

Funding Opportunity Announcement
Modular R01s in Cancer Control and Population Sciences
[PAR-18-869](#) (R01)

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What are the differences between a Modular R01 and regular R01?

A: A Modular R01 is similar to the traditional R01 in that the proposed research aims should be supported by strong preliminary research that demonstrates that the proposed research is promising and that the researcher's ability to carry it out is credible. The main differences between the Modular R01 and the traditional R01 are the budget (capped at \$250K direct costs) and the extent of the research that can be proposed.

Q: If applying for a Modular R01 doesn't lower the bar in terms of preliminary data requirements, what would motivate investigators to use this mechanism? Or, more broadly, what problem is it designed to solve?

A: As the cost of grants continues to increase, scientists and policymakers are concerned about the challenges early-stage investigators (ESIs) face, including the length of time it takes to achieve their first R01 award. Chief among those challenges is the unprecedented number of applicants competing for funding pools. Historically, the average cost of a population science R01 is higher than the NCI average. We have been analyzing the portfolio and looking for ways to attenuate the increasing cost of grants, including the number of outyear commitments. This FOA is a mechanism to promote the use of small-budget/modest-scope R01s in cancer control and population sciences.

Q: Will applications to PAR-18-869 be reviewed in the standing CSR study sections or a PAR-specific special emphasis panel?

A: PAR-18-869 does not have a special study section. Because the research areas covered under this FOA are so broad, encompassing several priority areas in the population sciences, we decided to have CSR review the applications through the standing study sections. The CSR standing study sections have the relevant reviewer expertise, and the applications will be reviewed using the standard R01 review criteria.

Q: Is there concern with how the Modular R01s will do in review compared with the traditional R01s?

A: This is something we considered as we were developing this announcement. Historically, grant applications in the population sciences have had relatively large budgets, and so we wouldn't want to encourage investigators to propose studies of modest scope and a small budget if they weren't going to fare well in review. We analyzed R01 funding data from

2013 – 2017 and found that Modular R01s have a success rate that is comparable to that of the traditional, larger-budget R01s.

Q: Is this funding opportunity open only to early-stage investigators? Or are all investigators encouraged to apply?

A: The announcement is open to all extramural investigators proposing research in the population sciences. An [early-stage investigator, or ESI](#), is a program director/principal investigator (PD/PI) who has completed their terminal research degree or end of post-graduate clinical training, whichever date is later, within the past 10 years and who has not previously competed successfully as PD/PI for a substantial NIH independent research award. We encouraged ESIs to apply because we feel the Modular R01, with a shorter project period, offers an alternative to the R21 mechanism, which is often pursued by ESIs (and possibly New Investigators, or NIs – investigators who have not previously received substantial, independent funding from NIH) and has typically had a lower payline.

Q: Can a Modular R01 be multi-PI?

A: Yes, a Modular R01 can be submitted with multiple PIs.

Q: I am a NI who will be submitting with a Co-PI who is an ESI. Will we be considered an ESI application?

A: For an R01 application to be considered an ESI application, all listed PD/Pis must have ESI status at the time of submission.

Q: If you have senior investigators listed in the grant application as collaborators/co-investigators/consultants, but not MPIs, would this still count as ESI?

A: Yes. An R01 application's ESI designation is determined by the ESI status of the investigators listed as PD/Pis on the application.

Q: Are ESIs encouraged to apply with a co-PI who is more senior? Or instead apply on their own as a solo PI?

A: For an R01 application to be considered ESI application, all listed PD/Pis must have ESI status at the time of submission. Whether an application is submitted with a single PI or with multiple PIs should be based on whether the proposed project would benefit from multiple PIs, and whether the roles and responsibilities of the investigators are sufficient to justify a PI designation.

Q: If an ESI PI receives a Modular R01, does that PI lose their ESI eligibility for future R01s?

A: Yes, if an ESI is awarded a Modular R01, they would lose their ESI eligibility for future R01s.

Q: Can you elaborate on how the MERIT Award applies to the Modular R01?

A: The objective of [NCI's ESI MERIT Award \(NOT-CA-18-037\)](#) is to allow eligible investigators the opportunity to obtain up to 7 years of support in two segments, with the first being an initial 5-year award and the second being based on an opportunity for an extension of up to

2 additional years, based on an expedited NCI review of the accomplishments during the initial funding segment. The ESI MERIT award extension application will be submitted to NCI 18 months prior to the end of the initial 5-year project period. The extension application will be reviewed by NCI staff and submitted to the National Cancer Advisory Board (NCAB) for review and recommendation. If an extension is granted, the ESI MERIT awardee will be notified of the length of time of the extension and the approved budget. If a proposed award does not receive an extension, the awardee may submit an application for review as a regular competing research grant application.

Q: Can I resubmit a previously scored but not funded R01 to PAR-18-869?

A: Yes. If the original A0 application was submitted to a PA, PAR, or PAS program announcement, the A1 application may be submitted to any other PA, PAR, or PAS program announcement that accepts resubmissions, provided eligibility and other requirements are met. Note that the A1 application will be reviewed using the review criteria in the current FOA, not the criteria in the FOA used for the A0 submission. Any application overlapping another application that is funded, pending initial peer review (e.g., pending summary statement release), or pending appeal of an earlier review will not be accepted.

Q: If an application was submitted to a different PAR as an R21, could it be resubmitted as a Modular R01?

A: A change of activity code (e.g., R21, K01, R011) between the original A0 application and the A1 resubmission, or a funded application and the renewal application, is not allowed under NIH policy.

Q: Are studies conducted by United States-based PIs who would like to partner with collaborators at international sites to conduct research among populations abroad eligible to apply?

A: Yes, U.S.-based (domestic) applications with collaborators and/or subcontracts at international sites are eligible under the PAR.

Q: Is research that will be conducted outside the U.S. considered a priority for this mechanism? If not, would such a proposal be equally competitive with proposals focusing on research in the U.S.?

A: Applications from foreign organizations will be evaluated and scored during the initial review process using standard review criteria, and funding decisions will be made based on the reviewer impact score and percentile and whether they fall within the NCI's fundable range for R01s. Applications from foreign organizations should address the following:

- Whether the project presents special opportunities for furthering research programs through the use of unusual talent, resources, populations, or environmental conditions in other countries that are not readily available in the United States or that augment existing U.S. resources.
- Whether the proposed project has specific relevance to the mission and objectives of the Institutes and Centers and has the potential for significantly advancing the health sciences in the United States.

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Peer Review

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(Information appears two weeks after the submission due date.)

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