

**BOARD OF SCIENTIFIC ADVISORS
NCI LISTENS Q & AS**

Based on most frequently asked questions from research community attending NCI Listens sessions at national meetings from 1997 to 2007.

GENERAL APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION

- **Where can I find general information on the NIH grants process?**

[Everything You Wanted to Know About the NCI](#) describes how a grant is awarded and administered.

NIH Office of Extramural Research provides information on [Grant Application Basics](#) and the [Grants Process Overview](#).

[NCI Extramural Funding Opportunities](#) provides links to funding initiatives, applications, grant policies, and research resources.

- **Where do I find information on the electronic grant application process?**

Go to the NIH Office of Extramural Research web page on the [Electronic Application Process](#) for information on how find a [Funding Opportunity Announcement \(FOA\)](#) and download an application. Information is also provided on the preparation and submission of electronic applications.

- **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.

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](#).

- **Does NCI support international research?**

Yes. The [NCI Office of International Affairs](#) (OIA) coordinates the Institute's worldwide including coordination of cancer research activities under agreements between the US and other countries; planning and implementation of international scientist exchange programs; and sponsorship of international workshops. Go to [International Funding Opportunities](#) for additional information.

Foreign institutions and international organizations are also eligible to apply for research project grants, with the exception of Kirschstein-NRSA institutional research training grants, [program project](#) grants, [center](#) grants, resource grants, SBIR/STTR grants, or construction grants. Information on the grants process specific to foreign applicants is located on [Foreign Grant Information](#).

Go to the [Fogarty International Center](#) for information on trans-NIH international programs and training opportunities.

- **How does an investigator state their interest in a dual assignment or cofunding in their grant application?**

If your research proposal is relevant to more than one institute, you may request a primary assignment and one or more secondary assignments in your [cover letter](#). To ensure your research is appropriate for assignment to NCI, contact the appropriate [NCI program director](#) prior to submission.

Dual assignment, or assignment to more than one institute, helps boost your funding chances by providing a backup. If the primary institute doesn't fund it, the secondary institute might or express interest in cofunding.

- **Are there special paylines for new investigators and early stage investigators?**

Yes. NCI establishes a special payline for [new investigators](#) and [early stage investigators](#) (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. Go to the [NCI Funding Policy](#) web page for information on the current NCI funding policies.

In addition, new investigators and ESIs are more likely to be funded through “exception funding” as a new investigator. Contact the [program director](#) listed on your summary statement for more information.

- **What can NCI do to support integrated and cross-disciplinary research?**

Electronic applications allow more than one [Principal Investigator](#) (PI) (see [Multiple Principal Investigators web site](#)) on individual research awards. This presents a new and

important opportunity for investigators seeking support for projects or activities that require a “team science” approach. Paper applications also may use multiple PIs when the [Funding Opportunity Announcement](#) (FOA) specifically allows them.

NCI supports [program project](#) grants and [specialized centers](#) focused on specific research areas that fund integrated and cross-disciplinary research. For examples, see the [Specialized Programs for Research Excellence](#) (SPORE), [Integrative Cancer Biology Program](#), and the [Centers of Excellence in Cancer Communication Research](#).

The [NIH Common Fund](#) provides the opportunity for major initiatives to address gaps in biomedical research that no single institute at NIH could tackle alone. Many of the new initiatives support integrated and crossdisciplinary research.

- **Is NCI working on bioinformatics and methods to share data including data standards?**

Yes. The [NCI Center for Bioinformatics and Information Technology](#) (CBIIT) lead the effort to provide tools and resources that enable information to be shared along the continuum from the scientific bench to the clinic. For example, one of the goals of the [cancer Biomedical Informatics Grid](#) (caBIG) is to develop new enabling tools and software systems to collect, analyze, and share data.

The [Cancer Therapy Evaluation Program](#) has led the effort to provide tools for participation in clinical trials, including the [Clinical Data Update System](#) (CDUS) and the [Adverse Event Expedited Reporting System](#) (AdEERS).

The [Office of Biorepositories and Biospecimen Research](#) has released the [NCI Best Practices for Biospecimen Resources](#) which provides guiding principles for the collection of biospecimens and related patient data.

- **Does NCI support biomedical engineering and what initiatives are available for interdisciplinary research involving biomedical engineering?**

Yes. The [Physical Sciences in Oncology](#) initiative partners scientists in various non-biology disciplines with cancer biology. The [Innovative Molecular Analysis Technologies Program](#) supports initiatives on the development of novel technologies suitable for the molecular analysis of cancer, including biomedical engineering approaches.

For training, the [Mentored Quantitative Research Career Development Award](#) (K25) supports investigators, with quantitative scientific and engineering backgrounds outside of biology or medicine, who have made a commitment to focus their research on behavioral and biomedical research (basic or clinical).