

About me (Katrina – hi!)

- Postdoctoral Fellow in Epidemiology at Columbia University
- Life course social determinants of cognitive aging; epidemiologic methods
- K99/R00 from NIA: *“Investigating financial wellbeing, biological aging, and risk of Alzheimers disease and related dementias in a life course synthetic cohort”*

My K99/R00 Experience

- Big picture overview of K99/R00
- My K99/R00 timing and timeline
- Resources and advice I found most helpful

K99/R00 Big Picture

“Pathway to Independence” award

- A career development award -- career development and mentorship plans are key aspects
- Reviewed and scored based on the following components:

Component	What is it?
Candidate	You – your prior training, accomplishments, research promise, etc.
Career development plan	Proposed training goals and activities
Research plan	Proposed research aims and activities
Mentoring	The team that will mentor your development/training during K99 and help facilitate your transition to independence
Institution/environment	The infrastructure/resources of where you will conduct the work – i.e., do you have what you need to do the things you want to do

K99/R00 Big Picture

- “Pathway to Independence” award



In your application you want to demonstrate:

- A long-term career goal that would be supported by receipt of a K99/R00
- A record of research success and promise (e.g., publications, awards)
- A need for additional training to fill any knowledge gaps...
- ...and that filling these gaps sets you up for success in achieving your independent research career goal

K99/R00 Big Picture

- The award covers the final one to two years of postdoctoral training (**K99 phase**) + three years of independent research (**R00 phase**)
 - **K99 phase**: mentored research and training phase
 - **R00 phase**: independent research phase
 - In between, you go on the job market and secure an independent tenure-track faculty position (or equivalent)
 - R00 phase is contingent on securing a position – you apply to transition to the R00 phase

K99/R00 Eligibility (with respect to timing)

- Eligibility windows (may?) vary by K99/R00 program/institution (check institute you'll submit to)
 - E.g., NIA: *“K99 applicants must be in mentored, non-independent research positions, working in the U.S., with **no more than four years of research experience after Ph.D. conferral at the time of application.** Importantly, time spent conducting research in your Ph.D. lab after receiving your Ph.D. counts as postdoctoral research experience.”*

K99/R00 Timing

- Recommended timing varies – ask your mentor/program officer
 - In my experience, general advice was submitting in **Year 2 (or early Year 3)** -- builds in buffer time for resubmission
- The review process can take some time
 - I submitted at the end of Year 2 of my postdoc
 - I submitted in February 2023 and got my notice of funding in December 2023
 - Awarded on first submission (a best case scenario) and **process took ~9-10 months**
 - Resubmission often needed, so plan for it/build in that time
 - Opportunities/deadlines for [re]submission are in February, June, and October

My K99/R00 Timeline

• Summer 2022

- Started thinking about my K99/R00 a few months into Year 2 of my postdoc
 - Drafted pieces of [Biosketch](#) (e.g., Contributions to Science) in **May 2022**
 - Drafted [Specific Aims](#) I felt pretty good about in **July 2022**

• July – October 2022

- I had a few key papers under review/in revisions phases that I focused on through the Fall

• October – November 2022

- Drafted most of the scientific components
 - [Candidate](#) section and [Research Strategy](#)
- Established mentoring team and worked on their biosketches

• December 2022 – January 2023

- Letter requests, mentor statements, administrative and “boring” stuff (e.g., Description of Institutional Environment)

• February 2023

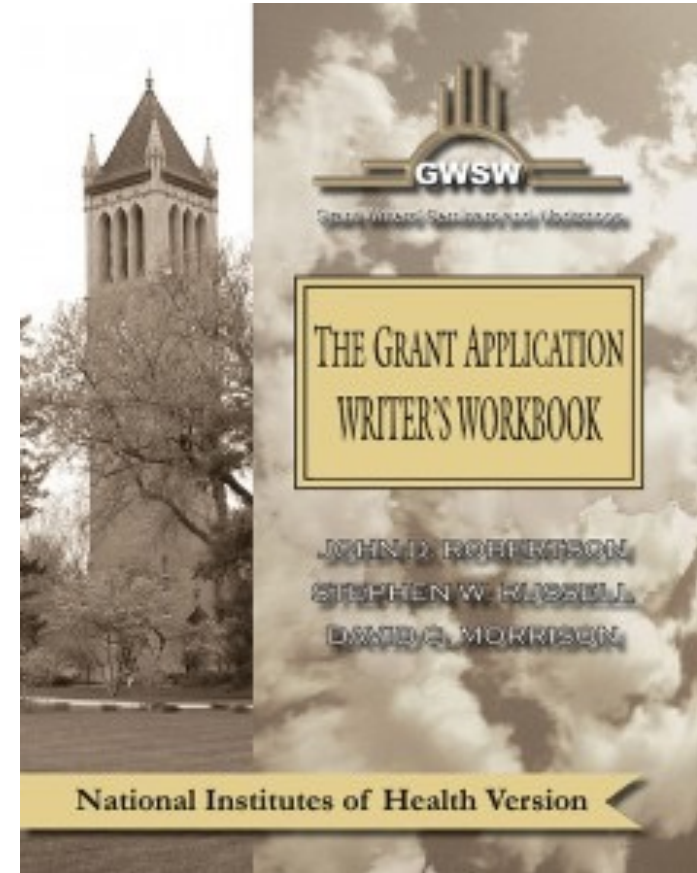
- Submitted my application (last month of Year 2 of my postdoc)

I had some interim/internal deadlines set by Columbia’s grants office that helped me structure my time - check with your institution.

Adhering to grants admin internal deadlines ended up making for a smooth submission process (at least in my experience).

Resources I found most helpful

- **Example K99/R00s!!**
 - Talking to other postdocs about major feedback they received from reviewers/summary statements (especially if needed to resubmit)
- Simple checklists of components (including page limits)
- Tips/Tricks websites
 - This one is quite good:
<https://www.grahamerwin.org/advice-for-k99r00-pathway-to-independence-award>
- My mentors
- Funding agency's webpage for K99/R00 – especially their list of currently funded applications
 - e.g., NIA:
<https://reporter.nih.gov/search/Qnhyel6ZtUmpUzJFkdSWiQ/projects>



Advice I found most helpful

If you feel lost coming up with an idea/aims, chip away at [Biosketch](#)

- Pull your google scholar, NCBI Bibliography, etc. and start to populate your Biosketch's "[Contributions to Science](#)"
 - Forces you to summarize your research to date
 - Helps you identify themes in your work
 - Helps you figure out how your research has evolved over time and where you see it headed (or where you might like it to go in the future)
 - Helps you identify training "gaps" you would like to fill to get your research where you want it to go
 - Helps you home in on a research topic; helps you narrow the aims

Other helpful K99/R00 tips

- Make it easy for your reviewer
 - Summary **tables** and **figures**
 - **Simple writing**
 - Be explicit, specific, clear & succinct
- Make the **distinction between the K99 and R00** components clear
- **Distinguish yourself** from your mentors (and be **explicit** about it in the proposal and mentor statements)
- **Be flexible** – writing process is quite iterative and components (including specific aims) may change (possibly a lot) as you're writing
- Hit on key themes throughout the proposal – link all the components
 - As components update, make sure application is **internally consistent**
 - E.g., specific aims, training aim/strategy, research aims/strategy, mentor statements, biosketches (yours and mentors)

Questions?

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