

VU & VUMC Limited Submission Opportunity

Winter 2026 NCI Pathway to Independence Award for Early-Stage Postdoctoral Researchers (K99/R00)

Applications due November 11, 2025

Vanderbilt (VU + VUMC): *This is a joint competition for VU and VUMC investigators. All investigators should follow these instructions.*

Overview

VU and VUMC may each submit **one application per scientific focus area** to the NCI Pathway to Independence Award for Early-Stage Postdoctoral Researchers (K99/R00) programs. The scientific focus areas are Cancer Data Science, Cancer Control Science, Molecular/Precision Cancer Prevention and Other Cancer Research. There are three separate RFAs, which allow different types of proposed research (e.g. basic, clinical): [PAR-23-286](#), [PAR-23-287](#), and [PAR-23-288](#). Each of VU and VUMC's four selected applicants (1/focus area) may apply to whichever RFAs best suit their research proposals.

The objective of the NCI Pathway to Independence Award is to help postdoctoral researchers complete needed, mentored training and transition in a timely manner to independent tenure-track (or equivalent) faculty positions. The program will provide independent NCI research support during this transition to help awardees to launch competitive, independent research careers. The K99/R00 award is intended to foster the development of a creative, independent research program that will be competitive for subsequent independent funding and help advance the mission of the NCI.

This program is designed for postdoctoral fellows with research and/or clinical doctoral degrees who do not require extended periods of mentored research training beyond their original doctoral degrees before transitioning to research independence. Researchers in the scientific areas of cancer control, cancer prevention and cancer data sciences are especially encouraged to apply.

Individuals must be in mentored, postdoctoral training positions for no more than 2 years as of the application due date to be eligible to apply to the K99/R00 program. The K99/R00 award will provide up to 5 years of support in two phases. The initial (K99) phase will provide support for up to 2 years of mentored postdoctoral research training and career development. The second (R00) phase will provide up to 3 years of independent research support, which is contingent on satisfactory progress during the K99 phase and obtaining an approved, independent tenure-track (or equivalent) faculty position.

In the mentored phase, the award covers **up to \$100,000 per year** toward the salary of the career award recipient, **and up to \$30,000 per year** toward the research development costs of the award recipient. The total cost for the independent phase (R00) may not exceed \$249,000 per year. This amount includes salary, fringe benefits, research costs, and applicable indirect costs.

See solicitations for full program and eligibility details:

[PAR-23-286](#) - Independent Clinical Trial Not Allowed

[PAR-23-287](#) - Independent Clinical Trial Required

[PAR-23-288](#) - Independent Basic Experimental Studies with Humans Required

Internal Application Process:

Anyone interested in being considered to submit a proposal must submit the following materials by **5 p.m. on November 11, 2025**. Note the different submission instructions for VU and VUMC postdocs, below.

1. Brief (2-page maximum) research plan including summary budget;
2. Statement of support from department chair/center director;
3. NIH Biosketch

For VU-employed Postdocs:

- Submit all application materials via InfoReady by November 11, 2025 at the following link: <https://vanderbilt.infoready4.com/#freeformCompetitionDetail/1996277>
- In your application, **indicate to which RFA and which scientific focus area** (cancer data science, cancer control science, molecular/precision cancer prevention, or other cancer research) you would apply.
- Any questions about this opportunity, eligibility, or the LSO process may be directed to VU-LSO@vanderbilt.edu.

For VUMC-employed Postdocs:

- Submit all application materials in a single PDF to Iso@vanderbilt.edu by November 11, 2025. Visit the [OOR site](#) for more detail.
- In your email, **indicate to which RFA and which scientific focus area** (cancer data science, cancer control science, molecular/precision cancer prevention, or other cancer research) you would apply.
- Any questions about this opportunity, eligibility, or the LSO process may be directed to LSO@vanderbilt.edu.