

National Institute of Nursing Research

Workforce Plan: FY 2002-2003

Introduction

The following workforce planning analysis recognizes the importance of linking human resource strategies to the mission of NINR. The mission of NINR is to support clinical and basic research to establish a scientific basis for the care of individuals across the life span, the promotion of healthy lifestyles, and the promotion of quality of life in those with chronic illness. The Institute accomplishes this mission by conducting basic and clinical research intramurally and by directing a national program of extramural research and research training in nursing science.

Workforce Skills

The Institute accomplishes its goals by the employment of a diverse staff of scientists, science administrators, research review specialists, program support staff and others. The skills required for mission accomplishment represent a delicate balance of scientific expertise, grants management experience, and support services proficiency, all working in concert to maximize the return on the Institute's investment in leading edge research. Each of these components is vital to the work of the others, and imbalances created by training deficiencies or position vacancies of any significant duration impair the ability of the entire organization to perform the work with which it is charged. It would be of little value to receive applications for the funding of promising research unless the information system, peer review, grants management, procurement, and other support structures were in place and adequately staffed to properly evaluate and rank the proposals, award the grants, monitor and direct the progress of the research, and manage and report the funding associated with the grants.

Mission Changes

No significant changes in the mission of NINR are anticipated, but there will be a renewed emphasis on intramural clinical research and on research training activities in the coming years. As a result, much of our expected hiring during fiscal years 2002 and 2003, shown in the attached hiring plans, will be concentrated in our intramural research program. Specifically, we contemplate hiring during FY2002 to fill the vacant Scientific Director and Clinical Director vacancies, as well as several other clinical research positions. We will continue that pattern in FY2003 with additional intramural hiring to take advantage of several clinical research opportunities.

Recruitment, Retention, and Training Strategies

As recruitment for highly skilled, especially scientific, positions has become more competitive, and attracting qualified individuals to Federal employment more difficult, we are pursuing more aggressive recruitment and retention strategies, including expanding areas of consideration, proactively seeking out qualified candidates from among faculty

and staff of leading academic and healthcare institutions, promoting the NINR and NIH as career-enhancing and family-friendly work environments, offering training and experiential incentives, and investigating a range of financial incentives, including recruitment and retention bonuses that might be employed in particularly competitive situations.

Workforce Effects of Expected Attrition

The demography of NINR indicates that we should expect few, if any, retirements among the Institute's staff during the next couple years, but the relatively high quality of the current staff, combined with competitive salary pressures, is likely to lead to moderate attrition attributable to separations to other agencies and the private sector. NINR addresses these potential losses through a combination of staff training to ensure continuity in skill mix and an aggressive and ongoing recruitment program to ensure that vacancies do not persist and become compounded by succeeding attrition.

Impediments to Recruitment and Retention

In the short term, unexpected and protracted freezes and other restrictions on hiring and promotions are the most significant and damaging factor in the loss of qualified staff and prospective employees. In the long term, salary and other income restrictions, lack of office and laboratory space at NIH, and restrictive Federal employment rules pose serious obstacles to acquiring and maintaining a highly skilled and motivated workforce.

Delegations

NINR has successfully delegated much operational responsibility to front-line managers, including organizational budgeting and financial management, position management and organizational analysis, and operational procedures.

Barriers to Achieving Workforce Restructuring

We have recently restructured NINR so that the current structure is ideally suited to well-managed growth. Additionally, we would request that hiring controls be lifted to allow us to fill out the gaps in staffing, increase employee-supervisor ratios and spans of control, and provide more front-line scientific resources to further the Institute's mission.

NINR Hiring Plans for FYs 2002/2003

	FY 2002	FY 2003	Total
INTRAMURAL			
Senior Investigators ¹	0		0
Investigators ¹		1	1
Other MD/PhDs, in FTE positions	1		1
Other MD/PhDs in non-FTE positions (IRTA, VF)		1	1
Other lab/clinical staff => GS-13	1	1	2
Other lab/clinical staff =< GS-12	3	2	5
Admin/support staff => GS-13			0
Admin/support staff =< GS-12	1		1
Infrastructure support => GS-13			0
Infrastructure support =< GS-12 ²			0
Summer and other temps not listed above (include summer IRTAs)	18	18	36
TOTAL INTRAMURAL	24	23	47
EXTRAMURAL			
HSAs/SRAs and other senior level science administrators => GS-13	2	2	4
Other science administration positions =< GS-12	2	2	4
Grants Management and R&D Contract Staff => GS-13 ³			0
Grants Management and R&D Contract Staff =< GS-12 ³	2	1	3
Administrative and support staff => GS-13		1	1
Administrative and support staff =< GS-12	3	1	4
Infrastructure support => GS-13			0
Infrastructure support =< GS-12 ²			0
Summer and other temps not listed above	4	4	8
TOTAL EXTRAMURAL	13	11	24
IC TOTAL	37	34	71
¹ Using OIR professional designations			
² Include all wage grade positions related to infrastructure in this group			
³ Includes 1101, 1102, 301 and 303 series where individual is engaged in these activities on a full-time basis.			