Name

WORKSHEET 1

Long-term career goals

Start with the science you want to do, then work back to what you need now. Rough answers are fine.

1. What scientific questions do I want to pursue?

What could you see yourself working on for 10 years or more?

2. What kind of lab or research role do I want to build?

Which tools and approaches would it use? Mark the ones you already know, are learning, or are new to.

3. What expertise, collaborators and environment would support that?

What kind of institution? Where else could you find resources you would need?

4. What is my next career stage, and what do I need to learn during it?

Include computational and analytical skills.

5. What can I do now to set up a smooth transition?

WORKSHEET 2

Concrete training plan

Pick two or three skills you need for your next stage. Name who will help and how you will know it is working.

My long-term goal (one sentence)	My next career stage

Skill I need to build	Who will help	How I will know it is working	By when
Something you cannot do yet	*Mentor, collaborator, course or workshop*	*A milestone you and your mentor can see*	*e.g., 6 months from now*
Technical skill			
Technical skill			
Professional skill *e.g., grant writing, mentoring, leadership, budgeting*			

SKILL, NOT EXPERIMENT

"Finish the Aim 2 optogenetics experiments" is an experiment. **"Learn to design optogenetic tools for cell-type-specific manipulation"** is a skill you will build, which a mentor can teach and a reviewer can assess.

WORKSHEET 3

My application timeline

Turn your plan into dates. If you have not picked an award yet, list what to look up and who to ask.

Where I am now

Current career stage	Date I started	Time in this stage at the deadline

Award I will look into	Eligibility to confirm, and who I will ask *Mark anything you have not verified TO CONFIRM*

Work backward from the deadline

Milestone	Target date	Who I need
Program officer contacted 8+ weeks before		
Pre-award office contacted 8+ weeks before		
Specific aims to mentors 8–10 weeks before		
Full draft to mentors 4–6 weeks before		
Letters in hand 2–3 weeks before		
Institutional deadline 1–2 weeks before		
Submit Deadline		
Resubmission, if needed Next cycle		

My next step after today	By when

WHO TO ASK

Program officer: science fit and eligibility.
Mentor and pre-award team: administrative questions, internal deadlines and forms.