

Crafting a Professional Development Plan

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What's the purpose?

“Applicants are encouraged to describe specific activities that will augment their skills in geriatrics and/or aging research in order to develop into independent researchers in aging science.”

What does the RFA say?

- Applicants are strongly encouraged to include a section titled "Evidence of a Supportive Environment" that describes an individualized Professional Development Plan supported by non-R03 sources.
- This plan would provide for cultivating and garnering resources, activities, collaborations, and/or didactic or practical experiences concurrent with the R03 research project that will
 - lead to enhanced knowledge and skills in aging/geriatrics science, and
 - increase the applicant's likelihood of successful completion of his/her GEMSSTAR project.
- This plan would complement the GEMSSTAR R03 award and could be supported through a variety of non-R03 sources as described in Part 2, Section I.
- This section will not impact peer review scores.
- *This section is limited to 5 pages within the Facilities & Other Resources attachment.*

Example PDP activities

- Mentorship plan: meetings, practical experiences
- Formal coursework (could lead to additional degree or certification)
- Participation at geriatrics/aging national meetings
- Geriatrics clinical exposures
- Journal clubs
- Grand rounds
- Professional milestones (e.g., publications, presentations, grant applications, academic advancement)
- Curriculum development

Funding your PDP

- Support for PDP activities should come from non-R03 sources; e.g.:
 - Your institution
 - KL2, K12, R25 program
 - Mentored K award
 - Specialty societies – see American Geriatrics Society (<https://www.americangeriatrics.org/programs/geriatrics-specialists-initiative/gsi-advancing-research>)
 - NIA research center (e.g., Pepper, Alzheimer's, Shock, Roybal, RCMAR, Demography)
 - Foundations, other private sources
- Support can be in \$'s, protected time, or a combination
- Seek funding when you start developing your GEMSSTAR application
- Provide documentation of support in R03 application (“Other Attachment”)
 - If you have applied for support but have not yet received a commitment, tell us about it in the application

How much time should I commit to my PDP

- Short answer: as much as you can afford
- Longer answer: GEMSSTARs are for physicians/dentists who want to combine their clinical specialty with aging research. If that's what you want, let your PDP show it!

Biosketch or Letter of Support?

- Biosketches are for senior/key personnel and other significant contributors to R03 project
- Letters of support are for individuals who are not contributing to the research project should provide a letters of support
 - E.g. mentors not involved in research project, department/division chairs, other institutional officials
- Include in the Letters of Support section (not the PDP section)

Who evaluates the PDP?

- Peer reviewers
 - Provide administrative comments for the benefit of NIA program staff
 - Comments do not factor into the score of the R03 application
 - Only what's available in the R03 application
- NIA program committee
 - Evaluate as evidence of a supportive research environment
 - Consider peer reviewers' administrative comments (if any)
 - Additional material (if any) requested after submission

What does a geriatrician's PDP look like?

- Geriatricians are experts in aging clinical care, but not necessarily in aging research
- A geriatrician's research project may involve other clinical specialties or research disciplines
- Remember: the PDP is intended to reflect a supportive research environment