

# Office of the Director

## Workforce Plan: FY 2002-2003

### **1. What Skills are currently vital to the accomplishment of the agency's goals and objectives?**

The mission of the Office of the Director (OD) is to provide leadership, focus, and direction to the NIH research community, and to coordinate and direct initiatives that cross Institutes and Centers. The OD is responsible for the development and management of intramural and extramural research and research training policy, the review of program quality and effectiveness, the coordination of selected NIH-wide program activities, and the administration of centralized support activities essential to the operation of NIH.

The OD requires a varied skill mix, from MDs and PhDs, to administrative and technical support, to clerical support. This skill mix is required to assure that initiatives/program activities such as Loan Repayment Programs, Undergraduate Scholarship Program for Individuals from Disadvantaged Backgrounds, public hearings and scientific workshops on women's health research and rare diseases, behavioral and social science research, databases such as the International Bibliographic Information on Dietary Supplements and the Electronic Research Administration (eRA) Commons (grantee gateway to NIH electronic grants administration), Supplementing Science Curriculums in the Classroom, technology transfer and licensing; oversight and direction of intramural and extramural research, science policy issues, and many others are accomplished in accordance with mandated legislative and Congressional requirements and to meet the health needs of the American and International public.

Current skills needed include, but are not limited to: advanced biomedical research knowledge; expertise in budgeting and finance; advanced training (PhD or MD) in biological, physical, or neurobehavioral, behavioral and social sciences; assessment or evaluation methodology; information technology; written and oral communication, mediation and negotiation expertise; advanced managerial skills; congressional knowledge; analysis and policy development; legal ability and knowledge; advanced nursing; human relations consultation; and strategic partnering. In addition, the OD also needs highly skilled staff who have administrative and support skills to minimize the administrative burden on scientists and therefore maximize our resources to meet the mission of the OD.

**2. What changes are expected; How will this affect the OD's human resources; What skills will no longer be required; What new skills will the OD need in the next five years?**

**Changes** (the majority of changes and/or increases listed below are a result, directly or indirectly, of Congressional mandates)

More emphasis on bioethics and human subjects protection  
 Increased Congressional interest in NIH programs  
 Development of a clinical research program for dietary supplement use in chronic diseases  
 Expansion of A-76 requirements  
 Increases in number of grant applications and contract proposals  
 Increased emphasis on the recruitment of women and minorities on review panels, advisory councils and participation in clinical trials  
 Increased educational loan repayment and scientific training programs  
 Continuing changes in information technology  
 Increased activity in intramural and extramural technology transfer

**Skills No Longer Needed**

Mainframe programming  
 Staff who can perform only routine, previously established steps in carrying out a function.

**New Skills Required**

Innovative, versatile, problem solving  
 Electronic commerce and information technology  
 Patient care and management  
 Public education and awareness  
 Advanced degrees in business  
 Law (J.D.) degrees  
 Knowledge of intellectual property rights

**3. What recruitment, training, and retention strategies are being implemented to help ensure that the OD has, and will continue to have, a high-quality, diverse workforce**

Participation in NIH-sponsored recruitment trips; use of recruitment, relocation and retention bonuses (3R's); expanded recruitment areas; visits to Native American reservations; use of special pay authorities. In addition, the Acting Deputy Director, NIH, has established various diversity panels and committees for the purpose of improving racial/ethnic relations at the NIH.

Such programs as the Loan Repayment Program, the NIH Graduate Academy, and the Undergraduate Scholarship Program for Individuals from Disadvantaged Backgrounds

will assure success in recruiting and retaining a high-quality scientific workforce with strong diversity.

**4. How is the agency addressing expected skill imbalances due to attrition, including retirements, over the next five years?**

The turnover rate for the OD, including retirements for the past five years has been at approximately 25%. Attrition for the next 5 years is projected to be 32%. The use of internships; special employment programs, internal retraining, and the use of various appointment mechanisms other than Title 5 that facilitate more flexible hiring will assure the development of a high quality, diverse cadre of individuals with appropriate skills.

**5. What challenges impede the OD's ability to recruit and retain a high-quality, diverse workforce?**

Competition from private industry (especially in the IT and technology licensing areas), and from colleges and universities is a significant factor in the recruitment and retention of candidates with scarce or high demand skills. The ability of the aforementioned to hire much more quickly than we can and provide higher pay and benefits is a major deterrent.

The lack of diversity in educational pipelines for types of skills needed, the negative public image of Federal employment and the time consuming hiring process for Federal jobs are also significant impediments to our recruitment and retention efforts.

**6. Where has the OD successfully delegated authority or restructured to reduce the number of layers that a programmatic action passes through before it reaches an authoritative decision point?**

The OD has delegated personnel authorities to the Associate Directors, Division Directors and Office Heads who report directly to the Director, NIH. Where possible, these authorities may be re-delegated by the above individuals. These delegations have been instrumental in speeding up decision-making and hiring.

In the area of procurement, small purchase (\$2,500) authority has been delegated to the lowest practical level; while higher level procurement authority has also been delegated on a more selective basis. Coupled with the increased use of government purchase cards, these actions facilitate making purchasing decisions at the lowest level.

An IT investment board has been formed to establish minimum standards for the purchase of IT equipment and services thereby facilitating the decentralized purchase of these items.

In the last two years the OD has conducted annual budget retreats to improve the integration of budget and program planning and to facilitate a unified and simplified fund allocation decision process.

The eRA is making the research enterprise more effective and efficient by conducting interactive electronic transactions for the receipt, review, monitoring, and administration of NIH grant awards to biomedical investigators worldwide. This effort will lower costs and administrative effort, speed up the process, and provide better quality data.

**7. What barriers (statutory, administrative, physical, or cultural) has the agency identified in achieving workforce restructuring?**

Physical dispersion of OD programs in various buildings on and off campus

Inflexible personnel systems e.g., qualification requirements, lack of effective mechanisms to quickly remove non-performers

Lack of early out authority

## OD Hiring Plans for FYs 2002/2003

	FY 2002	FY 2003	Total
<b>INTRAMURAL</b>			
Senior Investigators <sup>1</sup>	0	0	0
Investigators <sup>1</sup>	0	0	0
Other MD/PhDs, in FTE positions	8	5	13
Other MD/PhDs in non-FTE positions (IRTA, VF)	2	2	4
Other lab/clinical staff => GS-13	2	1	3
Other lab/clinical staff =< GS-12			0
Admin/support staff => GS-13	37	8	45
Admin/support staff =< GS-12	29	8	37
Infrastructure support => GS-13	0	0	0
Infrastructure support =< GS-12 <sup>2</sup>	0	0	0
Summer and other temps not listed above (include summer IRTAs)	2	2	4
<b>TOTAL INTRAMURAL</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>EXTRAMURAL</b>			
HSA/SRAs and other senior level science administrators => GS-13	21	5	26
Other science administration positions =< GS-12	1		1
Grants Management and R&D Contract Staff => GS-13 <sup>3</sup>	12	2	14
Grants Management and R&D Contract Staff =< GS-12 <sup>3</sup>	3	3	6
Administrative and support staff => GS-13	32	15	47
Administrative and support staff =< GS-12	30	16	46
Infrastructure support => GS-13	0	0	0
Infrastructure support =< GS-12 <sup>2</sup>	0	0	0
Summer and other temps not listed above	3	3	6
<b>TOTAL EXTRAMURAL</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>146</b>
<b>IC TOTAL</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>252</b>
<sup>1</sup> Using OIR professional designations			
<sup>2</sup> Include all wage grade positions related to infrastructure in this group			
<sup>3</sup> Includes 1101, 1102, 301 and 303 series where individual is engaged in these activities on a full-time basis.			