

Transition to the Independent (R00) Phase

Introduction. A major goal of the NIH in creating the K99/R00 award is to help facilitate and ease the awardee's transition to a successful independent research career. To help achieve this goal, NIH requires a strong institutional commitment from the potential R00 institution in order to activate the R00 portion of the award. In fact, at NINDS, the major emphasis of the administrative review of the R00 activation revolves around the institutional commitment and environment.

Contact us in advance. Applicants are strongly advised to contact the [Director of the NINDS Office of Training & Workforce Development](#) **before** they start to interview for independent positions. NINDS wants to ensure that appropriate positions, packages, and institutional support are provided to our K99/R00 awardees. Consequently, NINDS adheres to a strict set of requirements for the institutional commitment required for an R00 award. An inappropriate position or startup package will prevent activation of the award. Our experience has been that consultation with us before negotiations are well underway can help avoid potential delays and problems in activating the second phase of the award.

Some key NINDS requirements for an R00 award

- A tenure-track or equivalent position
- A maximum of 30% of applicant salary can be drawn from the R00
- An appropriate startup package – the R00 cannot be considered as part of the startup package. This startup package must be in line with those given to others in the same position and/or those who would be recruited without an R00 or other major grant.
- Appropriate space and access to resources
- A minimum of 75% protected time
- If there is a salary recovery expectation, an explicit plan for years 4-6 in the event that the expectation is not met
- A strong mentorship plan to provide help in developing competitive grants and negotiating your career

Transitioning to the R00. In order to activate the R00 portion of the award, K99 awardees must obtain a tenure-track or equivalent position by the scheduled end of the K99 phase. As described in the program announcement, it is intended that there will not be a break between the K99 phase and the R00 phase. NINDS adheres to the following policies:

1. One must have accepted an offer for a tenure-track or equivalent position by the end of the K99 phase or the R00 will not be awarded.
2. However, there are several discrete circumstances that will allow for a brief extension:
 - a. If one has an offer but it is not yet signed, NINDS will wait for the conclusion of the negotiation.
 - b. If one has interviewed for one or more tenure-track positions before the end of the two-year K99 phase, NINDS will wait for the results of those interviews.
 - c. If one has scheduled an interview for one or more tenure-track positions before the end of the two-year K99 phase, NINDS will wait for the results of those scheduled interviews.
 - d. NINDS will NOT extend the gap between K99 phase and R00 phase for consideration of job applications or interviews that are scheduled after the end of the two-year K99 phase. Once decisions are made based on interviews scheduled prior to the end of the two-year K99 phase, if an appropriate position is not obtained, the R00 will not be awarded.

3. As stated in the program announcement, candidates should apply for activation of the R00 no later than 2 months before the proposed activation date. NINDS **does not** have a strict requirement for when the R00 must be submitted, other than that it should be within a reasonable amount of time following moving to the faculty position. Candidates may submit the R00 application either before they move to the faculty position or shortly thereafter.
4. The program announcement contains a detailed description of submission requirements for R00 activation (Transition to the Independent Phase). Please be sure to read it carefully.

Termination of the K99 phase. For NINDS K99 awards, the K99 phase ends when the postdoctoral position ends. NINDS does not allow carry-over of K99 funds to the R00 position. Except in rare and unusual circumstances, no-cost extensions of the K99 will not be granted. If you think there might be a problem with obtaining an appropriate position by the end of the K99 phase, please contact the [Director of the NINDS Office of Training & Workforce Development](#) at least 6 months in advance.