

MENTORED CAREER DEVELOPMENT AWARDS: CHANGE IN NIH POLICY CONCERNING CONCURRENT SUPPORT FROM CAREER DEVELOPMENT AWARD AND A RESEARCH GRANT

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NOTICE: NOT-OD-04-007

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

With this notice, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) modifies its policy on mentored career development awards (K Awards) to allow award recipients to hold concurrent support from their career award and a competing research grant when recognized as a Principal Investigator or subproject Director. Thus mentored career award recipients in the last two years of their support period will be permitted to reduce the level of effort required for the career award and replace that effort with an NIH research grant or subproject provided they remain in a mentored situation. This policy will permit those candidates who are ready to apply for and receive NIH research support to continue to benefit from the period of protected time offered by the career development award.

Background

NIH mentored career development mechanisms are intended to support a period of career development in preparation for a role as an independent researcher (see <http://grants.nih.gov/training/careerdevelopmentawards.htm>). In some cases, current NIH policy has delayed the period of transition to independence until the career award is completed or nearly completed. This policy has often led to a hiatus in research support and an increased likelihood that career award recipients will not transition to independent research support. In rare cases, the NIH has discontinued mentored career awards at the time of receipt of independent research funding. With this announcement, the NIH will discontinue the practice of early termination of a career award when the recipient receives an NIH research project grant or when the recipient is named as the director of a subproject on a multi-project NIH grant. This policy is consistent with the NIH Roadmap Initiative in terms of promoting the career development of clinical researchers (see <http://nihroadmap.nih.gov/>). It is our hope, that this change in policy will facilitate the transition of all mentored career award recipients to independent NIH research support.

Implementation

Effective for competing applications submitted for February 1, 2004 and beyond, mentored career award recipients, in the last two years of career award support, are encouraged to obtain funding from NIH either as Principal Investigator on a competing research grant award or cooperative agreement, or as project leader on a competing multi-project award. Requested budgets for a competing research grant or a subproject on a multi-project grant should request appropriate amounts for the salary and associated costs

for the career recipient's effort. At the time the research grant is awarded, the effort required on the career award may be reduced to no less than 50 percent and replaced by effort from the research award so that the total level of research commitment remains at 75 percent or more for the duration of the mentored career award. This change in policy applies to the following mentored career award mechanisms: K01, K07 (developmental) K08, K22, K23, and K25, as well as the individuals mentored through institutional K12 awards. To be eligible for salary support from the Center or Research Project Grant (RPG):

(1) The career award recipient must be the named Principal Investigator on a competing NIH research project grant (R01, R03, R15, R21, R34, etc.) or the recipient must become the sub-project director on a competing multi-component research or center grant or cooperative agreement (P01, P50, U01, etc.).

(2) The career award must be active when the RPG or center competing application is submitted.

(3) The career award must have no more than two years of support remaining by the planned start date of the Center or RPG award.

In a letter accompanying the Center or RPG application, the chair of the mentored award recipient's department or other responsible institutional official must provide evidence that the recipient will continue to focus on the development of his/her research career, will continue to have access to his/her mentor, and that the recipient's total level of research effort will be maintained and protected at a minimum of 75 percent.

When a mentored career award recipient obtains independent support, as described above, the NIH Institute or Center supporting the career award will adjust the level of effort committed to the career award to no less than 50 percent consistent with maintaining total research effort at 75 percent or more of total professional effort. NIH will maintain the total salary amounts committed to the career award if consistent with the adjusted level of effort and institutional base salary (up to the legislative limit). The career award may also be adjusted to avoid budgetary overlap. Consistent with long-standing policies, additional salary for career award recipients may not be derived from NIH research grants unless the recipient is the named Principal Investigator on the research grant or has been named director of a subproject on a competing multi-component NIH grant.

For additional information concerning this change contact:

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