

CareerTrac FAQs

Process of Joining Questions

How do ICs obtain access to CareerTrac?

1. Work with NIEHS to discuss pilot project
2. Develop cost estimate and timeline
 - a. Number of programs
 - b. Mechanisms
 - c. Number of trainees
3. Onboarding of new tenant and users into CareerTrac
4. As pilots become permanent partners, join MOU
 - a. Commitment to maintenance costs
 - b. Signed by EO
 - c. Minimum of 6 months' notice to exit

Can you upload other types of tables and graphs from which data can be pulled/collated?

No graphs can be uploaded. Tables are currently used by grantees in progress reports. This requirement can be evaluated later once the pilot is up and running.

Loading historic data into the CareerTrac database is possible. However, these uploads may be limited to data fields that already exist in CareerTrac and will require ICs to work with us for data cleaning and verification of data mapping.

Who should be on the dedicated staff from the IC?

The dedicated staff from your IC should be individuals who interact with your training programs and understand your goals for trainee tracking and program analysis. They must be able to provide insight to point our development team toward your vision, feedback on customizations, and approval for system updates.

How much would it cost?

The cost estimation is variable since we allow customization. It will depend on the level of effort it will take to create your specific interface. For example, pilot projects in FY2024 were estimated between \$96K-150K.

Is there any technical support?

Open Intelligence serves as ongoing development and support as funded. A MOU/SLA are in place.

Data Questions

Is there any validation of data entered by the user?

Yes. Many fields limit the options available for selection; some are aligned to specific categories chosen by an IC their portfolio analyses, and others may be conditional depending on previous selections.

Do trainees have to approve data pull from the Commons ID to CT or can this be automatic?

Items such as contact information or grant information may be automatically updated during our nightly import. Other items (e.g. Degree, Employment info) from Commons can be pulled into CareerTrac and is initiated by a user. This can be made automatic, and some ICs have chosen to do this for specific items, like prior degrees.

Besides the information coming from IMPACII, is the information collected in CareerTrac verified?

When/how does it get updated?

Historically, PIs have been responsible for updating trainee profiles, which is still the case for most programs. However, in 2022, CareerTrac was opened to direct trainee access (via Commons ID Sign-on) for a few programs. The PI reviews the information entered by the Trainee and approves or denies the updates to said profile.

A key principle of CareerTrac is not to duplicate data entry and to minimize effort. We recommend trainees to update any information that can be updated in the NIH Commons (e.g. Degree, Employment info). We import data nightly. This eliminates (or greatly reduces) duplications of effort and ensures data quality.

Who is responsible for the manual data collection/request for data? How are PIs/Trainees incentivized to enter data?

IC staff working with CareerTrac have primarily focused on engagement with their PIs to encourage use of CareerTrac. There are ongoing discussions for new features and reports to make it easier to view items that are available to import into CareerTrac.

PIs are not required to use CareerTrac, but to incentivize PIs to use CareerTrac some ICs have designed custom reports in the same format as their annual reporting tables. Since PIs are required to build these tables for annual reports, many choose to enter the data into CareerTrac to generate the tables more easily.

Can program officers reach trainees directly for updates or do the requests have to go through the PI?

Currently, the PI must initiate the request for the trainee to provide updates. However, some ICs are exploring options to customize this process for specific programs or groups.

Can the system send notifications to the trainees to update information at given periods of time?

Yes, this is possible and is in our development queue for prioritization.

Effort Questions

How burdensome is it for participants (trainees or PIs) to keep their information up to date?

Past burden estimates provided to OMB were averaged to 30 minutes per trainee for PIs, or 15 minutes for individual trainees.

Import/Export Questions

Can trainees export their information?

Yes, trainees can export their information from the trainee portal to use on resumes, applications, etc.

Can users import subsequent grant information from IMPACII?

Yes, users can import subsequent NIH grant information from IMPACII via Commons ID.

Could CareerTrac be used for tracking intramural trainees at NIH (i.e., IRTAs, CRTAs)

Yes, this is possible. However, pilot projects for intramural programs in the past identified challenges due to their differences in organizational structure that can be overcome with additional customizations for these specific programs.

Is there a possibility of using ORCID IDs?

Currently we can capture ORCID IDs and generate links to the individual's ORCID profile. We have explored the ability to connect directly to ORCID databases in the past; however, the piloting IC determined the potential benefit was not worth the costs at that time.