

Clarifying Percent Effort and Support for Career Development (K) Awardees

In response to questions about [career development \(K\) award](#) policies, NIH issued a Guide Notice [NOT-OD-17-094](#) in 2017, to clarify percent effort requirements for K award principal investigators (PIs), and acceptable sources of research support. This document provides additional context regarding K award policies on percent effort.

For most K award programs, the K award PI (K awardee) must commit at the *minimum 9 person months*, equivalent to 75% full-time professional effort, directly to their research project and career development activities. The remaining effort (up to 25%) can be devoted to additional research, teaching, clinical work, or other efforts complementary to career development of the K awardee. NIH provides some salary support as part of the K award, and often institutions will supplement the salary of these K award PIs up to a level that is consistent with the institution's salary scale. [NOT-OD-17-094](#) clarified that salary *supplementation* for the K awardee's time spent devoted to the career development award and directly related to the research project is allowable, but must be from non-Federal sources, which can include institutional sources, and must not require extra duties or responsibilities that would interfere with the goals of the K award. For additional research projects, the effort not directly committed to the K award (commonly up to 25%), K award recipients may devote effort, with *compensation*, from Federal or non-Federal research projects as principal investigator, or in another role (e.g., co-Investigator), as long the specific aims of the other supporting grant(s) differ from those of the K award (see Figure 1). K awardees may also be compensated for effort devoted to teaching or clinical activities.

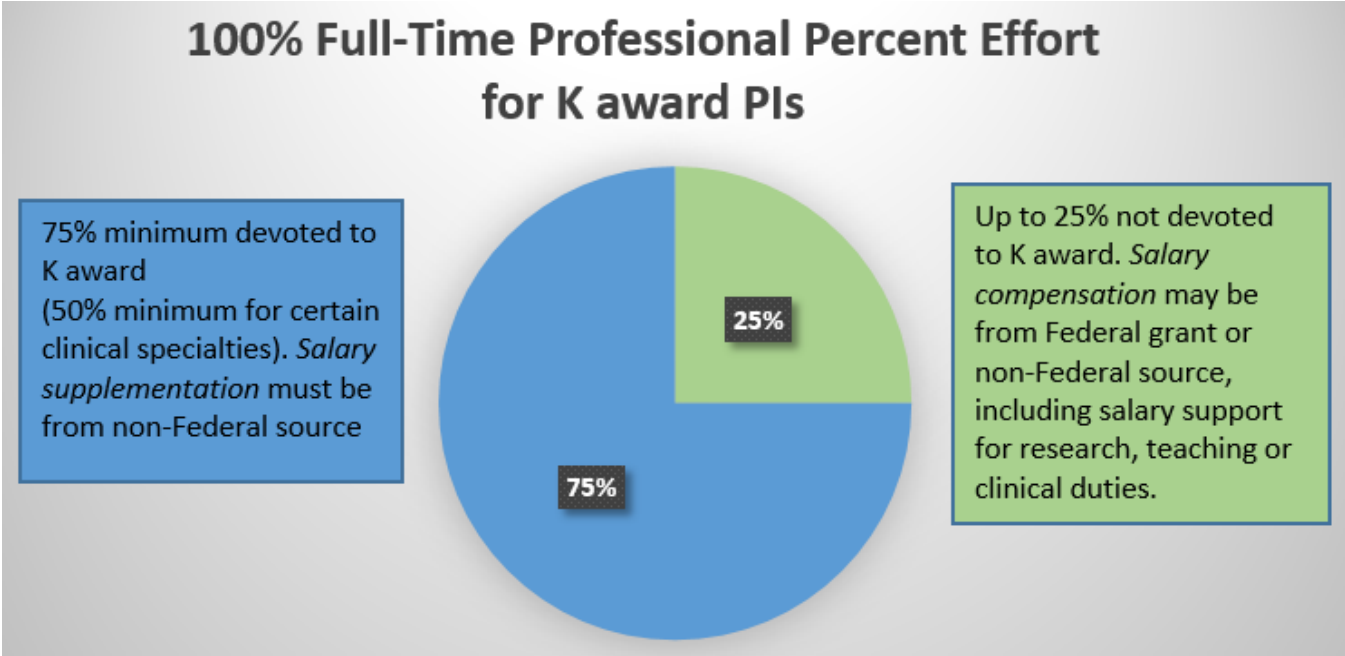


Figure 1: Salary supplementation and compensation during the entire period of K award (up to 5 years)

Most K programs are *mentored* career development awards, where a faculty mentor provides guidance to support transition of the K award recipient to independence. On mentored K awards of a 3-5 year duration, NIH policy provides a transitional period to permit the K award PI to apply for and if awarded, lead, an independent research project. If the mentored K awardee successfully becomes a PD/PI of a peer-reviewed research award from NIH or any other Federal agency during the final two years of their K award, they are permitted to reduce the effort devoted to the aims of the K award project from a minimum of 75% to a minimum of 50%. At the time the new research grant is awarded, this reduced effort on the K award may be replaced by effort and corresponding salary from the research award, so that the combined total research commitment of the PI remains 75% or more for the duration of the mentored K award (see Figure 2).

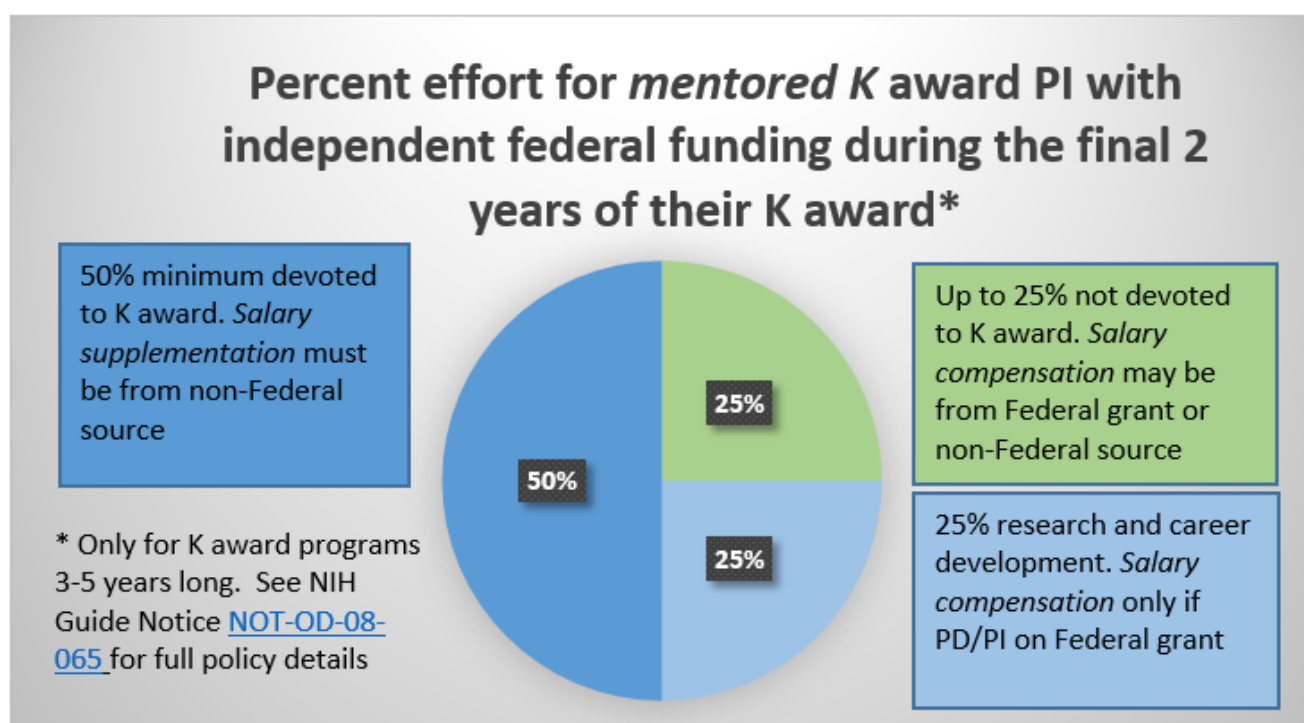


Figure 2: Reduced effort during the final two years of a mentored K award

Additional resources:

- [Frequently asked questions](#)
- [NIH Grants Policy Statement](#)
 - [level of effort](#)
 - [concurrent support](#)
 - [temporary adjustments to the percent effort requirement](#)

Contacts:

- Contact the grants specialist listed on the notice of award for guidance specific to you.
- General policy questions may be directed to the Division of Biomedical Research Workforce at NIHTrain@mail.nih.gov.