Frequently asked questions
RFA-DA-14-002

Short-term Mentored Career Enhancement Awards in the Basic Behavioral and Social Sciences: Cross-Training at the Intersection of Animal Models and Human Investigation (K18)

1. What career stage must I be at in order to apply?
Candidates at any rank or level of research/academic development beyond three years of postdoctoral experience are eligible to apply for this K18 award in response to RFA-DA-14-002.

2. Who submits the application, the candidate’s institution or the mentor’s institution?
The application is submitted by the candidate’s home institution. It is an award to the candidate, not to the mentor (or the mentor’s institution), as with any individual K award.

3. Are multiple mentors permitted?
Yes; however, candidates must name a primary mentor who, together with the candidate, is responsible for the planning, direction, and execution of the program. Candidates may also nominate co-mentors, as appropriate to the goals of the program. The respective areas of expertise and responsibility of the primary mentor and co-mentor(s) should be described. Co-mentors should clearly describe how they will coordinate mentoring of the candidate. If any of the co-mentors is not located at the host mentoring institution, a statement should be provided describing the mechanism(s) and frequency of communication with the candidate, including the frequency of personal meetings.

4. May an NIH intramural scientist serve as a mentor?
Yes, as long as the proposed mentor has the appropriate expertise. The mentor(s) should be recognized as accomplished investigator(s) in the proposed research area and have a track record of success in training independent investigators.
5. If this application is unsuccessful, can it be resubmitted?
RFA-DA-14-002 is a one-time announcement and therefore, resubmissions in response to it will not be allowed. However, since this announcement is a Request for Applications, unsuccessful applications may be revised and submitted as new applications after the peer review process for the current RFA is completed. Note that there are currently no other active K18 announcements at NIH targeting career development in the basic social and behavioral sciences, and many Institutes and Centers at NIH do not currently sponsor the K18 mechanism. Unsuccessful applicants may consider other mechanisms such as the K02 and are advised to follow the specific guidelines for these announcements. See http://grants.nih.gov/training/careerdevelopmentawards.htm for additional information.

6. Must the time for the training experience be taken in one contiguous chunk, or may I propose separate months of training, spread out over the year?
It is permissible to propose breaking the training time up over the course of the year. The timeline should be clearly described in the application. All candidates must devote a minimum of 3 to a maximum of 6 person-months of full-time professional effort to the career enhancement activities described in the application. The total project period may not exceed one year.

7. I have a prior relationship with my proposed mentor, but we have never worked on a grant or published a paper together. Are we eligible for this mechanism?
In most cases, the candidate and the proposed host laboratory/research program will not have any previous research collaborations, but candidates may propose such arrangements with justification as to why this program will facilitate career enhancement that could not be achieved solely through a research grant mechanism or current collaborative efforts.

8. Since the submission of my application, I have a new publication that I would like to add to my Appendix materials. How do I provide information to the review committee?
Applicants are required to follow the instructions for post-submission materials, as described in NOT-OD-10-115 [see section, “Exceptions 1. Applications submitted in response to Requests for Applications (RFAs) that have only one due date”].

9. I currently conduct basic behavioral and social sciences research (b-BSSR) in birds and would like to acquire some training to do similar studies in rodents. Would this type of training be responsive to RFA-DA-14-002?
No. RFA-DA-14-002 will support cross-training of (a) scientists conducting b-BSSR in
animal models who seek training in the study of similar or related behavioral or social processes in humans; or (b) investigators conducting b-BSSR in human subjects who seek training in the study of similar or related processes in animal models. This RFA will not support cross-training of scientists conducting b-BSSR in one non-human species seeking training in the study of similar or related behavioral or social processes in a different non-human species. OppNet will review all applications for responsiveness to RFA-DA-14-002. Applications that are nonresponsive will not be reviewed.

10. Is there a specific budget limit to the K18?
The amount of the budget will depend on the amount of time requested and the salary of the candidate, up to the maximum legislated salary level. The K18 budget may include salary for up to 6 person-months of full-time professional effort for the candidate (current NIH Salary Caps for extramural grants apply), plus fringe benefits, as well as up to $20,000 in other program-related expenses, as specified below. Indirect Costs (also known as Facilities & Administrative [F&A] Costs) are reimbursed at 8% of modified total direct costs. Details on these components follow:

**Salary:** The total salary provided by the award will be prorated based on a full-time, 12-month staff appointment up to the maximum legislated salary level. All candidates must devote a minimum of 3 to a maximum of 6 person-months of full-time professional effort to the career enhancement activities described in the application. For additional information regarding the calculation of person-months, see [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/person_months_fafs.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/person_months_fafs.htm). The award will also provide fringe benefits on the calculated base salary at the established institutional rate. The sponsoring institution may supplement the NIH salary contribution up to a level that is consistent with the institution's salary scale. However, supplementation may not be from Federal funds unless specifically authorized by the Federal program from which such funds are derived. In no case may PHS funds be used for salary supplementation. Institutional supplementation of salary must not require extra duties or responsibilities that would interfere with the purpose of the career award.

**Other Program-Related Expenses:** This program will provide up to $20,000 in direct costs to cover other program-related expenses, such as tuition and fees for short-term courses, travel to training or scientific meetings, and research-related costs, primarily supplies and technical or computational services. Salary for mentors, secretarial and administrative assistance, etc., is not allowed.

10. From its number (i.e., RFA-DA-14-002), it looks like this announcement is coming from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). Does this mean that my project has to have particular relevance to the NIDA mission?
No. NIDA is serving as the administrative lead Institute for this RFA but is not necessarily the NIH Institute or Center that ultimately will manage a funded OppNet project. All 24 NIH Institutes and Centers that fund research and four Program Offices
within the NIH Office of the Director co-fund and co-manage OppNet. All OppNet initiatives invite investigators to propose innovative research that will advance basic social and behavioral sciences and produce knowledge and/or tools of potential relevance to multiple domains of health- and life course-related research, congruent with the NIH mission (http://www.nih.gov/about/mission.htm).

11. The RFA lists a number of b-BSSR topics that may be particularly amenable to this K18 career enhancement activity. Does that mean that my project must target one of those topics?
No. While a need has been identified for collaborations between animal modelers and human subject researchers on those topics, this is not an all inclusive listing of appropriate topics for RFA-DA-14-002. Any topical area that fits the definition of b-BSSR, as defined by NIH (http://obssr.od.nih.gov/about_obssr/BSSR_CC/BSSR_definition/definition.aspx), is appropriate for support through this FOA.

For more information on OppNet’s RFA-DA-14-002:
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