Overview of the K Award Funding Mechanisms

Elements of Successful Career Development Award Applications

John Ojeifo, MD, PhD, MBA

July 19, 2017
Outline

1. K Award Funding Mechanisms
2. Elements of Successful K Award Applications
Career Development (K) Award Funding Mechanisms
K Awards FOAs


- **K08**: NCI Mentored Clinical Scientist Research Career Development Award to Promote Diversity: [https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-16-400.html](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-16-400.html) (PAR-16-400)
  - Combined previous K23 and K08 (Clinical, Translational, and Patient-Oriented Research)
  - Salary up to $185k per year; R&D support up to $50k per year

  - Investigators in faculty positions are not eligible
Objectives of the K Award Mechanisms

- Provide protected time for research for 3–5 years

- Support training and career development activities to enhance research capabilities under the guidance of an experienced mentor, or sponsor.
Eligibility Criteria for K Award Mechanisms

**Academic/Career Level of Trainee:**
- Post-doctoral
- Early Stage Investigator

**Diversity of Applicants:**
- Individuals of Different Race/Ethnicity
- Individuals with Disability
- Individuals from Disadvantaged Background

US Citizens or Permanent Residents
Additional Eligibility Criteria: K01, K08, K22*

Academic/Career Stage of Trainee:

- Candidates applying for a K01 or a K08 award must have completed at least **two**, but usually not more that **five** years of postdoctoral training at the time of submitting or resubmitting a K01 or K08 application.

- * Candidates applying for a K22 award must have completed at least **two**, but usually not more that **eight** years of postdoctoral training at the time of submitting or resubmitting a K22 application.

- *Investigators in faculty positions are not eligible to apply for a K22 award.
## K Award Mechanisms

**Due Dates:** February 12, June 12, & October 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>K Type</th>
<th>Mentored or Non-Mentored</th>
<th>Research Focus</th>
<th>Max Salary</th>
<th>Max R&amp;D Support</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K01</td>
<td>Mentored</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>$100k</td>
<td>$30k</td>
<td>3-5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K22</td>
<td>Non-Mentored</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$50k</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K08</td>
<td>Mentored</td>
<td>Clinical, Translational &amp; Patient-Oriented Research</td>
<td>$185k</td>
<td>$50k</td>
<td>3-5 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Elements of Successful K Award Applications
Elements of Successful K Award Applications

- **Strong:**
  - Candidate
  - Research Plan
  - Career Development Plan/Career Goals & Objectives
  - Mentor(s), Consultant(s), Collaborator(s)
  - Environment and Institutional Commitment to the Candidate
Elements of Successful K Award Applications: Candidate

- Strong candidates have:
  - Excellent education, academic training, & experience in the area of proposed research
  - Well prepared Biosketch
  - Clear career goals
  - Highly productive (good publication record)
  - Strong reference letters

- Strong:
  - Candidate
  - Research Plan
  - Career Development Plan/Career Goals & Objectives
  - Mentor(s), Consultant(s), Collaborator(s)
  - Environment and Institutional Commitment to the Candidate
Elements of Successful K Award Applications: Research Plan

- Strong research plans:
  - Are well-written with a good training vehicle to establish PI’s niche & portable
  - Have a sound research strategy (highly significant, innovative, solid research approach, design, & feasible)
    - Includes the scientific and technical merits of the scientific question, including the experimental design, expected outcomes, and methodology used to address the hypothesis
  - Reasonable timeframe is proposed
  - Research plan vetted by mentors & well-aligned with PI’s career Goals

- Strong:
  - Candidate
  - Research Plan
  - Career Development Plan/Career Goals & Objectives
  - Mentor(s), Consultant(s), Collaborator(s)
  - Environment and Institutional Commitment to the Candidate
Elements of Successful K Award Applications: Research Plan (Cont.)

- **Address:**
  - Scientific Premise of Proposed Research
  - Rigor of Experimental Design
  - Consideration of Sex and Other Relevant Biological Variables
  - Authentication of Key Biological and/or Chemical Resources

https://www.nih.gov/research-training/rigor-reproducibility

- **Strong:**
  - Candidate
  - *Research Plan*
  - Career Development Plan/Career Goals & Objectives
  - Mentor(s), Consultant(s), Collaborator(s)
  - Environment and Institutional Commitment to the Candidate
Elements of Successful K Award Applications: Career Development Plan (CDP)

- Strong CDPs are well-written and:
  - Provide a timeline for research and non-research activities that enhance research training
    - e.g., courses, workshops, techniques, scientific meetings, presentations, etc.
  - Document prior & future trainings in the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) suitable for the applicant’s career stage

- Strong:
  - Candidate
  - Research Plan
  - Career Development Plan/Career Goals & Objectives
  - Mentor(s), Consultant(s), Collaborator(s)
  - Environment and Institutional Commitment to the Candidate
Elements of Successful K Award Applications: Mentor(s), Consultant(s), Collaborator(s)

- Strong mentor(s), consultant(s), collaborator(s) and advisory committee (if any) are well qualified and have:
  - Good track record of funding and publication
  - Considerable K grantee mentoring experience
  - Strong statements for the applicant
  - Matched expertise & strong track record of mentoring ESIs
Elements of Successful K Award Applications: Environment & Institutional Commitment to the Candidate

- A strong Environment & Institutional Commitment section should include:
  - Outstanding supportive research environment
  - Strong institutional commitment to the candidate with guaranteed minimum of 75% commitment to candidate's effort devoted to research
  - Adequacy of research facilities and training opportunities, including capable faculty
  - Assurance that institution intends for the candidate to be an integral part of its research program
  - Eligibility letter provided by the institution

- Strong:
  - Candidate
  - Research Plan
  - Career Development Plan/Career Goals & Objectives
  - Mentor(s), Consultant(s), Collaborator(s)

✓ Environment and Institutional Commitment to the Candidate
K Award Workshop Agenda: Guidance & Tips

- Candidate Biosketch
  - John Ojeifo, MD, PhD

- Research Plan
  - Abigail Soyombo, PhD, MBA

- Career Development Plan
  - Anil Wali, PhD

- Mentors/Co-Mentors/Institutional Environment
  - Abigail Soyombo, PhD, MBA
What Do We Look for in a Career Development Application?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicant</th>
<th>Career Development &amp; Mentoring Plan</th>
<th>Research plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Excellent training & research experience  
• Highly productive (good publication record)  
• Clear career goals  
• Eligibility letter | • Well-written career development plan  
• Matched expertise & strong mentoring track record of mentor(s)  
• Strong reference letters  
• Strong environment & institutional support | • Good training vehicle to establish applicant’s niche & portable  
• Sound approach (appropriate research design and feasible)  
• Well written with good alignment with applicant’s career goals |