

CNCDP-K12

Child Neurologist Career Development Program – K12

Application Process Q&A

May 18, 2026

Executive committee

Brad Schlaggar, MD, PhD

CNCDP-K12 Role: Program Director

President & CEO, Kennedy Krieger Institute

Professor of Neurology & Pediatrics, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine

Amy Brooks-Kayal, MD

CNCDP-K12 Role: Scholar Selection and Oversight

Professor and Chair, Department of Neurology, UC-Davis

Erika Augustine, MD

CNCDP-K12 Role: Workforce Development

Associate Chief Science Officer, Kennedy Krieger Institute

Associate Professor of Neurology, Johns Hopkins University

Heather Fullerton, MD, MAS

CNCDP-K12 Role: Scholar Selection and Oversight

Chief, Division of Child Neurology, and

Kenneth Rainin Chair of Pediatric Stroke Care, UC-San Francisco

Barry Kosofsky, MD, PhD

CNCDP-K12 Role: Retreat and Curriculum Planning

Chaired Professor, Weill Cornell Medical College/New York Presbyterian

Brenda Porter, MD, PhD

CNCDP-K12 Role: Mentorship of Scholars and Applicants

Chief and Ponzio Family Chair in Pediatric Neurology, and

Professor of Pediatrics, Neurology, and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Stanford

Christopher Thompson, PhD

CNCDP-K12 Role: Program manager

Manager of National Training and Career Development Programs

Kennedy Krieger Institute

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Chaired Professor, Weill Cornell Medical College/New York Presbyterian

Ann Poduri, MD, MPH

CNCDP-K12 Role: Mentorship of Scholars and Applicants

Director of Research, Robert's Program on Sudden Unexpected Death in Pediatrics, and

Professor of Neurology, Harvard Medical School/Boston Children's Hospital

Renée Shellhaas, MD, MS

CNCDP-K12 Role: Mentorship of Scholars and Applicants

Senior associate dean for faculty promotions and career development, and

The David T. Blasingame Professor of Neurology, Washington University, St. Louis

Christopher Thompson, PhD

CNCDP-K12 Role: Program manager

Manager of National Training and Career Development Programs

Kennedy Krieger Institute

Brief History

- Neurological Sciences Academic Development Award (NSADA; 1993-2020)
- Child Neurologist Career Development K-12 Award Program (CNCDP-K12; 2016-present)

Overview

Limited to pediatric neurologists and NDD within 3 years of completion of clinical training

Up to 3 years of support for intensive, clinically relevant basic and/or patient-oriented research

Goal: "pre-K" --- preparation for individual K08, K23 or other career development award

Eligibility Criteria

- **US citizen or Lawful Permanent Resident (proof at time of Letter of Intent)**
- **No more than 3 years from completion of clinical training**
 - Exceptions for compelling reasons are possible
 - LOI can be submitted prior to completion of clinical training
- **Faculty appointment as Instructor or Assistant Professor at US academic institution once funding period starts**

Award



Up to 3 years of funding



Salary up to \$115,000/year



\$38,000/year for research-related expenses, including travel



Indirect Costs are reimbursed at 8% of modified total direct costs.

Your Institution must guarantee



At least **75% effort** pursuing **research and career development activities**



No more than 25% effort for clinical and other non-research/career development activities



To financially support 25% of full-time professional effort **and the remainder of the salary for research/career development to supplement K12**

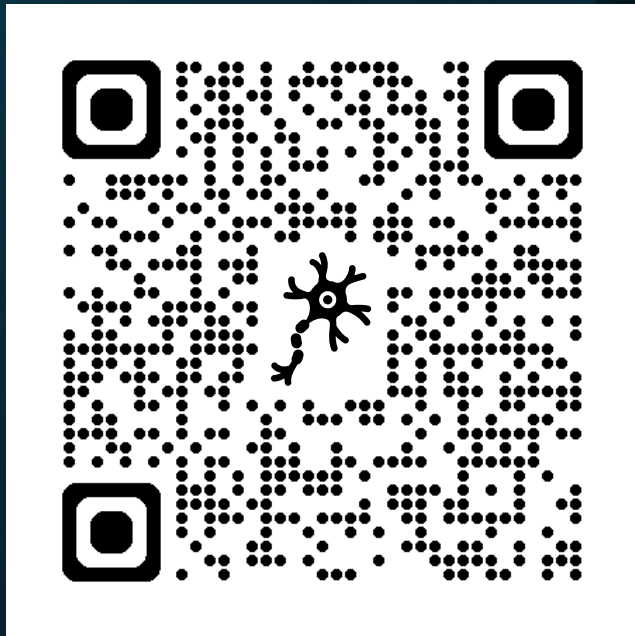


A minimum of 50% protected time and salary for at least 18 months after the 3-year funding period ends

Advisors

- **Each CNCDP-K12 scholar will be assigned a CNCDP advisor for the full funding period**
 - Advisors are physician-scientists in the field of child neurology and related disciplines with significant career mentorship experience
- **Quarterly interactions with CNCDP advisor, including:**
 - An in-person site visit by the advisor during the first year of funding
 - A remote site visit during the second and third years of funding
 - Discussions at the Annual Retreat
 - This also provides a unique networking opportunity with Advisors, leaders in child neurology and peers

Letter of Intent (Due June 18th)



- **Page 1: Statement of Intent**

Title, date of completion of clinical training, name of institution and mentor(s), brief career development plan

- **Page 2: Preliminary specific aims**

- **Page 3: ONLY for resubmission**

Explain how re-application was modified from the previous and why, one year later, you are still a candidate for a K12, rather than an individual K award

- **NIH format Biosketches for the candidate and mentor(s)**

Preferably in the new SciENCv format

- **Proof of US Citizenship/Lawful Permanent Resident:**

Copy of Passport/Green Card

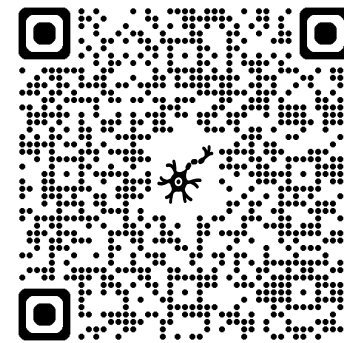
→ **Submit as a single PDF document to**

CNCDP-K12@kennedykrieger.org

Full Application

- All LOIs reviewed by CNCDP-K12 Executive Committee
- Invitations to submit Full Applications emailed by July 2nd (LOI due June 18, 2026)
- Full applications due Monday, August 10th
- Interviews will take place at the Annual CNCDP Retreat
 - November 6-8, 2026, at the Kennedy Krieger Institute in Baltimore, MD

Full Application



Introduction (Resubmissions only; 1 page)

Specific Aims (1 page)

Research Plan (6 pages)

Career Development Plan (3 pages)

Literature Cited (no limit)

Mentor(s) Statement (3 page maximum)

Resource Statement (No page limit)

Biosketches (No page limit)

Primary Mentor's Current and Pending Support (No page limit)

Statement of Institutional Support (no limit)

New FAQ section of the CNCDP Website



<https://www.kennedykrieger.org/cncdp-k12/apply/faqs>

Frequently Asked Questions

FAQs: Planning your application and LOI

FAQs: The full application

FAQs: Special Situations

FAQs: Planning your application and LOI

FAQs

Are biosketches needed from all mentors for the Letter of Intent (LOI)?

The primary mentor's biosketch is required for the LOI. Having biosketches from the other mentors is recommended for the LOI, but not required until the full application.

Is Current and Pending Support required for all LOIs?

The primary mentor's Current and Pending Support document is required for the full application, but not with the LOI.

Who is the best contact for technical/practical questions as I prepare to submit my LOI/full application?

All questions regarding the grant should be directed to CNCDP-K12@kennedykrieger.org. We do our best to answer them in a timely manner.

What is the ideal length of the career development plan for the LOI?

All information except the Specific Aims and the biosketch must fit into 1 page, so the career development plan likely should not be longer than a paragraph.

FAQs

What is a reasonable work breakdown for a faculty position on this award?

- *75% of your full-time professional effort must be dedicated to research/career development*
- *The combination of clinical effort and any other responsibilities should NOT exceed 25% and has to be explicit: ½ day per week equals 10% effort, 1 wk of full-time service is a minimum of 2% effort*
 - *Do not have “25% clinical effort”. There must be time for administrative responsibilities as well*
- *On call responsibilities cannot occur during protected time*
- *Vacation time must be prorated and cannot come from protected time only*

FAQs

How much data do I need to apply?

- *In theory you don't need any data, but your application will be more competitive if you can provide some data, which will also make it easier to write a compelling proposal*
- *If you are reapplying, it is recommended that you have data to show work/progress in the intervening year*

FAQs

I have the strongest data on project X, but long term I want to work on project Y. What should I write my grant on?

- *A very reasonable strategy is to start with the project that has the strongest argument, which often means preliminary data (project X), and use what you want to work on long term (project Y) for your K08/K23 application*
- *These projects should be related such that your approach to building your career appears rational, not opportunistic*

FAQs

Is it better to wait one year if still eligible or go in with less data?

Apply as soon as you can submit a well-designed and well-written application

How bad is it to go in again with an improved proposal that was not funded?

We have a significant number of funded scholars who re-applied after an initial unsuccessful application. It is critical to indicate how the application was modified in response to the prior review AND why, one year later, you are not yet a candidate for an individual-level K award.

Is it unlikely for the CNCDP to support more than one scholar from the same institution?

We have, but we prefer to spread funding to as many institutions as possible, which is one of the goals of the national program.

What do you look for in an institutional mentor?

At least one mentor with a track record of successful NIH funding is recommended, but you can have a team that includes non-NIH-funded mentors.

Questions from the live webinar

- How many mentors should I have, and what expertise should they cover?
 - There is no required number. The right team is the one that covers the gaps identified in your career development plan. Two to four mentors is common; larger teams can be harder to coordinate effectively.
 - A few guiding principles: (1) if your primary mentor is not a physician-scientist, include at least one who is; (2) each mentor should have a distinct, clearly defined role; (3) your application will need to specify meeting frequency and how you will coordinate input across the team.
- What percentage of LOIs result in an invitation to submit a full application?
 - Historically over 95%. The most common reason for a non-invitation is that the applicant falls outside the clinical training eligibility window (currently no more than three years post-completion). The LOI stage is primarily a brief eligibility screen; the Executive Committee does not want applicants investing time in a full application if a basic eligibility issue would disqualify them.

FAQs: The full application

FAQs

- **What is a “good” start-up package that would assist in showing that the institution is supporting me?**
 - *Your institution should make the commitment of:*
 - *a tenure-eligible faculty position*
 - *a statement indicating that if the K-12 research funds are insufficient to complete the proposed work the institution will provide necessary funding/resources*
 - *18 months of 50% effort protected time and additional support as needed, so you can succeed in getting a K08/K23*
 - *independent space and additional start should the K08/K23 (or equivalent) be awarded*

FAQs

Will the full application need to be initially processed by the institution administrators, who will then submit it online, or will I submit the application myself online?

The applicant will upload the full application via our application portal. Many institutions require you to notify them in advance of your submission and may require institutional review before submission. Definitely check with your institution's grants office in advance to find out what the rules are at your institution.

For the full grant, the instructions state it is "not required" to have letters of support from all mentors, but is this recommended?

The primary mentor must provide a statement (not to exceed two pages) regarding their availability, suitability, mentoring history, mentorship plans, etc., as outlined in the application materials. If there are additional co-mentor(s)/secondary mentor(s), a separate statement can also be included (maximum 1 page). In toto, the mentor and co-mentor letters should not exceed 3 pages.

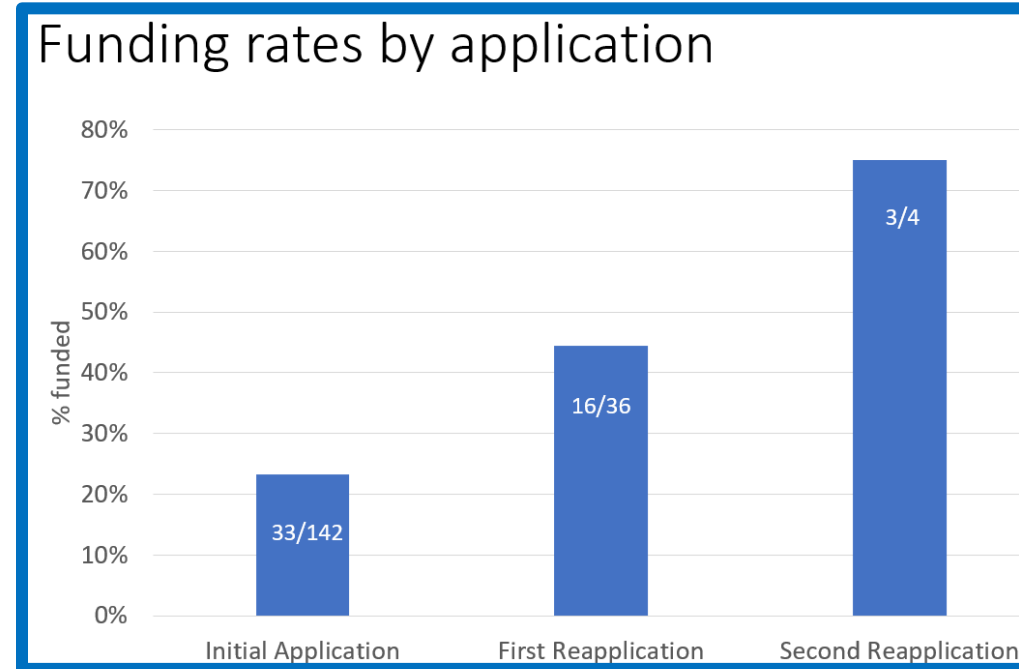
FAQs

Is it correct that a budget does not need to be attached with the full grant submission?

The grant mechanism predetermines the budget, so you do not need to include a budget with the application. However, a budget may be required by your institution as part of pre-application routing and approval

What is the applicant success rate for receiving K12 funding on the first attempt?

The CNCDP-K12 award is highly competitive, with ~6 funded scholars per cycle. We have had 15-26 applicants per year.



Questions from the live webinar

- Will the interviews have structured questions this year?
 - The Executive Committee continues to refine this format based on applicant feedback, and has used fully structured, fully unstructured, and hybrid approaches in prior years. The likely approach will be a hybrid: one or two structured questions to open, followed by open-ended conversation. The interview is designed primarily to help *you* - to give informal feedback on your application, connect you with relevant senior investigators, and support your path toward an individual K award.

FAQs: Special Situations

FAQs

Can I move to a different institution after my initial application?

- *YES---we've had multiple instances*
- *You will need to submit an institutional support letter of your new institution guaranteeing full research support in a comparable academic environment*
- *You will need to have a letter of support from your mentor(s) to demonstrate that the local mentor and mentorship team is appropriately configured and is fully supportive*
- *You will need to update your specific aims and your career development plan and/or attest to not needing any changes*
- *The Executive Committee of the CNCDP will review the above to make a determination*

FAQs

Can I apply for CNCDP-K12 and K08/K23 at the same time?

- *Technically, yes, but we don't recommend it*
- *The decision about funding through the CNCDP-K12 is made by the Executive Committee of the CNCDP, not by NINDS/NIH.*
- *A better strategy might be to use the review process and experience of the CNCDP to bolster your individual K award application*

FAQs

Can I have the K12 award in tandem with another career development award?

- *In general, no.*
- *There are some unique circumstances in which this would be allowed. For example, some Scholars were awarded a Pediatric Epilepsy Research Foundation (PERF) grant concomitant with the K12. This is acceptable so long as the PERF funds are not used to cover the same 75% protected time as the K12. Most people use PERF funds to hire postdocs/assistants, purchase research supplies, or fund additional protected time.*

Questions from the live webinar

- If two applicants from the same institution apply, does the program's preference for geographic spread apply only to the same cohort, or also across overlapping cohorts?
 - Both. The program looks at funding distribution globally, not just within a single cohort year. Spreading the award across institutions and geographies is a stated program objective, and the progress report tracks breadth of institutional representation as a success metric. That said, there is no hard rule; applicants from the same institution in consecutive cohorts have been funded. The strongest applications with the strongest career development plans remain competitive; geographic spread is a prioritization factor, not an absolute bar.
- Which NIH institute funds the CNCDP?
 - NINDS

**These questions
(and more) are
addressed in the
FAQ section of
the CNCDP
Website**



<https://www.kennedykrieger.org/cncdp-k12/apply/faqs>

Need more
information?

Please don't hesitate to contact
us with additional questions at
cncdp-k12@kennedykrieger.org