Planning Your Career Path: NIH Experts Share Their Perspectives

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• What career stage are you?
  • Graduate Student
  • Postdoctoral Scholar
  • Faculty
  • Other
My Journey

B.A. Psychobiology
Swarthmore, PA

Ph.D. Neuroscience
Washington, DC

Policy & Advocacy
Neuroscience Education & Training
Washington, DC

AAAS Science & Technology Policy Fellow at NINDS
Bethesda, MD

Office of Programs to Enhance Neuroscience Workforce Diversity
Bethesda, MD
How to navigate your career path

• Focus your exploration
  • Instead of: What do I want to do with my life?
  • Try: What do I enjoy doing?
• Seek out resources and opportunities
  • Many skills are transferable (e.g., project management)
• Develop your network
  • Networking can be useful and fun!
• National Postdoctoral Association
  • https://www.nationalpostdoc.org/
• Science Careers’ myIDP
  • https://myidp.sciencecareers.org/
• Job Simulations
  • https://intersectjobsims.com/library/
• Annual NIH Career Symposium
  • https://www.training.nih.gov/nih_career_symposium
• And many more...
  • https://extramural-diversity.nih.gov/career-pathways/next-career-steps
My Path to Becoming a Program Officer

High School Diploma

AB in Biology and African-American Studies

PhD in Microbiology and Immunology

Postdoc in Immunology

Faculty Position

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Post-Docs’ Guide to Gaining Independence

https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grants-contracts/postdoc-guide

Postdocs' Guide to Gaining Independence

This page may be helpful if you’re a postdoctoral researcher* who eventually wants to be principal investigator (PI) of your own lab, most likely as a faculty member at an academic institution.

*For our purposes, we assume that you have already joined a mentor’s lab. Also, we use mentor in the singular, but you may have more than one.
“Through research each scientist grows as a human being and helps others to do likewise.”
- Pope John Paul II
Building Blocks of a Career Path

- **Inspiration needs follow-through**
- **Motivation Inspiration**
- **Skills and Knowledge**
- **Flexibility**
- **Support Network**
- **Opportunity**

*Things that keep us going*

*Things change .. Be open, finish tasks, develop transferrable skills*

*It’s OK to fail …as long as we don’t stop there*

*We can’t do it alone … and we are not alone*

*Recognize … Seize!*
NCI Diversity-Focused Research Training Opportunities:

- Extramural CURE Program:
  https://www.cancer.gov/about-nci/organization/crchd/diversity-training/cure

- Intramural iCURE Program:
  https://www.cancer.gov/about-nci/organization/crchd/diversity-training/icure

Tips for Grant Applications:

- Find NIH grants and funding information:
  https://grants.nih.gov/grants/oer.htm

- Visit NIH extramural diversity website:
  https://extramural-diversity.nih.gov

- Learn about peer review at NIH Center of Scientific Review:
  https://public.csr.nih.gov/ApplicantResources/Pages/default.aspx