complete needed, mentored training and transition in a timely manner to independent, tenure-track or equivalent faculty positions. ○ Applicants must have no more than 4 years of postdoctoral research experience at the time of the initial or the subsequent resubmission or revision application. ○ Award is intended for individuals who require at least 12 months of mentored research training and career development (K99 phase) before transitioning to the R00 award phase of the program. Consequently, the strongest applicants will require and propose a well-conceived plan for 1–2 years of substantive mentored research training and career development that will help them become competitive candidates for tenure-track faculty positions and prepare them to launch robust, independent research programs. An individual who cannot provide a compelling rationale for at least 1 year of additional mentored research training at the time of award is not a strong candidate for this award. ○ Individuals must be in a mentored, postdoctoral training position. If an applicant achieves independence (any faculty or non-mentored research position) before a K99 award is made, neither the K99 nor the R00 award will be made. ○ Award provides up to 5 years of support in two phases. The initial (K99) phase provides support for up to 2 years of mentored postdoctoral research training and career development. The second (R00) phase provides up to 3 years of independent research support, which is contingent on satisfactory progress during the K99 phase and an approved, independent, tenure-track (or equivalent) faculty position. The two award phases are intended to be continuous in time. Although exceptions may be possible in limited circumstances, R00 awards are generally only be made to those K99 PDs/PIs who accept independent, tenure-track (or equivalent) faculty positions by the end of the K99 award period. |
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