

# **NIH Announces Program to Foster the Independence of New Investigators** <sup>[1]</sup>

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## **Calificación:**



National Institutes of Health Director Elias A. Zerhouni, M.D. announced today the NIH Pathway to Independence Award program. The program features a new opportunity for promising postdoctoral scientists to receive both mentored and independent research support from the same award. "Encouraging independent inquiry by promising new investigators is a major goal for NIH," Dr. Zerhouni said. "We must invest in the future of our new scientists today if we expect to meet the nation's health challenges of tomorrow. New investigators who successfully cross the bridge from research dependence to research independence bring fresh ideas and innovative perspectives to the research enterprise, which are critical to sustaining our ability to push forward the frontiers of medical research." The program is also responsive to the major recommendations of a National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report issued in 2005 entitled, "Bridges to Independence." The NAS report called for new ways to mentor and support early career scientific investigators from their post-doctoral studies to running their own research programs. NIH will issue between 150 and 200 awards for this program in its initial year, beginning in Fall 2006. The agency expects to issue the same number of awards each of the following five years. During this time, the NIH will provide almost \$400 million in support of the program. This award is a major piece of a larger, ongoing NIH effort to support new scientists as they transition to research independence. All NIH Institutes and Centers are participating in this award program. The award will work as follows: The initial 1-2 year mentored phase will allow investigators to complete their supervised research work, publish results, and search for an independent research position. The second, independent phase, years 3-5, will allow awardees who secure an assistant professorship, or equivalent position, to establish their own research program and successfully

apply for an NIH Investigator-Initiated (R01) grant. The R01 is the major means by which NIH supports individual scientists in the field. “This award program is a major step toward fostering the early independence of new investigators, a key to innovation and creativity,” Dr. Zerhouni continued. “We must take action now to maintain the tremendous momentum that we’ve experienced in science. Talented people with new ideas are at the core of our success — we must support them all the way. Nothing is more important, especially in times of tight budgets.” For more information about the NIH Pathway to Independence program visit: [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/new\\_investigators/index.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/new_investigators/index.htm) [2]. A Backgrounder is available at [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/new\\_investigators/backgrounder.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/new_investigators/backgrounder.htm) [3]. A list of Questions and Answers is available at [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/new\\_investigators/QsandAs.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/new_investigators/QsandAs.htm) [4]. The Office of the Director, the central office at NIH, is responsible for setting policy for NIH, which includes 27 Institutes and Centers. This involves planning, managing, and coordinating the programs and activities of all NIH components. The Office of the Director also includes program offices which are responsible for stimulating specific areas of research throughout NIH. Additional information is available at <http://www.nih.gov/icd/od/> [5]. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) — The Nation's Medical Research Agency — includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is the primary Federal agency for conducting and supporting basic, clinical, and translational medical research, and it investigates the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit <http://www.nih.gov> [6].

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