NIH Grant Mechanisms

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Identifying a Grant Mechanism

• Scope of the project
• Years of support needed
• Budget needed to perform the work
• Your career stage (accomplishment and experience in research, years from terminal degree, training, academic productivity)
• Underrepresented minority investigator?
• Preliminary data?
NIH Grant Mechanisms

- Project (fund an individual project) vs Career/Training grants (fund an individual’s training)
- Project
  - R level grants
    - R03
    - R21
    - R01
- Career/Training:
  - T series
  - F series
  - K series
- Program / Center Grants (senior investigators only)
  - P series
- Other mechanisms: Small business (SBIR), Conference, etc.
R03 Small Grants Program

- **NIH Small Grant Program (R03):**
  - Provides limited funding for a short period of time to support a variety of types of projects, including: pilot or feasibility studies, collection of preliminary data, secondary analysis of existing data, small, self-contained research projects, development of new research technology, etc.

- Limited to two years of funding
- Direct costs generally up to $50,000 per year
- Not renewable
- Utilized by more than half of the NIH ICs
- See parent FOA: PA-10-064
R21 Exploratory/Developmental Grants

- NIH Exploratory/Developmental Research Grant Award (R21)
  - Encourages new, exploratory and developmental research projects by providing support for the early stages of project development. Sometimes used for pilot and feasibility studies.
- Limited to up to two years of funding
- Combined budget for direct costs for the two year project period usually may not exceed $275,000.
- No preliminary data is required
- Not all ICs utilize – check carefully
- See parent FOA: PA-10-069
R01 Research Grant

• NIH Research Project Grant Program (R01)
  ▫ Used to support a discrete, specified, circumscribed research project
• NIH's most commonly used grant program
• No specific dollar limit unless specified in FOA
• Advance permission required for $500K or more (direct costs) in any year
• Generally awarded for 3 -5 years
• All ICs utilize
• See parent FOA: PA-10-067
New and Early Stage Investigator

- **New Investigator**: has not yet served on a PHS supported research project other than a R03, R21, or K award previously.

- **Definition of Early Stage Investigator**: A Program Director/Principal Investigator who qualifies as a New Investigator is considered an Early Stage Investigator (ESI) if he/she is within 10 years of completing his/her terminal research degree or is within 10 years of completing medical residency (or the equivalent).
  - Only applicable to R01 submissions

- **Note regarding grants with Multiple PD/PIs**: In the case of a grant application that involves more than one PI, all PD/PIs must meet the definition of New Investigator in order for the application to have the New Investigator designation.
Career Development Awards

- **K awards** – beginning of research career
  - e.g., K01, K07, K23

- **Purpose:** (K23) Encourage research-oriented clinicians to develop independent research skills and gain experience in advanced methods and experimental approaches needed to become an independent investigator conducting patient-oriented research.
  - May request 5 years of funding (typically 75% FTE)
  - Low indirect rate to institution (8%)
  - Small research budget ($25K per year)
  - Cost share for PI salary
  - No salary for mentors, consultants

- **K awards - midcareer and senior awards:** K24, K26, etc
K Mechanisms

- K Kiosk
  [http://grants.nih.gov/training/careerdevelopmentawards.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/training/careerdevelopmentawards.htm)
- Individual K’s: based on degree (research doctorate vs health professional doctorate), diversity, type of research (human vs not)
- Institutional K’s: K12 – some general, some specific focus
Underrepresented Minority Investigators

- NIH definition: African American, Hispanic American, American Indian, Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian, and other Pacific Islanders.

- Mechanisms specific to training/career development (e.g., K01) and inclusion in research
  - Administrative supplements to existing grants for recruitment and support of underrepresented minority investigators
Information about the Mechanism

• The PA: these are your instructions for the grant mechanism you are applying for
  ▫ Read every word of the PA
• Review what that institute has funded
  ▫ Search by mechanism in NIH Reporter
• Make contact with a Program Officer
• Be prepared to discuss your aims
  ▫ Avoid calling prematurely
Submission Cycles

• NIH cycles: 3 per year
• New grants – roughly Feb, June, October
• Some exceptions for certain mechanisms or PAs
• Resubmission and renewal grants: one month past standard due date
Building a Timeline

- Multiple considerations
- Grant mechanism
- Readiness of preliminary data
- New content area or not
- Experience level
- Mentored award – consider mentor’s time
Timeline Considerations

• Day to day work:
  ▫ Clinical commitment; Clear schedule of other demands as much as possible during grant writing (e.g., say no to chapters, etc)

• Outside review:
  ▫ Plan to ask at least 2 outside reviewers to provide feedback on the entire proposal
  ▫ Build in 3-4 weeks before the due date
  ▫ Use reviewers who have history of NIH funding, do not necessarily need to be content experts
Be Realistic

- Competition is fierce
- The grant cannot just be “good” – it has to be “outstanding”
- Better to delay submission than submit a mediocre grant
- Plan around personal life circumstances as much as possible (e.g., don’t plan to submit a major grant when you are on maternity leave)