

Advice for Early Stage Investigators

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Advice for Early Stage Investigators

- Know the purpose the program you will apply for, and the review criteria; make sure the application addresses them completely
- Tell Reviewers what they need to know to favorably evaluate your application
- Use the data to better understand your choices and chances
- Avoid applying for the R21 Activity Code
- Build Networks

Know the purpose of the program and its review criteria

Funding Opportunity Title

Mentored Patient-Oriented Research Career Development Award
(Parent K23)

“The purpose of the NIH Mentored Patient-Oriented Research Career Development Award (K23) is to **support the career development** of individuals with a clinical doctoral degree who **have made a commitment to focus their research endeavors on patient-oriented research.**”

Funding Opportunity Title

NIH Research Project Grant (Parent R01)

“The NIH Research Project Grant supports a **discrete, specified, circumscribed project** in areas representing the specific interests and competencies of the investigator(s).”

Review Criteria - K23

- **Candidate**
- **Career Development Plan/Career Goals and Objectives**
- **Research Plan**
- **Mentor(s), Co-Mentor(s), Consultant(s), Collaborator(s)**
- **Environment & Institutional Commitment to the Candidate**
 - ✓ **State Career Objectives**
 - ✓ **Explain how Career Development Plan, Research Plan, Mentors and Institution will help fulfill career objectives**
 - ✓ **Letters of support must express commitment to fulfilling candidate's career objectives**

Review Criteria – R01

- **Significance**
 - **Investigator(s)**
 - **Innovation**
 - **Approach**
 - **Environment**
-
- ✓ **Focus of review criteria is the research project**
 - **Approach, Significance, Innovation**
 - **These three criteria are weighted most heavily**
 - ✓ **Other criteria assess how the research objectives are advanced.**
 - **Investigator(s), Environment**

Tell Reviewers what they need to know to favorably evaluate your application

- Explain in the application:
 - How the project is significant and innovative
 - How the project fulfills the objectives of the program
- If there are controversies or conflicting literature in the field, it must be discussed in the application (scientific premise) – explain how your research will inform the discussion.
- Don't ignore limitations in the application in hopes that reviewers don't notice them.
 - It is better to make the argument for your chosen solution
 - Assures reviewers you have thought of (most) everything

Use the data to better understand the scientific landscape around your application

- Look for funded grants similar to your own
- “Futurecasting”
- Talk to other successful applicants about their experiences and strategies

Finding Funded Grants...

A tool available in NIH RePORTER database that many are not familiar with is “Matchmaker”.

Under the “Matchmaker” tab, you can copy and paste your abstract and/or specific aims

Matchmaker will return a list of the recently funded awards with project descriptions most similar to the text you pasted into the text box.

https://projectreporter.nih.gov/reporter_matchmaker.cfm

The screenshot shows the NIH RePORTER Matchmaker tool interface. At the top, there is the NIH logo and the text "Research Portfolio Online Reporting Tools (RePORT)". A search bar is located in the top right corner. Below the search bar, there are navigation links: HOME | ABOUT RePORT | FAQs | GLOSSARY | CONTACT US. A navigation menu contains tabs for QUICK LINKS, RESEARCH, ORGANIZATIONS, WORKFORCE, FUNDING, REPORTS, and LINKS & DATA. A yellow banner below the navigation menu states: "Note: RePORTER will be temporarily unavailable for system updates from 9 p.m. (ET) Thursday, April 20 until 7 a.m. (ET) Friday, April 21. We apologize for any inconvenience." Below the banner, there is a breadcrumb trail: Home > RePORTER > Matchmaker. The main header area includes the NIH RePORTER logo (Version: 7.16.0), a "CHECK OUT FEDERAL RePORTER" button, and links for About RePORTER DATA, FAQ, ExPORTER, RePORTER Manual, and RSS of Newly Added Projects. A navigation bar below the header has tabs for QUERY, BROWSE NIH, MATCHMAKER (highlighted with a red box), and SEARCH PUBLICATIONS BETA. Below the navigation bar, a yellow banner reads: "Use Matchmaker to find similar projects". The main content area contains the instruction: "Enter abstracts or other scientific text and Matchmaker will return a list of 100 similar projects from RePORTER. These matches are based on the terms and concepts used in the submitted text. Up to 15,000 characters are permitted." A "VIEW TUTORIAL" button is located to the right of this instruction. Below the instruction is a text input field labeled "Enter your Text:" containing a sample abstract text. At the bottom of the page, there are "SUBMIT" and "CLEAR" buttons. A footer note states: "Terms will be weighted by frequency of appearance in the text above. The process is automated and confidential. The Matchmaker system does not track and store submitted text." The character count "Characters left: 11526" is displayed in red text.

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

NIH Research Portfolio Online Reporting Tools (RePORT)

Search

HOME | ABOUT RePORT | FAQs | GLOSSARY | CONTACT US

QUICK LINKS | RESEARCH | ORGANIZATIONS | WORKFORCE | FUNDING | REPORTS | LINKS & DATA

Note: RePORTER will be temporarily unavailable for system updates from 9 p.m. (ET) Thursday, April 20 until 7 a.m. (ET) Friday, April 21. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Home > RePORTER > Matchmaker Results

MyRePORTER Login | Register | RePORTER Manual | System Health: GREEN

Matchmaker Results

Matchmaker New Query

Export All Projects GO

100 projects similar to concepts from the entered text. (100 maximum.) Show/Hide Search Criteria

Click on chart labels to filter search results by the Institute/Center or Activity Code or Study Section

INSTITUTE/CENTER

Institute/Center	Count
NIA	80
NHLBI	5
VA	5
NIGMS	2
NINDS	1
NINR	1

ACTIVITY CODE

Activity Code	Count
R01	28
R21	13
K23	11
R03	7
P50	6
P01	5

STUDY SECTION

Study Section	Count
ZAG1	35
NIA	15
ASG	9
CNN	8
SAT	3
NRCS	2

Click on the column header to sort the results

Records per page: 25 (1 2 3 4)

1 of 4 Next Last

T: Application Type; Act: Activity Code; Project: Admin IC, Serial No.; Year: Support Year/Supplement/Amendment

Match Score	T	Act	Project	Year	Sub #	Project Title	Contact PI / Project Leader	Organization	FY	Admin IC	Funding IC	FY Total Cost by IC	Similar Projects
2339	4	K23	AG043504	05		CSF PREDICTORS OF POSTOPERATIVE DELIRIUM IN NON-DEMENTED HIP FRACTURE PATIENTS	OH, ESTHER SEUNGHEE	JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY	2016	NIA	NIA	\$163,755	
1474	1	K23	AG051783	01A1		PREVENTION AND COGNITIVE CONSEQUENCES OF POSTOPERATIVE DELIRIUM	BROWN, CHARLES HUGH	JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY	2017	NIA	NIA	\$194,400	
1273	5	R21	AG048600	02		THE ROLE OF BRAIN BETA-AMYLOID AND TAU PROTEIN IN POD AND POCD	XIE, ZHONGCONG	MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL	2016	NIA	NIA	\$221,161	
1227	1	R21	AG050850	01A1		A RANDOMIZED DOUBLE BLIND PLACEBO CONTROLLED TRIAL OF RAMELTEON IN THE PREVENTION OF POST-OPERATIVE DELIRIUM IN OLDER PATIENTS UNDERGOING GENERAL ANESTHESIA	NEUFELD, KARIN JANE	JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY	2016	NIA	NIA	\$238,040	

Matchmaker also reports the most prevalent:

- 1) Institutes/Centers
- 2) Activity codes
- 3) Study sections

associated with the applications.

Avoid applying for the parent R21 Activity Code

- Why? Reviewers look for fit with purpose, e.g. the “high risk – high reward” aspects of the application
- Look for the stated purpose from the parent announcement:

<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-16-161.html>

“...These studies may involve considerable risk but may lead to a breakthrough in a particular area, or to the development of novel techniques, agents, methodologies, models, or applications that could have a major impact on a field of biomedical, behavioral, or clinical research.”

- Reviewers look for evidence that approach is “feasible”; risk is “manageable” in the hands of this investigator
 - Read: Preliminary data – not required but established investigators often provide it
 - Limited funds and time make challenges for inexperienced managers, reviewers know this
 - No ESI handicap for R21, so enlist an established investigator to collaborate as a MPI
- If the R01 is not a choice (due to institutional policies or other limitations) –
 - tell reviewers how your application fits the stated purpose; how you plan to manage risk
 - look for an RFA or PAR to avoid applying for the parent announcement.
 - Reviewers will focus on RFA’s scientific concepts instead of lingering on high risk – high reward
 - If you can find an R21/R33, that’s almost better than an R01
- Overall award rates for NIA (FY17): 93/417 = 22%; ESIs: 16/74 = 22%
 - Compare to R01: 319/1,615 = 20%; ESIs: 61/222 = 27%

Build your Networks !!!

- Don't try to be too self-reliant
 - Many will want to help you, so if the first person does not respond, keep asking until you find your partners
- Program Staff are often on travel and read emails on tiny screens. You may have to send a reminder emails to get a response.
 - We do want to speak to you, it's the fun part

