

CTSI Spotlight



Taking the Leap to Independent Investigation: Writing Workshop for Preparing a Career Development Award Proposal

Since 2016, the Career Development Award Grant Writing Workshop Series, sponsored by the Clinical and Translational Science Institute, has helped 50 early career faculty and postdoctoral trainees from across five BU schools develop skills to write their career development award (CDA), and propel them as independent investigators with an attentive eye on groups known to be less represented in biomedical research.

This workshop series consists of seven, 2-hour sessions, providing both senior faculty and peer mentoring on writing and revising draft proposals, followed by a mock review session to get critical feedback for final revisions. The expected outcomes for participants are the preparation of a competitive proposal that can be submitted at the end of the workshop series and to get funded. Nearly all participants submitted their proposal within four months of completing the workshop and 67% were awarded a NIH K Award or foundation award such as the American Heart Foundation and American Academy of Neurology.

Offered semiannually, applications will be open next in November 2023 and again in July 2024 to those who will be remaining at BU with the goal of submitting their grant application for the upcoming deadlines. Participants gain general principles related to NIH grant writing and learn from researchers who have successfully applied for NIH and foundation funding. The workshop series directors, [Natalia Morone, MD](#), Associate Professor of General Internal Medicine, and [Robyn Cohen, MD, MPH](#), Associate Professor of Pediatrics, assist participants to:

- **Writing a concise, rigorous Specific Aims page for a CDA application.**
- **Collaborating with mentors to formulate and refine a career development and research plan.**
- **Writing all sections of a CDA application using appropriate grant sponsorship strategies and with consideration of review criteria.**
- **Providing constructive peer feedback on interim drafts of sections of CDA proposals, the ultimate goal being the submission of a successful CDA proposal.**

For early career faculty and post-doctoral trainees who need support prior to applying to the Career Development Award Grant Workshop Series, the BU CTSI offers the Program of Early Research Career Development that provides a clear understanding of the grant writing process, guidance on writing a Specific Aims page, support for manuscript writing, and suggestions about mentorship.

Please visit our [website](#) for more information and sign up for the CTSI Newsletter [here](#).

"It had a major impact on my knowing what I needed to do for each section and the language that reviewers were expecting to see... There is specific language that is NIH-speak that I needed to understand and get clear about... It was particularly helpful to know the career development part, and understand what the reviewers would like to see how the applicant building up the application based on the previous accomplishment."

Anonymous Participant Feedback

BU CTSI Support

With support from the BU CTSI staff and faculty, participants learn more about and are encouraged to use the [CTSI's Offerings & Resources](#) aimed to help them build their research support networks to ensure the success of their research projects. Participants can also request no-cost research consultations from BU CTSI services at any point during their research study through the [Research Navigator Team](#).