GREAT PLAINS IDeA | Clinical and Translational Research

2027 Early Career Investigator Program

Request for Applications

Deadline: November 21, 2026, by 5:00 pm

Program start date: January 15, 2027
Notification of funding decisions will be sent by January 1, 2027
Questions? Contact Heather Braddock via email or by phone: 402-559-9870

Description

The goal of the one-year NIGMS-funded Early Career Investigator Program (ECIP) is to support interested early career faculty by helping them develop a competitive R or K award (or equivalent) research career development application. Priority will be given to faculty demonstrating a high likelihood of submitting a competitive entry-level extramural grant application within 12-18 months of award receipt, a commitment to clinical translational research with early productivity, and a strong interdisciplinary mentoring team committed to supporting the applicant.

*Please note that this funding does not support research efforts.

Eligibility

1) Instructors or Assistant Professors with a terminal degree (or equivalent); Associate Professors new to research may be considered; preference will be given to tenure track faculty.
2) Applicants must be members of the Great Plains IDeA CTR (To become a member, click here).
3) Applicants must be full-time faculty (or equivalent) from one of the following institutions: UNMC, UNO, UNK, UNL, Creighton University, Boys Town National Research Hospital (this includes investigators with dual affiliation with Nebraska Medicine, Children's Nebraska and the Omaha VA).
4) Institutional support for 25% protected research time in place throughout the one-year funding period.
5) Have conducted feasibility or pilot work and are ready to write an external grant.
6) No prior R01, K-series or equivalent funding (applicants with only internal pilot/seed grants or foundation grants remain eligible).
7) Eligible to receive NIH funding.

Award Details

Up to 8 applicants will be awarded. The program will provide up to $5,000 funding in a personal development account to support professional development opportunities which will become available July 1, 2027. Additional grant writing support will be provided through consultations with the AtKisson Training Group (paid for separately by the CTR). The total value of the award is up to $10,000.

The award will specifically support:

1) Participation in an ECIP Kick-Off meeting led by Great Plains IDeA-CTR Professional Development Core leadership (month 1 of funding).
2) Working with Core leadership in developing an NIH Biosketch, participating in a formal Research Studio to review and refine the proposed Aims Page, and to identify and communicate with relevant funding agency program officers (months 2-6 of funding).
3) Complete a brief Needs Assessment and an Institutional Development Plan (IDP; following Kick-Off meeting).
4) One-on-one and/or small group consultation with the AtKisson Training Group to support proposal (K- or R-grant) development and longitudinal consultation and proposal development with AtKisson (months 7-12, beginning after July 1, 2027).
5) $5,000 in a personal development account to be used for professional development activities (e.g., attendance of professional meetings; travel supporting research networking; coursework; consulting

fees, etc.). Funds must be expended during the funding period as no carry-over funds are allowed. These funds cannot be applied to research costs.

It is anticipated that all applicants will submit a grant application prior to (or within 6 months of) the end of the funding period.

Application Requirements for ECIP

1) NIH format Biographical Sketch (Common Form) and Other Support document for the applicant (to be further developed/refined during ECIP participation) and proposed mentor(s).
2) A formal mentor is required for this award even when the target grant application is an R level grant. This mentor must be from one of the GP IDeA-CTR partner institutions listed above. Co-mentors, collaborators and consultants are allowed (Limit biosketches to 3 or fewer mentors).
3) Summary of project: (limited to 30 lines or less).
4) Specific Aims page: (page 1 of proposed grant that will be further developed/refined during ECIP participation) following standard NIH format, here.
5) Community Impact: Write a brief narrative in plain language (limited to 30 lines or less), so even a non-scientist can understand the importance and potential community impact of the project. Applicants can review research priority areas published by the Community Advisory Board (CAB), here.
6) Environment and Institutional Commitment to the Candidate: Current resources (e.g., equipment, lab or office space, research resources, clinical coordinator, or statistical support) available to support the pilot research project and lead to the submission of a R or K grant application or equivalent, as applicable (1 page or less).
7) A brief budget and budget justification for use of up to $5,000 in professional development funding. Please note that these funds **may not** be used to directly support research and are not allowed for personnel costs.
8) Letters of recommendation:
    a. A letter from your primary mentor detailing their commitment to the applicant throughout the training period. The mentor should have current or a history of external research funding and should not be the applicant's immediate supervisor (e.g., Division Chief, Chair, Dean). Applicants should have a project that is independent of their mentor's ongoing research.
    b. An administrative approval letter from one of the following: the appropriate Division Chief, Department Chair and/or Dean confirming the applicant will have 25% or more protected time for research (coming from their institution), if selected
9) Sign the commitment statement in the REDCap submission portal confirming that you will participate in the required activities (see 'Program Expectations' below), with a grant proposal ready for submission (R or K proposal or equivalent) and submitted within 12-18 months of funding.

Review Process

- Applications will be reviewed by the Professional Development Leadership Committee, and applicants will be notified of their submission status by January 1, 2027.

Program Expectations

- Devote at least 25% effort to the program.
- Participate in an ECIP Kick-Off meeting led by PD Core leadership.
- Work with PD Core leadership in the development of NIH biosketch and identifying appropriate funding mechanisms and relevant program officials.
- Completion of brief Needs Assessment and submit an IDP.
- Complete a CTR Research Studio for review and refinement of proposed Aims page (prior to engaging with AtKisson consultants) (months 0 to 6).
- Participate in a small-group grant writing proposal development consultation with AtKisson, including one-on-one sessions with an AtKisson representative (months 7-12).
- Attend regular meetings (at least every 2 weeks) with your designated mentor.
- Attend monthly symposia sponsored by the Professional Development Core (3rd Thursday of each month).
- Submit an extramural grant within 12-18 months of starting the program.

➢ Apply to the Early Career Investigator Program