CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF THE OUTSTANDING INVESTIGATOR AWARD (R35)

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Today’s Update

- Brief summary of earlier recommendations
- Report from the R35 Working Group meeting in February
- Next steps
Working Group Members

- Gene Hayunga, Co-chair
- Caroline Signore, Co-chair
- Sarah Glavin
- Diana Bianchi
- Frances Jensen
- Gregory Kopf
- Ruth Lehmann
- Stephen Petrill
- George Saade
Summary of Earlier Recommendations

- Length: Up to 8 years
- Budget: Up to $750K/year (direct costs)
- PI effort: At least 50%
- Scientific topics: Should not be restricted to specific research areas -- any topic that is appropriate for NICHD should be eligible.
- Other considerations:
  - Should support the kind of PI who will generate new ideas.
  - Could promote high-risk or transformative research.
  - Mentorship, service, and collaboration are important.
  - Should encourage some kind of institutional commitment.
Continued Discussion

Unanswered questions:

- How many R35 awards should NICHD plan to make? What would they cost, and what would effect would that have on the RPG pay line?

- What is the most appropriate career stage for R35 investigators? (e.g., 1st Type 2 renewal? PIs with longer track records? or with multiple R01 awards?)

Modeling size of the potential applicant pool:

- Analysis done by OSPAC to identify how many PIs will be approaching renewal of their first R01 vs. those who are approaching their second R01 renewal.
Need to clarify the purpose: (What is the problem we’re trying to solve?)
- Foster innovation and creativity?
- Reduce time spent writing applications?
- Protect “vulnerable” PIs – i.e., so-called “Valley of Death”?

Need to identify the type of PI to target:
- Consider two tiers: emerging scientific leaders vs. well-established investigators.
- Develop appropriate review criteria for each type of PI.
Further Recommendations

Some Next Steps:

- Continue Working Group discussions.
- Consider small scale piloting of the R35, with appropriate evaluation.
- Learn from the experience of other ICs.
Comments, Questions