

Comparison of Common NIH Research Grant Mechanisms

	Small or Early Stage Research Awards			
	R15	R03	R21	R01
	Academic Research Enhancement Award [AREA]	Small Grant Program	Exploratory/Developmental Research Grant Award	Research Project Grant Program
Purpose	Stimulates research in educational institutions that provide baccalaureate or advanced degrees for a significant number of the Nation's research scientists, but that have not been major recipients of NIH support Supports small-scale health-related research projects	Provides limited funding for a short period of time to support a variety of types of projects Examples: ◦ pilot or feasibility studies ◦ collection of preliminary data ◦ secondary analysis of existing data ◦ small, self-contained research projects ◦ development of new research technology	Encourages new, exploratory and developmental research projects by providing support for the early stages of project development Sometimes used for pilot and feasibility studies	Supports a discrete, specified, circumscribed research project
Special features	Including undergraduate students in the research is strongly encouraged "Forward funded" - funds for all years of award set aside in 1st year		No preliminary data is generally required Encourages high risk/high potential payoff projects	Most commonly used mechanism More than one PD/PI may be designated
\$\$ Limit?	Direct cost limited to \$150,000 over entire project period	Direct costs up to \$50,000 per year	Combined budget for direct costs for the two year project period usually may not exceed \$275,000	No specific dollar limit unless specified in FOA
Special conditions?	Institution must not have received research funding from NIH totaling more than \$3 million per year (in both direct and indirect costs) in each of 4 or more of the last 7 years Applicants may not be the PD/PI of any active NIH research grant, incl. another AREA grant, at the time of award		No more than \$200,000 in direct costs allowed in any single year	Advance permission required for \$500K or more (direct costs) in any year
Duration	Up to 3 years	Up to 2 years	Up to 2 years	Usually 3 -5 years
Renewable?	Renewed by competing for additional project periods or can apply for a successive new award	No	No	Renewed by competing for additional project periods
Participating Institutes and Centers (ICs)	All ICs except FIC and NCMHD	More than half of the ICs	Most ICs	All ICs
Parent FOA	http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-06-042.html	http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-06-180.html	http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-06-181.html	http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-07-070.html