

NEW INVESTIGATORS

- **As a new applicant, where can I look for advice?**

NIH offers [Resources for New Investigators](#). In addition, you should contact an [NCI Program Director](#) in your research area to discuss your research application and seek advice if you are submitting an investigator initiated [R01](#) application. Contact the NCI Program Director listed in the [Funding Opportunity Announcement](#) (FOA) if you are responding to a specific Program Announcement (PA) or Request for Applications (RFA).

Contact the NCI [Cancer Training Branch](#) if you are interested in [training](#) or [career development](#) awards.

- **What kinds of fellowships and career awards does NCI support?**

NCI supports [training](#) awards, [fellowships](#), and [career development](#) awards. For more information, see the [NCI Training Career Development and Education](#) web page.

- **How do I know if I qualify as a New or First-Time Principal Investigator?**

In general, a Program Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) is considered a New Investigator if he/she has not previously competed successfully as PD/PI for a significant NIH independent research award. Specifically, a PD/PI is identified as a New Investigator if he/she has **not** previously competed successfully for an NIH-supported research project **other than** the following small or early stage research awards:

- Pathway to Independence Award-Research Phase (R00)
- Small Grant (R03)
- Academic Research Enhancement Award (R15)
- Exploratory/Developmental Grant (R21)
- Clinical Trial Planning Grant (R34)
- Dissertation Award (R36)
- Small Business Technology Transfer Grant-Phase I (R41)
- Small Business Innovation Research Grant-Phase I (R43)
- Shannon Award (R55)
- NIH High Priority, Short-Term Project Award (R56)
- Competitive Research Pilot Projects (SC2, SC3)

Additionally, the PD/PI is not excluded from consideration as a “New Investigator” if he/she has received an award from any of the following classes of awards:

Training-Related and Mentored Career Awards

- All Fellowships (F awards)
- All career awards (K awards)
- Loan repayment contracts (L30, L32, L40, L50, L60)

Instrumentation, Construction, Education, Health Disparity Endowment Grants, or Meeting Awards

- G07, G08, G11, G13, G20
- S10, S15, S21, S22

- **What are the qualifications for an “Early Stage Investigator”?**

An individual who is classified as a New or First-Time Investigator and is within 10 years of completing his/her terminal research degree or is within 10 years of completing medical residency (or the equivalent) is considered an Early Stage Investigator (ESI). Applications from ESIs and New Investigators will be identified to reviewers so that appropriate consideration of their career stage can be applied during review. More information on ESI designation is available at: <http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/not-od-08-121.html>

- **How does NIH know if an applicant is a New Investigator or ESI ?**

There will no longer be a New Investigator checkbox on the SF 424 and PHS 398 applications starting in February, 2009. Investigators will be identified by modifying the data collection related to degree dates and medical residency within the personal profile of the [eRA Commons](#). When the revised data collection approach is announced, PD/PIs must update their personal profile in the eRA Commons to provide information on degree and residency completion dates in order to be considered for the New Investigator or ESI classification.

- **For a multiple PI application, what constitutes a new investigator?**

To qualify as a New Investigator application, all PIs on a multiple PI application must meet NIH's definition of a [New Investigator](#).

- **If I am a project leader on a program project grant (P01), can I qualify as a new PI for an R01 application?**

Yes. As a project leader on a [program project](#), you are not a PI, so you are still eligible to be a [New Investigator](#).

- **If I received a grant from the National Science Foundation, am I still considered new for NIH?**

Yes. Only PHS grants affect your status as a [New Investigator](#) for NIH.

- **Are there mechanisms to support pilot projects?**

Yes. The [small grant program](#) (R03) and the [exploratory/developmental program](#) (R21) both support pilot or feasibility studies that can be carried out in a short time (2 years or less) with limited resources. Investigators may be a PI on an R03 or R21 grant and still apply for an [R01](#) as a [New Investigator](#).

The R03 grant mechanism supports different types of projects including pilot and feasibility studies; secondary analysis of existing data; small, self-contained research projects; and development of research methodology. Although NCI does not accept applications from the NIH R03 Parent announcement, a list of active R03 FOAs published by NCI can be found on the [R03 web page](#).

The R21 mechanism is intended to encourage new, exploratory and developmental research projects by providing support for the early stages of their development. Although NCI does not accept applications from the NIH R21 Parent announcement, a list of active R21 FOAs published by NCI can be found on the [R01/R21 web page](#).

- **Are there special R01 paylines for new investigators and ESIs?**

Yes. NCI establishes a special payline for [new investigators](#) and ESIs that is normally 5 percentile points above the R01 payline. Examples of special paylines for new investigators set by NIH institutes are available on the NIH [New Investigators Program](#) web site. In addition, new investigators and ESIs are more likely to be considered for “exception funding” or funding outside the payline. Contact the [program director](#) listed on your summary statement for more information.

- **Are there special initiatives for new investigators and ESIs?**

The NIH Director's [New Innovator Award Program](#) was launched in 2007 to support a small number of ESIs of exceptional creativity who propose bold and highly innovative new research approaches that have the potential to produce a major impact on broad, important problems in biomedical and behavioral research. In addition, see the [NCI Training Career Development and Education](#) available to [new investigators](#).

- **What type of investigator initiated award should I apply for?**

If you have sufficient preliminary data, you should probably apply for an [R01](#). R01s give you a solid level and duration of support, whereas smaller types may not provide enough money or time to complete a major project.

If you don't have preliminary data, check for [Program Announcements](#) for one of the following smaller awards, an [R03](#) or [R21](#) grant, to pay for time and resources to collect the data needed for an [R01](#) application.

- **Are reviewers less critical of new investigators and ESIs?**

Yes. The Center for Scientific Review provides special instructions to reviewers for the [Review of New Investigator R01 Grants](#) that emphasize training and research potential rather than track record and publications. In addition, the NIH will, wherever possible, cluster applications from New Investigators for discussion during [initial peer review](#).

- **Should I avoid collaborators to demonstrate my independence and show I can do it all?**

No. You can impress reviewers by bringing in collaborators to fill gaps in your expertise and resources. It helps to choose a mentor or collaborator who is well known and respected; reviewers may recognize their name.

- **Is there a way to shorten the review process so that investigators can receive the review outcome and resubmit more rapidly?**

Beginning with the September/October 2007 study section meetings, [New Investigators](#) now have the option of submitting a resubmission/amended [R01](#) application for consecutive review cycles, saving four months. The summary statements for qualifying applications will have an explicit note indicating eligibility for next cycle submission. See [NOT-OD-07-083](#) for more information.