

Four pages to fill in as you plan: an eligibility check, a worksheet that ties each training need to your sponsor's support, an attachment tracker, and a timeline. Tick a box only once you've checked it against the current notice. This workbook doesn't decide eligibility; NIH does.

Eligibility and submission check

- Target Institute or Center

Internal deadline and who submits

Open eligibility or policy questions

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Needs, training and sponsor support

One row per development need. Each need should show up in three places: your candidate materials, your training plan and your sponsor's statement. This is our own planning method, not an NIH scoring formula.

Development need	Training activity and milestone	Sponsor commitment and evidence

A made-up example. Need: longitudinal modeling. Training: a methods course, monthly co-sponsor meetings, and a preregistered analysis milestone. Sponsor support: the sponsor statement names the same mentor, meeting schedule, dataset access, and who gives feedback.

The three review criteria

Candidate's Preparedness and Potential

Does the record, viewed in context, show the qualities and potential needed to benefit from the proposed training?

Goals, prior experiences, candidate self-assessment, scientific perspective, and reference letters.

Research Training Plan

Is the plan rigorous, feasible, developmentally appropriate, and likely to provide meaningful training?

Specific Aims, research strategy, training activities, milestones, responsible conduct of research, and environment.

Commitment to Candidate

Do the sponsor team and organization make specific commitments aligned with the candidate's goals and needs?

Sponsor commitment statement, mentoring approach, resources, and institutional support.

Current review criteria: [Source D](#).

Attachments

For each file, note who drafts it, who reviews it and what's still open. Check NIH's current page-limit table rather than reusing an old lab template.

Attachment and what it covers	Drafted by	Reviewer, status or open issue
Goals, Preparedness and Potential Overall goals, preparation, a self-assessment with 2 to 4 strengths and 2 to 4 development areas, and a scientific perspective.	Candidate	
Training Activities and Timeline Activities by year, percent effort totaling 100% in each year, links to development areas, and the transition to the next career stage.	Candidate with sponsor	
Research Training Project Specific Aims Goals, objectives, expected outcomes, and likely impact of the proposed project.	Candidate with scientific feedback	
Research Training Project Strategy Scientific foundation and rationale, approach, feasibility, expected challenges, and alternatives in the candidate's own words.	Candidate with scientific feedback	
Training in Responsible Conduct of Research Format, subject matter, faculty participation, duration, and frequency. Online-only instruction is not sufficient.	Candidate with program and sponsor	
Sponsor(s) Commitment Statement Specific supervision, mentoring, training, resources, and commitments. Sponsor and co-sponsor statements are combined into one PDF.	Sponsor team	
Biographical Sketch materials The current Biographical Sketch Common Form and NIH Biosketch Supplement required by Forms-I.	Each named contributor	

Current instructions. Preliminary data and extensive experimental detail aren't required. The strategy still needs enough detail to assess rigor and feasibility, and it must be in the candidate's own words.

Attachment instructions: [Forms-I fellowship guide](#). Limits: [current NIH page-limit table](#).

Timeline and sources

Adapt this sequence to your institution's deadline. It's our suggested order, not an NIH requirement.

- 1. 12 weeks before**
Confirm the active notice, participating Institute or Center, eligibility, internal deadline, registrations, sponsor team, and grants-office owner.
- 2. 10 weeks before**
Write the candidate self-assessment and turn each development area into a training activity, sponsor commitment, and observable milestone.
- 3. 8 weeks before**
Lock the research question, aims, feasibility boundary, expected challenges, and alternatives. Ask for targeted scientific critique.
- 4. 6 weeks before**
Draft the candidate-owned attachments in Forms-I order. Build the year-by-year effort table and check that every year totals 100%.
- 5. 4 weeks before**
Reconcile the candidate narrative, research plan, sponsor statement, facilities, and letters. Remove contradictions and unsupported promises.
- 6. 2 weeks before**
Run page-limit, file-format, accessibility, citation, privacy, and NOFO-specific checks. Hand the administrative package to the authorized submitter.
- 7. After submission**
Use eRA Commons to confirm that the assembled application image is complete and viewable before the verification window closes.

\$29,364 per year FY2026 predoctoral stipend	Apr 8, Aug 8, Dec 8 Standard F-series dates	Three criteria Scored in the current review framework
Institution's internal deadline	NIH due date you're aiming for	

NIH sources, checked October 1, 2026

A. Parent F31 notice PA-25-422 Purpose, Key Dates, Eligibility Information, and Application and Submission Information Open source	B. FY2026 NRSA stipend and budget levels, NOT-OD-26-044 Predoctoral Fellows and Institutional Allowance tables Open source	C. How to Apply: Fellowship Instructions for NIH and Other PHS Agencies, Forms-I Fellowship Supplemental Form, sections 6 to 11 Open source
D. Changes to NIH Fellowship Application Review Criteria Three scored review criteria Open source	E. Standard Due Dates F Series Fellowships table and deadline policy Open source	F. Table of Page Limits Fellowship application page-limit rows Open source
G. NIH notice NOT-OD-24-086: FORMS-I application packages Summary and key dates Open source	H. Previous parent F31 notice PA-23-272 Notice history (March 6, 2025 note); Eligibility Information Open source	I. NIH notice NOT-OD-24-107: changes to fellowship review criteria and application Notable changes Open source
J. FY2025 NRSA stipend levels, NOT-OD-25-105 Stipend levels table Open source	K. NIH notice NOT-GM-26-002: NIGMS participation in PA-25-422 Purpose and Key Dates (release date March 19, 2026) Open source	L. Predoctoral Individual National Research Service Award (F31) activity code page Application and Submission Information: Reference Letters Open source

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