



NIH R03 Cheat Sheet

NOTE: Applicants should use the MOST RECENT funding announcement. Please check the “Release/Posted Date” in the “Key Dates” section of the RFA/PA to ensure that it is up to date.

Link to NIH Small Research Grant Program (Parent R03): <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-11-262.html>.
Specific RFAs also use the R03 funding mechanism.

Check the actual funding announcement to which you are responding to see if standard due dates apply (sometimes dates vary).

R03 Standard Due Dates:

- Cycle 1: February 16 (AIDS/ AIDS Related: May 7)
- Cycle 2: June 16 (AIDS/ AIDS Related: September 7)
- Cycle 3: October 16 (AIDS/ AIDS Related: January 7)

Other Important Dates:

Scientific Merit Review Dates:

- Cycle 1: June - July
- Cycle 2: October - November
- Cycle 3: February – March

Advisory Council Review Dates:

- Cycle 1: September - October
- Cycle 2: January - February
- Cycle 3: May – June

Earliest Project Start Date:

- Cycle 1: December
- Cycle 2: April
- Cycle 3: July

Check your announcement to see if single or multiple Principal Investigators (PIs) are allowed. For applications designating multiple PDs/Pis, a Multiple PD/PI Leadership Plan must be included. For more information about Multiple PD/Pis, please go to http://grants.nih.gov/grants/multi_pi/faq.htm. Multiple PD/Pis would be unusual for small research grants.

Purpose: NIH R03 funding opportunity supports small research projects that can be carried out in a short period of time 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; development of research methodology; and development of new research technology.

Renewals: The R03 is not renewable.



Budget Information: Budget format is module (i.e., limited details). The total project period may not exceed two years. Direct costs are limited to \$100,000 in direct costs over the entire two-year period, with no more than \$50,000 in direct costs are allowed in a single year.

Title: Limited to 81 characters (includes spaces and punctuation marks).

Project Summary (Abstract):

- No longer than 30 lines of text.
- Summary of the proposed activity suitable for dissemination to the public.
- Briefly state the specific aims and research design.
- Provide info on the significance (i.e., the gap the study is addressing and the public health significance).

Project Narrative:


- No more than 2 or 3 sentences.
- Describe the relevance to public health.
- Be succinct and use plain language appropriate for a lay audience.

Biographical Sketch- CHANGES HAVE BEEN MADE TO THE BIOSKETCH FORMS:

- Each biosketch is limited to 4 pages.
- Educational Block: begin with baccalaureate information.
- Personal Statement: Briefly describe why your experience and qualifications make you particularly well-suited for your role on this project.
- Include no more than 15 publications or manuscripts in press (NOT submitted or in preparation).
- If you are citing NIH funded studies in your publications section of your biosketch, and if these publications fall under the NIH Public Access Policy (<http://publicaccess.nih.gov/>), provide the NIH Manuscript Submission reference number (e.g., NIHMS97531) or Pubmed Central reference number or PMCID (e.g., PMCID234567). More information can be found here: http://www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/techbull/so08/so08_skill_kit_pmcid.html.
- The NIH Public Access Policy: applies to all peer-reviewed articles accepted for publication on or after April 7, 2008, and onward. See <http://publicaccess.nih.gov/> for more details.
- If the PMCID is not yet available because it is in process, then state "PMC Journal – In Process." A list of the journals can be found here: http://publicaccess.nih.gov/submit_process_journals.htm.
- Research Support: List selected ongoing and completed (during the last three years) research projects (Federal or non-Federal support). Begin with the projects that are most relevant to the research proposed in this application. Briefly indicate the overall goals of the projects and key personnel responsibilities that are relevant to the current application. Do not include number of person months or total costs.

Specific Aims:

- 1 page limit. The Specific Aims do NOT count toward your Research Strategy, which has a 6-page limit.
- Concisely state the goals of the proposed research.
- Summarize the expected outcomes, including impact of research on fields involved.
- Succinctly list objectives of proposed research (e.g., to test a hypothesis, create a novel design, solve a specific problem, etc.).



Research Strategy:

- Cannot exceed 6 pages (for R03s; page limits for other grant types will vary. Please see the NIH Table of Pages limits for other grant mechanisms: http://enhancing-peer_review.nih.gov/page_limits.html).
- This section includes the following new headings: Significance, Innovation, Approach.

A. Significance:

- Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress in the field that the proposed project addresses.
- Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice in one or more broad fields.
- Describe how the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field will be changed if the proposed aims are achieved.

B. Innovation:


- Explain how the application challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms.
- Describe any novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or intervention(s) to be developed or used, and any advantage over existing methodologies, instrumentation, or intervention(s).
- Explain any refinements, improvements, or new applications of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.

C. Approach:

- If you are including Preliminary Studies/Progress Report, put this information in the “Approach” Section. However, preliminary studies are not typically included or needed.
- Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Include how the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted as well as any resource sharing plans as appropriate.
- Discuss potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success anticipated to achieve the aims.
- If the project is in the early stages of development, describe any strategy to establish feasibility, and address the management of any high-risk aspects of the proposed work.
- Point out any procedures, situations, or materials that may be hazardous to personnel and precautions to be exercised.

Other Sections:

- Cover Letter: NIH suggests that you request a specific Institute/Center and a specific review committee. Check with the project officer listed on the RFA for advice on this.
- Facilities and other Resources-- Note: Changes have been made to the instructions for this section. PIs must identify facilities used, their capacities, pertinent capabilities, relative proximity and extent of availability to the project. Describe how the scientific environment in which the research will be conducted contributes to the probability of success. For Early-Stage Investigators, describe institutional investment in the success of the investigator. The R2 office has prepared a template that PIs may tailor for their proposals. Please contact the office to see this boilerplate document.
- Bibliography/References Cited- this section does not count toward your page limit.
- Inclusion Enrollment Report

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- Human Subjects Sections:
 - Protection of Human Subjects
 - Inclusion of Women and Minorities
 - Inclusion of Children
 - Targeted/Planned Enrollment Table
 - Vertebrate Animals
 - Select Agent Research. A full discussion on the use of Select Agents should appear in this section. PIs must describe the biocontainment resources available at all performance sites.
 - Multiple PD/PI Leadership Plan (if applicable)
 - Consortium/Contractual Arrangements (if applicable)
 - Letters of Support
 - Resource Sharing Plan(s). Note: (a) Data Sharing Plan: Not Applicable
 - Appendix: R03 Appendix materials may include ONLY pre-printed questionnaires or surveys. No publications or figures are allowed in the Appendix.

Miscellaneous Information about R03 grant applications:

- Only one resubmission of an unsuccessful application is permitted. Some “grandfathering” is permitted for R03s originally submitted before January 25, 2010.
- Review panels are advised to evaluate the conceptual framework and general approach of the R03. They are looking for discrete, well-defined projects that can be realistically accomplished in the two years with limited funding.