**NIH Project Narrative Template**

*The Project Narrative is required for all NIH applications. It is limited to, at most, three sentences, and it must follow NIH font, margin, and formatting requirements. Refer to the NIH Application General Instructions and Research Instructions for the* [*full guidelines*](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide.html)*.*

**Content[[1]](#footnote-1):**

Describe the relevance of this research to public health in, at most, three sentences. For example, NIH applicants can describe how, in the short or long term, the research would contribute to fundamental knowledge about the nature and behavior of living systems and/or the application of that knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce illness and disability. If the application is funded, this public health relevance statement will be combined with the project summary and will become public information.

**Writing Tips:**

* This document is a succinct snapshot of your research that will be shared with the public. Therefore, it is important to write it in lay language that will be understandable to people outside of the sciences.
* Write the Project Narrative after completing the Research Strategy and Project Summary because, as Norins and Matheson suggest, “You will have a clearer picture of your project’s scope and how it impacts public health[[2]](#footnote-2).”
* There is no one way to write the Project Narrative. However, the four examples below, including one from a successful UWL PI, provide different ways to write this document based on how you want to covey your research to the public:
  + Can you clearly answer the question: “What is the relevance of your research to public health?”
    - Language suggestions: What is the weakness or shortcoming in the research field at this time? Example 1 uses the language “*Despite the clear linkage between/and*…hormone therapy *has not proven to be* cardioprotective” to succinctly introduce the shortcoming that will be addressed in the proposal, “This application *will identify*…*and test* the overall hypothesis… *It is expected that the proposed studies will provide timely information that can help form* the basis…”
  + How does your research fit with the purpose of the R15 mechanism?
    - Example 2 provides an overview of the project and then focuses specifically on how objective meets the goals of the R15 program, as well emphasizing graduates/undergraduates (a significant part of an R15) will be involved: “*This project aims to generate… The objectives of this proposal are consistent with the goals of the NIH Academic Research Enhancement Award (AREA) R15 program, and will have a significant impact on public health by providing…will be conducted by…two graduate students, and four undergraduate students.”*
* How does your research address the chosen Institute’s or Center’s mission and/or objectives?
  + Example 3 directly speaks to how the proposed research aligns with one of the Institute’s objectives as well as its mission: “The proposed research is clinically relevant *as it could lead to*…*the project supports objective 1 of the strategic vision of the NHLBI to*… *By involving undergraduates in this project*, both in and out of the classroom, the *project supports objective 8 to*…”
* Does your research provide new insight into the public health field?
  + Example 4’s language includes descriptions of what the research will provide and how it will be used to guide future research in public health: “*This study will yield a comprehensive structural characterization of…* *The structural data from this project will therefore be used to guide*…*potentially providing* new therapeutic agents *for treating* mycobacterial infections, as well as chemical genetic probes *to increase understanding of* this enzyme system.”

**Example Project Narratives from Norins and Matheson2 (1, 2, and 4):**

Example 1

Proposal Title: Regulation of GPER-mediated Signaling in the Vasculature by Calmodulin

Project Narrative: Despite the clear linkage between postmenopause and cardiovascular disease, hormone replacement therapy has not proven to be cardioprotective. This application will identify the novel G protein-coupled estrogen receptor 1 (GPER) as a novel calmodulin-binding protein and test the overall hypothesis that GPER activation triggers in vascular endothelial cells and smooth muscle cells feed-forward mechanisms that involve CaM both at the receptor level and downstream effectors, linking signaling pathways mediated by different estrogen receptors. Effects of GPER activation will also be tested on endothelial Ca2+ signaling and cell-cell interaction via modulation of calmodulindependent activities. It is expected that the proposed studies will provide timely information that can help form the basis for targeting estrogen receptor subtypes for preventive and therapeutic purposes.

Example 2 (This proposal has multiple PIs, and the Narrative emphasizes goals of the R15 program.)

Project Title: Chemoenzymatic synthesis of pradimicin analogues for novel antifungal and antiviral agents

Project Narrative: This project aims to generate a library of novel pradimicin analogs using a combination of enzymatic and chemical methods, and evaluate the antifungal and antiviral activities of these synthesized compounds. The objectives of this proposal are consistent with the goals of the NIH Academic Research Enhancement Award (AREA) R15 program, and will have a significant impact on public health by providing promising molecules for new anti-infective drug discovery. This multi-departmental project will be conducted by a team of researchers consisting of three faculty members, a technician, two graduate students, and four undergraduate students.

Example 3

Project Title: Mechanisms of cold storage lesion resistance in hibernating ground squirrel platelets

Project Narrative: The proposed research is clinically relevant as it could lead to the generation of cold storage lesions in platelets, extending their availability for transfusions. By studying hibernating 13-lined ground squirrels, the project supports objective 1 of the strategic vision of the NHLBI to “understand normal biological function and resilience” in exploring natural resilience to cold storage lesions in platelets. By involving undergraduates in this project, both in and out of the classroom, the project supports objective 8 to “further develop, diversify, and sustain a scientific workforce capable of accomplishing the NHLBI’s mission.”

Example 4

Project Title: Structural Characterization of the M. tuberculosis Thioredoxin System

Project Narrative: This study will yield a comprehensive structural characterization of the thioredoxin enzyme system from Mycobacterium tuberculosis, the causative agent of tuberculosis. Since the Mycobacterium tuberculosis thioredoxin system protects it from the oxidative attacks of human immune cells, it is currently being pursued as a promising new drug target. The structural data from this project will therefore be used to guide structure-based identification of inhibitors, potentially providing new therapeutic agents for treating mycobacterial infections, as well as chemical genetic probes to increase understanding of this enzyme system.

1. *NIH Research Instructions*. (2018). pp. R-38. Retrieved from <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Norins, L., & Matheson, S. (2014). *NIH R15 Grant Application Mentor: An Educational How-to Manual* (2nd edition). Bonita Springs, FL: Principal Investigators Association. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)