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[NIH Awards First Batch of Grants in Program to Help Young Scientists](#)

The National Institutes of Health announced today the [first 58 recipients](#) of a new kind of grant designed to help young scientists make the transition from postdoctoral appointments to faculty positions. The agency developed the [Pathways to Independence](#) awards because new biomedical researchers [increasingly work many years as postdocs](#) before they land their first academic jobs in middle age, if they ever even do that.

Postdocs are typically barred from receiving the agency's principal research grants or serving as principal investigators until they land faculty appointments. The new awards will provide postdocs with two years of financing to develop their own ideas, with a three-year extension if they gain a faculty job. The NIH's director, Elias A. Zerhouni, has said he hopes the grants will serve as a "dowry" making the recipients more attractive to potential employers.

The NIH chose the first recipients from among 900 applicants. The agency expects to make an additional 150 awards in 2007 and may expand the size of the program further, depending on results. Today's recipients represent a fraction of all aspiring scientists, but Dr. Zerhouni has said the agency wants to do what it can within its fiscal constraints to help the best to succeed.