

The K02 award contrasts with the K08 and K23 awards in that, while the latter two are mentored career awards, the K02 is for applicants who have already transitioned to independence. Consequently, the NINDS requires **applicant institutions to demonstrate a commitment to providing the appointment, environment and resources commensurate with this independence and experience**, and requires that institutions provide the support that will allow junior investigators to launch successful careers as independent academic researchers in neuroscience.

The K02 award is intended for junior investigators who need 2 - 3 additional years of protected time and research support to become highly competitive when applying for an R01. To continue the K02 award beyond 3 years, the investigator must obtain independent major research funding, such as an R01 or subproject PI on a P01 award. As part of the application process, sponsoring institutions must describe the resources and space offered to the candidate as concrete evidence of their commitment to fostering a successful independent career track for the applicant. Under this award, institutions are asked to confer an academic title that signifies independence, which will typically be along the tenure-track (or equivalent) path. Because awardees are required to apply for independent funding within three years of the K02 award start date, and are encouraged to apply for independent funding as soon as possible, sponsoring institutions must provide the resources and title required to do so from the onset of the award.

Resources in support of career development should include adequate space, access to major equipment and core facilities, access to graduate students, fellows, research assistants, and/or biostatistical and clinical trial consulting services and administrative support. The unique features of the environment, the resources to be provided and the institutional/departmental track record in mentoring junior faculty, should be specifically described.

The level of institutional commitment, and start-up funds already provided, will be considered during review. It is expected that the institutional commitment will not be contingent on the success of the K02 proposal.

Institutions are urged to specifically address the following commitments to the candidate:

- Assurance that the applicant will have 75% protected time for work dedicated to the proposed research. If and when an applicant obtains additional, major independent research support (e.g. an R01 or subproject PI on a P01), the percent effort on the K02 may be reduced as long as the total protected time for research remains at 75%.
- The provisions for ensuring that the candidate will not bear, or be asked to bear, an inappropriate load of clinical or administrative duties.
- An academic title along the tenure-track path (or its equivalent if tenure is not given in the candidate's department) to ensure that the applicant is eligible for tenure or any other privileges of full time faculty.
- Provision of adequate and appropriate funds and space for laboratory or clinical investigation as necessary for the research program described.
- A plan for ensuring regular academic supervision and support.
- The applicant's access to administrative support, technical support and trainees.
- Provision that institutional supervision will: include independent review of a candidate's progress toward the goal of gathering strong data for submission of an R01; provide advice and support during preparation of the R01 application such as assigning a senior faculty mentor to read and provide input about the grant
- Assurance that a candidate may consult directly with the institutional official(s) responsible for committing the resources for the career development experience.