

**Application Deadline - Jan. 13, 2016**

**Award Activation - July 1, 2016**

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## **Program Description, Eligibility and Peer Review Criteria**

### **Success Rate**

### **Objective**

This program provides funding for trainees with outstanding potential for careers as physician-scientists in cardiovascular or stroke research during the crucial period of career development that spans the completion of research training through the early years of the first faculty/staff position. The award provides a supportive mentored experience during this period of transition. The award will (1) greatly enhance the awardee's chances of obtaining a high-quality faculty/staff appointment; (2) improve the awardee's success and retention in an investigative career in cardiovascular science; and (3) develop the mentoring skills of the awardee as a potential future sponsor.

The award will provide support for beginning physician-scientists for a minimum of one year and a maximum of three years of research training and the first years of the first faculty/staff (or equivalent) appointment, for a maximum of five years of support. It is strongly encouraged that the five years of the award run consecutively, but the applicant and sponsor may propose and justify an alternative plan for peer review consideration.

Individual awardees may take the award from the institution providing the research training component to another institution for the career development component (first faculty/staff appointment). The intent is to make the awardee a "free agent" who is empowered to stay at or move from the training institution while retaining the award. The sponsor during the faculty stage of the award may or may not be the same person who was the sponsor during the training phase.

### **Science Focus**

Research broadly related to cardiovascular function and disease and stroke, or to related clinical, basic science, bioengineering or biotechnology, and public health problems, including multidisciplinary efforts.

### **Target Audience**

At the *time of application*, the applicant must:

- hold a M.D., M.D./PhD., D.O. or equivalent doctoral degree and seek additional research training under the supervision of a sponsor/sponsor prior to embarking on a career of independent research.
- be enrolled in or have completed an Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)-approved residency or a clinical fellowship program associated with an ACGME-approved residency.
- have completed the clinical portion of their training program by the time of award activation. The applicant is responsible for identifying and working with a sponsor/sponsor to develop the application.

not have more than five years of postdoctoral research training (beyond clinical training).

- not have faculty/staff rank.

At the *time of award activation*:

- the applicant may not hold a faculty/staff appointment. (Exceptions: M.D. or M.D./Ph.D. with clinical responsibilities who hold a title of instructor or similar due to their patient care responsibilities but who devote at least 80 percent full-time effort to research training.)
- the sponsor may hold a M.D., Ph.D., D.O. or other equivalent degree. Because of the strong sponsoring component of this award and the importance of developing a meaningful relationship between awardee and sponsor; an individual sponsor may sponsor only one applicant to the program per year.

## **Citizenship**

At the *time of application*, must have one of the following designations:

- U.S. citizen
- Permanent resident
- Pending permanent resident. Applicants must have applied for permanent residency and have filed form I-485 with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and have received authorization to legally remain in the United States (having filed an Application for Employment Form I-765).
- E-3 - specialty occupation worker
- H1-B Visa - temporary worker in a specialty occupation
- O-1 Visa - temporary worker with extraordinary abilities in the sciences
- TN Visa - NAFTA Professional
- G-4 Visa - family member of employee of international organizations and NATO

**Individuals with J1 visas are not eligible.**

Awardee must meet American Heart Association citizenship criteria throughout the award.

**Exception:** Postdoctoral applicants outside the United States at the time of application, and who meet all other eligibility requirements for the Fellow-to-Faculty Transition Award, must provide visa documentation prior to award activation.

## **Location of Work**

American Heart Association research awards are limited to non-profit institutions, including medical, osteopathic and dental schools, veterinary schools, schools of public health, pharmacy schools, nursing schools, universities and colleges, public and voluntary hospitals and others that can demonstrate the ability to conduct the proposed research.

Applications will not be accepted for work with funding to be administered through any federal institution or work to be performed by a federal employee, except for Veterans Administrations employees.

The training component of the award may be completed at any accredited institution in the United States, although U.S. citizens or permanent residents may complete this training portion at a non-U.S. institution. All awardees must complete the faculty component at an institution in the United States.

Applicants are not required to reside in the United States for any period of time before applying for the award.

## **Annual Budget**

### *Training Stage of Award:*

**Salary/Fringe:** Up to \$50,000 for salary and fringe of the principal investigator; institution may supplement.

**Fringe Benefits:** Included in \$50,000

**Indirect:** The award does not allow indirect costs during the fellowship phase. Also, the AHA award does not allow costs for tuition or dependent allowance.

**Project Support:** Project related expenses such as salaries of technical personnel, consultative services, supplies, equipment, computer/electronics, travel, volunteer subject costs, publication costs, within the following limits:

- Minimum \$10,000
- Travel - \$3,000 per year
- Computer purchase - Association-wide allows \$5,000 for computer equipment/electronics

**Sponsor Support:** additional \$5,000 per year is available to support sponsor salary, projects costs, sponsor travel to accompany awardee to professional meetings

**Maximum Annual Award Amount:** \$65,000

### *Faculty Stage of Award:*

**Salary/Fringe:** Up to \$90,000 for salary and fringe of the principal investigator; institution may supplement salary

**Fringe Benefits:** Included in the \$90,000

**Indirect Costs** 10 percent (\$12,000)

**Project Support:** Project related expenses such as salaries of technical personnel, consultative services, supplies, equipment, computer/electronics, travel, volunteer subject costs, publication costs, within the following limits:

- Minimum \$25,000 per year
- Travel - \$3,000 per year
- Computer purchase - Association-wide allows \$5,000 for computer equipment/electronics

**Sponsor Support:** additional \$5,000 per year is available to support sponsor salary, projects costs, sponsor travel to accompany awardee to professional meetings

**Maximum Annual Award Amount:** \$132,000

**Award Duration:** Five years

### **Sample FTF budget (trainee)**

\$40,000 - PI salary

\$10,000 - plus fringes

\$50,000 - Total

\$15,000 - Project costs (\$10,000 + \$5,000 per year for sponsor)

\$65,000 - Annual Amount

**Sample FTF budget (faculty/staff)** \$75,000 - PI salary  
\$15,000 - plus fringes  
\$90,000 - Total

\$ 30,000 - Project costs \$30,000 (\$25,000 + \$5,000 per year for sponsor)  
\$120,000 - Annual Amount  
\$12,000 - 10 percent indirect  
\$132,000 - Total year amount

## Restrictions

- With one exception, this award may not be held concurrently with another AHA award (national or affiliate).  
**Exception:** A Fellow-to-Faculty Transition Award recipient may apply for and receive an affiliate Beginning Grant-in-Aid or Grant-in-Aid during the faculty phase. The awardee may request only project support for these AHA grants, since the Fellow-to-Faculty Transition Award provides significant salary support.
- This award is not for individuals of faculty/staff rank.
- Since the fellowship is considered a training award, a staff or faculty appointment cannot be held. (The exceptions are M.D. or M.D./Ph.D. with clinical responsibilities who hold a title of instructor or similar due to their patient care responsibilities but who devote at least 80 percent full-time effort to research training.)
- During the training period, awardees are expected to devote more than 80 percent full-time equivalent effort to research or activities directly related to their development into independent researchers, as opposed to administrative, patient care, or teaching responsibilities.
- A 75 percent full-time equivalent effort to research is required during the faculty component of the award.
- The Fellow cannot hold a comparable fellowship award.
- Current or prior recipients of an AHA Scientist Development Grant, Established Investigator Grant or Established Investigator Award (national or affiliate) are not eligible.
- Prior or current recipients of any NIH K-series awards are not eligible.
- The Fellow-to-Faculty Award is not renewable. An individual may hold this award only once.
- A minimum of one year of research training after award activation is required, prior to the transition to a faculty/staff appointment.
- An applicant may submit only one national application per deadline. If eligible, an applicant may simultaneously submit an application to the national award program and an affiliate. The proposed research plan may need to be adjusted based upon different length of award and dollars available. The deadline dates may be different for each submission. If both are funded, the applicant must choose one award.
- An applicant who is unsuccessful in a competition may resubmit the same or similar application three times (the original plus two [resubmissions](#)). The same or similar application submitted for the fourth time will be administratively withdrawn.

## Peer Review Criteria

Contacting AHA peer reviewers concerning your application is deemed a form of scientific misconduct and will

result in the removal of your application from funding consideration and institutional notification of ethical concerns.

To judge the merit of the application, reviewers will comment on the following criteria. Please be sure that you and your sponsor fully address these in your proposal. Each criterion will account for one-third of the overall score.

## **Criterion 1 - Evaluation of the Investigator**

1. Does the trainee have potential for a research career?
2. Are the trainee's career plans specified in the application?
3. Is this supported by the trainee's academic record and the assessment provided by the three letters of reference?
4. Does the trainee have prior research experience and/or publications?
5. Is there a clear rationale supporting the need for the proposed training?
6. What is the sponsor's assessment of the applicant?

## **Criterion 2 - Sponsor/Training Plan and Environment**

### **Sponsor/Training Plan**

1. Is the sponsor an independent investigator?
2. Does the sponsor have the experience to direct the proposed research training, as evidenced by their track record regarding productivity, funding and prior trainees?
3. Does the sponsor have adequate current funding to support the fellow's project?
4. Quality of a specific sponsoring plan that makes explicit the sponsor's ability to guide the awardee's completion of research training and compatibility of the sponsor's research area with that of the applicant to support direct acquisition of the appropriate scientific skills and approach.

### **Environment**

1. Does the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success for the training experience?
2. Is there evidence of institutional commitment?
3. Documented institutional commitment to protect more than 80 percent of the awardee's time for research during the training phase of the award.

## **Criterion 3 - Evaluation of the Proposal**

1. **Significance:** Does this study address an important problem broadly related to cardiovascular disease or stroke? What will be the effect of these studies on the concepts, methods and technologies that drive this field?
2. **Approach:** A new fellow may not have had adequate time to generate preliminary data. Applicants can present preliminary data generated by the sponsor. The assessment of preliminary data, whether generated by the sponsor or the applicant, should be put into perspective so that bold new ideas and risk taking by beginning investigators are encouraged rather than stymied. Are the conceptual framework, design, methods and analyses adequately developed, well integrated, well reasoned, feasible (as determined by preliminary data or the expertise available in the sponsor's and/or collaborator's laboratories) and appropriate to the aims of the project? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative tactics?
3. **Innovation:** Is the project original?
4. **Impact:** How does this project address the mission of the AHA, and how likely will this support enhance PI career development in the area of cardiovascular diseases and stroke?

# Fellow-to-Faculty Transition Award

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## **Annual Budget**

Training Stage of Award:

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**Fringe Benefits:** Included in \$50,000

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**Maximum Annual Award Amount:** \$65,000

Faculty Stage of Award:

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**Fringe Benefits:** Included in the \$90,000

**Indirect Costs** 10 percent (\$12,000)

**Project Support:** Project related expenses such as salaries of technical personnel, consultative services, supplies, equipment, computer/electronics, travel, volunteer subject costs, publication costs, within the following limits:

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