

## NIH R21 - Exploratory/Developmental Research Grant Award

### Description of Award

The R21 grant mechanism is intended to encourage exploratory/developmental research by providing support for the early and conceptual stages of project development. The NIH has standardized the Exploratory/Developmental Grant (R21) application characteristics, requirements, preparation, and review procedures in order to accommodate investigator-initiated (unsolicited) grant applications.

The scope of projects appropriate for the R21 include:

- Exploratory, novel studies that break new ground or extend previous discoveries toward new directions or applications.
- High risk high reward studies that may lead to a breakthrough in a particular area, or result in novel techniques, agents, methodologies, models or applications that will impact biomedical, behavioral, or clinical research.
- Projects should be distinct from those supported through the traditional R01 mechanism.

NIH awards are applied to through specific Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs). See a list of [active R21 FOAs here](#). *What's an FOA and what do all these NIH acronyms mean? Click [here](#) to find out!*

### Looking for additional information? Try this link:

- [NIH Exploratory/Developmental Research Grant Award \(R21\)](#)

### Eligibility

- Any individual(s) with the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to carry out the proposed research as the Program Director(s)/Principal Investigator(s) (PD(s)/PI(s))
  - E.g., PhD, MD, etc degree holders

### Funds Provided

- A total of up to \$275,000 over the project period (up to 2 years) for research-related expenses. No more than \$200,000 may be requested in a single year.

### Deadlines

NIH has 3 submission cycles for new R21 applications. No letter of intent is required.

- Cycle I: February
- Cycle II: June
- Cycle III: October
- New R21 applications may be submitted by any of these deadlines. For each date, applications are due by 5:00 PM local time of application organization.

*Note:* Check with the grants office at your home institution because internal deadlines can vary. Oftentimes materials must be submitted internally prior to the NIH deadline.

### Major Application Components

Comprehensive application instructions can be found [here](#) and should be considered in conjunction with your specific FOA

- Major application components and length (general NIH page limit guidelines found [here](#))
  - Biosketch - 5 pages

- Highlights individual qualifications for the individual's specific role in the project through the following sections:
  - Personal Statement
  - Positions and Honors
  - Contributions to Science
- View [Biographical Sketch Format Page \(non-fellowship\) here](#)
  
- Research Plan - *7 pages*
  - Specific Aims - *1 page*
  - Research Strategy - *6 pages*
    - Significance
    - Innovation
    - Approach

**Contact Information for Successful Applicants:**

*References*

<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/r21.htm>