

# AHA Research Supplement to Promote Diversity in Science

---

## Purpose

To support research experiences for predoctoral and postdoctoral fellows from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups in science (Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian/Alaskan Native, or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander), under the primary mentorship of current AHA awardees.

## Overview

Only eligible AHA-funded investigators (below) are eligible to serve as the primary mentor for supplemental funding to support eligible trainees (below) from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. The predoctoral or postdoctoral candidate must be identified by the primary mentor in the joint application submission.

Key elements of a successful application will include:

1. A trainee who has demonstrated excellent potential for conducting research;
2. A plan of research that expands or augments the currently funded research project and the skills of the trainee;
3. A capable primary mentor who has constructed a strong development plan for the trainee; and
4. A training environment that will facilitate the success of the trainee.

The primary mentor and fellow will submit one application jointly. The primary mentor's institution will administer the project (if applicants are from more than one institution).

Maximum of two years of AHA support per trainee.

Each predoc/postdoc supported by AHA is expected to attend a scientific conference during the term of the award.

## Eligibility

### **Current AHA Awardee/Primary Mentor**

Only currently funded AHA faculty awardees with at least two years of funding remaining on the original award term at the time of application (April 1, 2021) may apply to serve as the primary mentor in the joint application with the designated trainee.

Current AHA awardees who hold the following grants are eligible to serve as the mentor for this supplement:

- AHA Merit Award
- Career Development Award
- Collaborative Sciences Award
- Established Investigator Award
- Transformational Project Award
- Project PIs of a funded Strategically Focused Research Network

## **Trainee**

### Predoctoral Fellow

- Must be full-time student working towards his/her degree and enrolled in a post-baccalaureate Ph.D., M.D., D.O., D.V.M., Pharm.D., D.D.S., Dr.PH., or Ph.D. in nursing or equivalent clinical health science doctoral degree program, who seeks research training with a mentor prior to embarking upon a research career.
- At the time of award activation, the trainee must have completed initial coursework and be at the stage of the program where he/she can devote full-time effort to research or activities related to the development into an independent researcher or a related career aimed at improving global cardiovascular health.

### Postdoctoral Fellow

At the time of supplement activation:

- Must hold a post-baccalaureate Ph.D. degree or equivalent, or a doctoral-level clinical degree, such as M.D., D.O., D.V.M., Pharm.D., D.D.S., Dr.Ph., Ph.D. in nursing, public health, or other clinical health science., or equivalent clinical health science doctoral student who seeks research training with a mentor prior to embarking upon a research career.
- May not be pursuing a doctoral degree.
- May have no more than five years of research training or experience since obtaining a post-baccalaureate doctoral-level degree (excluding clinical training).
- Will be expected to devote at least 80 percent of full-time work either to research or to activities pursuant to independent research (instead of administrative, clinical duties that are not an integral part of the research training program or teaching responsibilities).
- May not hold faculty rank.

### Exceptions

- M.D. or M.D./Ph.D. with clinical responsibilities who needs instructor or similar title to see patients, but who will devote at least 80% full-time to research training.
- R.N./Ph.D. with clinical appointment. Awardee will be expected to devote his/her time to research or activities directly related to the development into an independent researcher. All other eligibility criteria apply.

## Budget

AHA does not pay indirect costs on fellowships.

**Annual Stipend** - Matches the NIH scale for predoctoral and postdoctoral fellows at the time the AHA publishes its RFA.

<b>Stipend Levels for FY2021</b>	<b>Annual Stipend</b>
Predoctoral Fellow	\$25,320
Postdoctoral Fellow, based on years of experience:	
0	\$52,704
1	\$53,076
2	\$53,460
3	\$55,596
4	\$57,456
5	\$59,580
6	\$61,800
7 or more	\$64,008

### **Health Insurance**

Predoctoral Fellow: \$4,200 per year

Postdoctoral Fellow: \$10,850 per year

Note: Stipend may be used to further supplement health insurance cost, however, the health insurance allowance may not be used for any other purpose.

### **Project Support**

Predoctoral Fellow: \$2,000 per year, in addition to the stipend.

- No limit on any line item (travel, computer, equipment, etc.).

- Must attend a national conference during the term of the award (attendance at AHA Scientific Sessions is strongly encouraged).
- International travel is permitted and does not require prior AHA approval.

Postdoctoral Fellow: \$3,000 per year, in addition to the stipend.

- No limit on any line item (travel, computer, equipment, etc.).
- A minimum of \$1,500 per year must be spent on travel to a national conference (attendance at AHA Scientific Sessions is strongly encouraged).
- International travel is permitted and does not require prior AHA approval.

**Supplement Duration:** Two years

## Restrictions

- An applicant may submit only one Research Supplement to Promote Diversity in Science application per deadline.
- The fellow must resign the award if promoted to a staff or faculty position. See exception above, under Eligibility.
- An AHA Fellowship awardee may not hold another AHA award concurrently. However, the trainee may apply for a subsequent AHA award during the last year of the project.
- A primary mentor may only hold one Research Supplement to Promote Diversity in Science at any one time. In addition, AHA's limit on supervision of AHA-funded fellows (no more than four predoctoral and/or postdoctoral fellows at the same time) remains.

## Required Application Documents

Refer to [AHA Application Instructions \(PDF\)](#) and links below for details.

### **Mentor:**

- Proposed Research Plan (3-page limit)  
The mentor and fellow should work collaboratively to create a proposed research plan that is within the overall scope of the mentor's current grant and a logical extension of its goals and objectives. A Research Plan redundant with any portion of the studies approved under the mentor's grant will not be supported under this supplement program.
- Biosketch of Mentor and Co-Mentor, if applicable (5-page limit per Mentor)
- [Past and Current Trainees](#) (3 pages per mentor)
- [Training Plan of Mentor](#) (and Co-Mentor, if named) (3 pages total)
- The trainee's career goals, as stated in "Part A - Personal Statement" of the fellow's biosketch, and the mentor's training plan must be complementary to one another

and focus specifically on the individual. A standardized training plan will not be viewed favorably. AHA does not require but strongly encourages the use of Individual Development Plans (IDPs) for AHA training programs. IDPs provide a structure for the identification and achievement of career goals.

- [Research Project Environment](#) (no page limit)

#### **Fellow:**

- **Biosketch (5-page limit)**  
In “Part A - Personal Statement”, briefly describe why you are well-suited for your role in this project. Relevant factors may include aspects of your training; your previous experimental work on this specific topic or related topics; your technical expertise; and/or your past performance in this or related fields. Also state your career goals and how conducting this research will facilitate achievement of these goals. AHA does not require career plans to be traditional academic or clinical research work.
- **Summary for Non-scientists (2500-character limit)**  
With guidance from the mentor, the fellow should create a Summary for Non-scientists (lay summary). Applications for research funding will be assessed for their potential impact on the AHA Mission, and on the description of the proposal and its potential outcomes to non-scientists.

The AHA recommends that the lay summary be written on a 10th grade level. If your summary is written above the 12th grade comprehension level, your application cannot be submitted. The parts of your summary that would benefit from editing will be highlighted in yellow and red in ProposalCentral. For assistance with editing your summary, you may use <https://readable.com/text/> or a similar online tool.

#### **Optional Third-Party Personnel:**

- Biosketch of Co-Mentor(s), if named (up to 5 pages per co-mentor)

**No reference reports are required** for the Research Supplement to Promote Diversity in Science.

---

## Peer Review Criteria

An applicant is prohibited from contacting AHA peer reviewers. This is a form of scientific misconduct and will result in the removal of the application from funding consideration and institutional notification of misconduct.

To judge the merit of the application, reviewers will consider the following criteria. The AHA uses a 1-9 score scale; see AHA guidance for peer reviewers. and [AHA Peer Reviewer Guidance](#).

### **Criterion 1 - Non-Scientist Summary**

To be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives.

1. How well written is the Non-Scientist Summary in explaining to a non-scientist audience the research proposed and its importance?
2. Does the Non-Scientist Summary adequately explain the major health problem being addressed by this study?
3. Does it provide specific questions and how the projects will address them?
4. Does it provide information on the overall impact of this work and the potential advances in the field?
5. Does it relay how the proposal supports the mission of the AHA?

### **Criterion 2 – Evaluation of the Fellow**

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

### **Criterion 3 - Mentor/Training Plan and Environment**

Because the fellow receives only a stipend from the award, additional monetary support for the proposed work MUST come from the mentor's laboratory. The mentor should specify the role the applicant played in developing the proposal, the relationship of the proposal to the existing AHA grant to which the supplement applies, and how the proposal will contribute toward the training and career development of the applicant.

#### *Mentor/Training Plan*

1. Is the mentor an independent investigator?
2. Does the mentor have the experience to direct the proposed training, as evidenced by a track record regarding productivity, funding, and prior trainees?
3. Does the mentor have adequate current funding to support the trainee's project?
4. Does the mentor demonstrate familiarity with the trainee's career and developmental goals and provide a comprehensive plan that supports the

trainee's career goals, which should be outlined in the Personal Statement section of the fellow's biosketch?

5. Is there a plan for instruction in the responsible conduct of research, considering the specific characteristics of the training program, the level of trainee experience, and the particular circumstances of the trainee? The reviewers will evaluate the adequacy of the proposed training in relation to the following: A sufficiently broad selection of subject matter, such as conflict of interest, authorship, data management, human subjects and animal use, laboratory safety, research misconduct, research ethics. AHA does not require submission of the NIH RCR form.

#### *Environment*

As evidenced by the Mentor's Research Project Environment form, does the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of a successful learning experience?

#### **Criterion 4 - Evaluation of the Proposal**

This section should provide a summary of the proposed research plan: A thoughtfully planned, systematic proposal aimed at clearly answering an investigative question in cardiovascular or stroke research. It should be completed in collaboration with the proposed mentor.

Note: The proposal will be assessed on the scientific merit, but equally as an integral part of the trainee's development into a career aligned with AHA's mission.

A new fellow may not have had adequate time to generate preliminary data and therefore may present preliminary data generated by the mentor. The assessment of preliminary data, whether generated by the mentor or the trainee, should be put into perspective so that bold new ideas and risk-taking by beginning investigators are encouraged rather than stymied.

- Is the Proposed Work appropriate for the trainee, given his/her academic background, experience, and career interests?
- Does the proposal contain the right balance of challenge, the importance of the research question, and feasibility in relation to the trainee's experience and training?
- For all applications that include vertebrate animals or human subjects, applicants must explain how relevant biological variables, such as sex, are factored into the research design, analysis, and reporting. Furthermore, strong justification from the scientific literature, preliminary data, or other relevant considerations, must be provided for applications proposing to study only one sex.

## Use the AHA Precision Medicine Platform to perform data analysis, increase your capability, and receive up to \$50,000 in AWS credits per year

AHA awardees may apply for a complimentary Precision Medicine Platform workspace to perform data analyses during the term of their AHA awards. The workspace will provide up to \$50,000 in AWS credits per year during the course of the AHA award.\*

- Register for a free account on the AHA [Precision Medicine Platform](#) to learn more.
- [Learn more about the platform \(video\)](#).
- [Explore the capabilities of the platform \(video\)](#).
- Join our Forums and office hours to speak directly to the experts and users. [Contact us](#) for more information.
- The AHA Precision Medicine Platform provides a friendly web User Interface that allows you to write code in various languages (for example, Python, R, SAS, and more), execute the code, and view the results as they are processed. Workspaces are equipped with pre-installed software packages ranging from machine learning, statistical analysis, data analysis, visualization, and genomic and bioinformatic tools. Researchers are also able to upload their own software. View a [complete list](#) of languages, packages, and kernels available on the Precision Medicine Platform.

\* Grantees requesting a workspace are asked to pay a minimal annual maintenance fee, which may be charged to the AHA award. Please refer to this [FAQs](#) document for more details.