

Information on Institutional Commitment Required for NINDS Career Development Awards to Clinician Scientists

Institutional commitment is a critical contributor to an applicant's success as a clinician-scientist and is carefully considered in both the peer review and programmatic review processes. The institutional commitment should be carefully and explicitly described by the Chairs of the departments or centers to which the applicant is responsible.

EFFORT

Effort requirements. All NINDS Career Development (K) Awards require awardees (other than neurosurgeons; see below) to devote a minimum of **75% of full-time professional effort** to the K award research. NINDS calculates time as follows:

- ½ day per week = 10% effort
- 1 month per year = 8% effort
- Time with clinical on-call responsibilities (even if working in the lab or research clinic) cannot be counted as protected time for research

NINDS calculates effort during the Monday through Friday workweek. The 75% effort must occur during the Monday through Friday workweek. In line with this requirement, it is not permissible to assign official research effort to nights and weekends. Moreover, NINDS does not calculate time in hours. For example, ½ day does not equal 4 hours, unless the awardee's full-time professional effort is 8 hours per day (40 hours per week). If the awardee's full-time effort expectation is 12 hours per day, ½ day = 6 hours, etc.

The letter of institutional commitment must explicitly describe the non-research responsibilities of the candidate in terms of the formula above. A statement simply stating that the candidate will receive 75% protected time for research is not an adequate description of commitment.

Neurosurgeon effort requirements. NINDS will accept 50% full-time professional effort for research and career development activities associated with the K award.

The letter of institutional commitment, as above, must describe the specific allocation of time (on a weekly and/or monthly basis) devoted to K award activities and to clinical and other non-K award activities.

RESOURCES

Resource requirements. The NINDS K award has an allocation of \$51,000 for research costs (this includes \$1,000 per year provided with the contingency that K awardees must attend the NINDS/ANA Career Development Symposium twice during the first 4 years of the award; see [NOT-NS-13-028](#)). The research cost allocation may be used for all typically allowable costs (supplies, equipment, personnel, travel). Although costs do not have to be itemized in an application, applicants should generally explain the needs of the project, with projected associated costs. If the expected cost is greater than \$50,000 per year, the source of additional needed funds should be identified. Moreover, if the funds are to be provided by another individual (Chair, Mentor, etc.), that individual should write a letter confirming that

the funds will be available to the applicant for the proposed project and identify the source of the funds (e.g. a specific grant, departmental funds, etc.).

Startup funds. It is not required that K award applicants be provided with startup funds, and peer review scores will not be negatively affected by the lack of startup funds. However, departmental contributions to the success of an applicant are looked upon favorably by the review committee. The most important financial issue for peer review consideration is that applicants have sufficient funds to conduct the proposed research appropriately from the start of the award through the completion of the award (i.e. scholars are not depending on receipt of additional grant awards to generate sufficient funds for the project).

PROFESSIONAL POSITION/TITLE

K08/K23. Candidates for the NINDS K08 or K23 are expected to have a faculty position at the time of award (they may apply, for example, during residency or fellowship, but cannot receive the award unless they have a faculty position). There is no specific required title, and **it is not** a requirement that institutions guarantee a tenure-track position to an applicant. However, **it is required** that the Chair commit to supporting the candidate for the 5-year duration of the award period and **this should be stated explicitly** in the letter of institutional commitment. Moreover, it is expected that candidates will be promoted appropriately for somebody in their position. The Chair must describe explicitly and clearly the plan for supporting the candidate, both in terms of timeline and expectations for promotion.

K02. The NINDS K02 is an award given to an independent investigator. It typically follows, but isn't required to follow, a mentored K award. Its purpose is to enable the applicant to compete for an R01 or equivalent NIH award within the first 3 years of receiving the K02 award. Consequently, the academic position of, institutional commitment to, and institutional resources provided to, a K02 awardee should be commensurate with that individual's time on faculty, accomplishments and professional goals. Specifically, the commitment to the applicant is expected to reflect a departmental expectation that the applicant will obtain an NIH R01 or equivalent grant and pursue a robust, individually funded research career.