



K99 – “Mentored” Phase
@ Your Postdoc Institution



R00 – “New Faculty” Phase
@ Your Institution



Ultimate Goal –
Your Own Lab & Tenure
@ Your Institution

Guide to the NIH Pathway to Independence Program (K99/R00)

2016

Prepared by:



Donna and Benjamin M.

Rosen Bioengineering Center

What is
it?

Page 2

Is it Right
for Me?

Page 3

What Do I
Need?

Page 4

Where Can I
Learn
More?

Page 5

Next
Steps?

Page 6

What is it?

- The Pathway to Independence Award Program is designed to help outstanding postdoctoral researchers complete needed, mentored training and transition in a timely manner to independent research careers.
- The strongest applicants will require, and will 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.
- The Pathway to Independence Award seeks to attract the best and brightest individuals conducting research in the United States, regardless of citizenship.
- Two Phase Program
 - Mentored Phase (K99): 1-2 years of postdoctoral support
 - Independent Phase (R00): up to 3 years of support contingent upon securing an independent (e.g. tenure-track or equivalent) research position
- Each Institute within NIH has specific (and varying) guidelines for the K99/R00, including budget information. Please refer to [this page for Institute-specific information](#), including Scientific Program and Grants Management Contacts.

| Applications | Awards | Success Rate |
|--------------|--------|--------------|
| • 2015: 932 | • 208 | • 22% |
| • 2014: 1114 | • 246 | • 22% |
| • 2013: 926 | • 203 | • 22% |
| • 2012: 911 | • 212 | • 23% |
| • 2011: 932 | • 180 | • 22% |
| • 2010: 778 | • 194 | • 25% |

Top 10 Institutes

NCI
NHLBI
NICHD
NIGMS
NIMH
NINDS
NIDDK
NIA
NIDA
NIEHS

(by number of grants awarded)

Is it Right for Me?

I have:

- less than 4 years of postdoc research experience
- evidence of research productivity
- a creative idea for an independent research project
- some preliminary data
- identified several potential institutions in the US (different from Caltech) where I will apply for tenure-track faculty positions

I intend to:

- spend at least 12 more months as a postdoc, upon award
- pursue research relevant to NIH
- pursue a tenure-track faculty position in the US
- talk over my research aims and approaches with colleagues
- reach out to NIH Contacts in my topic area for advice

I can:

- clearly describe the relationship between my mentor's research and my own
- clearly describe how I will gain independence and separate my research from my mentor
- obtain a statement of support from my mentor for the K99 mentored phase and describing the research I may take with me for my R00
- implement a career development plan, including training in the Responsible Conduct of Research, that will promote my independence

What Do I Need?

There are multiple pieces to the application, but you will likely spend the largest chunk of your time building your Research Plan/Strategy.

- The Research Plan/Strategy must span both phases of the K99/R00 award.
- Specific Aims (1 page, does not count toward 12 page max) – a maximum of 3-4 aims are recommended, divided into mentored and independent phases. Avoid being “overly ambitious” and trying to squeeze in too much.
- Candidate Information and Goals for Career Development & Research Plan/Strategy (12 pages total for both attachments combined)

Components of the Research Plan/Strategy (8-9 pages, max)

- Significance (0.5 page) – get to the point, do not start with trivia from your field. Describe your most pressing research questions and put those into context of what is known in the field. How will your research fill in gaps, advance understanding, or even change the game?
- Innovation (0.5 page) – describe what is novel about your question, approach, perspective, or anticipated results.
- Approach (7-8 pages)
 - Introduction
 - Background
 - Preliminary studies
 - Research design (organized by specific aims)
 - Design, procedures, measurements, quality & management, data analysis
 - Expected outcomes
 - Potential problems and alternative approaches/outcomes
 - Timeline chart (or flow chart)
 - Future directions
 - (Summary or concluding statement) – recommended

Deadlines

| | | | |
|---------------------|-------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| New | February 12 | June 12 | October 12 |
| Resubmissions | March 12 | July 12 | November 12 |
| Earliest Start Date | September | April, following year | July, following year |

Where Can I Learn More?

From the officials:



- [PA-16-193: The Current Solicitation](#)
 - [Program Details](#)
 - [NIH New Investigators Program FAQ](#)
 - [NIAID Training and Career Site](#)
 - [NIAID Postdocs' Guide to Gaining Independence](#)
 - [NICHD Connection: Navigating the K99 Pathway to Independence](#)
 - [Criteria and Considerations for K Critiques](#)
 - [Success Rates](#)
-

From your peers:



- The New PI Sets Up A Lab
 - [July 1, 2014: Compilation of K99/R00 Advice](#)
 - NYAS [Navigating the K99/R00 Award](#) (with slides)
 - [K99/R00 Insights into the review process](#) (with slides)
 - [Structured timeline for the K99/R00 award](#)
 - [How to Write a K99](#) (Mar 30, 2011)
 - ChemicalBiLoLogy
 - [How to put together \(your life and\) a K99/R00 proposal](#) (Jun 30, 2008 & Feb 2010 update)
 - Pathway to Insanity
 - [How to Write a K99/R00 \(in 3 weeks\)](#) (Oct 12, 2012)
 - [How to Write a Successful K99 - One Canuck's Perspective](#)
 - [10 Things I Wish I'd Known Before I Wrote My K99](#)
 - [K99 To-Do List](#) (.docx download from UCI)
-

Next Steps?

- ❖ Review the current solicitation
- ❖ Check for upcoming deadlines (refer to page 4)
- ❖ Set up, or update, your eRA Commons account
- ❖ Put together a rough plan for your proposal (refer to the “What Do I Need?” section on page 4)
- ❖ Talk to recent awardees (from NIH reporter)

| Project Title | Administering IC | Project Number | Activity | Support Year | Contact PI / Project Leader | FY | FY Total Cost |
|--|------------------|-------------------|----------|--------------|-----------------------------|------|---------------|
| CHARACTERIZATION OF MENTHOL'S EFFECT ON NICOTINE REINFORCEMENT AND NICOTINIC RECEPTOR NEUROBIOLOGY | NIDA | 1K99DA040047-01A1 | K99 | 1 | HENDERSON, BRANDON J. | 2016 | \$151,200 |
| LINEAGE-BASED INFERENCE OF CELL STATE TRANSITION DYNAMICS IN DEVELOPMENT AND DISEASE | NIGMS | 1K99GM118910-01 | K99 | 1 | HORMOZ, SAHAND | 2016 | \$90,000 |
| SPATIO-TEMPORAL SIGNALING DYNAMICS IN NEURONAL CELL FATE DECISION AND PATTERNING | NICHD | 1K99HD087532-01 | K99 | 1 | LI, PULIN | 2016 | \$100,000 |
| GENETIC DISSECTION OF NEURAL CIRCUITS UNDERLYING TRAUMA; FEAR; AND SOCIAL BEHAVIOR | NIMH | 1K99MH108734-01A1 | K99 | 1 | ZELIKOWSKY, MORIEL | 2016 | \$90,986 |
| FUNCTIONS OF PIWI PROTEINS AND SHORT RNAs IN GERMLINE | NICHD | 5R00HD057233-04 | R00 | 4 | ARAVIN, ALEXEI A. | 2012 | \$242,811 |
| GENETIC ANALYSIS OF SLEEP DISORDERS IN ZEBRAFISH | NINDS | 5R00NS060996-05 | R00 | 5 | PROBER, DAVID AARON | 2011 | \$244,021 |

Curious how I got this info? Check out our Walk-through on using NIH Reporter for K99/R00!

Our search continues for examples of successful K99/R00 grant applications that we can share. Since the K99/R00 shares a number of similarities with K01 and R01 grants, you can start with a peek at these.

- ❖ K Grant Application Help (with examples)
- ❖ Proposal Samples from the University of Toledo

EXAMPLE

You may also make a request for a successful application from NIH directly under the Freedom of Information Act – instructions here.

