

2022 Established Investigator Award

Deadline for required pre-proposals is Thursday, Jan. 13, 2022

Invited full applications are due Wednesday, March 23, 2022

Important Notes:

- Proposals must be received no later than 3 p.m. Central Time on the deadline date. Early submission is encouraged.
- Potential applicants should review the Features of All AHA Awards on the [AHA Application Information](#) page for answers to commonly asked questions about eligibility and award details.
- All proposals must be submitted electronically via [ProposalCentral](#). The system will open eight weeks prior to the application deadline to complete your proposal and upload documents. You can begin to create your documents now; please refer to the [AHA Application Instructions \(PDF\)](#).
- Applicants invited to submit full proposals must be [AHA Professional Members](#) at the time of application. This must be done online. Join or begin the membership process well before the deadline. This requirement is not applicable for the pre-proposal.

Purpose

To support investigators (typically at the associate professor level) with unusual promise and established records of accomplishments. Candidates have a demonstrated commitment to cardiovascular or cerebrovascular science disciplines that support the AHA's mission to be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives, as indicated by funding and publication history and scientific accomplishments. A candidate's career is expected to be in a rapid growth phase.

Eligibility

At the time of application must hold:

- M.D., Ph.D., D.O., D.V.M., or equivalent doctoral degree
- Faculty/staff scientist position or equivalent. NOTE: At the time of award activation, the awardee must be at the level of associate professor/staff scientist or equivalent.
- History of substantial extramural funding.

Pre-proposal (letter of intent) - Required

Application for this award requires a letter of intent (LOI), limited to two (2) pages. AHA will contact applicants with the highest-rated LOIs and invite them to submit a full application. The LOI should briefly address the following points.

Describe the investigator's competitiveness in terms of:

1. Demonstrated commitment to the study of cardiovascular and/or cerebrovascular disease and scientific innovation.
2. Independence as assessed by publications, research funding, and impact of scientific work as a principal investigator.
3. How the award will enhance the investigator's rapid career growth phase.

In addition to the pre-proposal, upload:

- A list of your 15 most impactful and/or foundational publications that are relevant to the proposed research focus or this program in a pdf document. When selecting, consider those which are foundational papers that support your research program; those that are most cited; and for more recent publications, those in high-impact journals or that you predict will elicit the most citations. (limited to 2 pages)
- NIH biosketch (limited to 5 pages)

No reference letters are to be supplied with the initial LOI. Three references will be required from those selected to submit a full application.

Abbreviated Proposal (if selected to submit)

The Established Investigator Award (EIA) abbreviated proposal format is not the same as those used for other AHA grants or individual NIH research grants (R01). The eight (8) pages of the proposal in the EIA describe past research accomplishments, the potential of the EIA to provide new directions and innovations, and broadly discuss projected research studies. The application should not contain detailed protocols or focus heavily on the design or interpretation of individual experiments. The applicant should clarify how this proposal differs from other funded projects, or how these funds will be used to expand upon other projects.

Budget

Award: \$80,000 per year, including 10 percent indirect costs (Indirect costs are not to exceed \$7,273 per year)

Aside from the cap on indirect costs, there is no limit on budget categories. Funds may be used as the principal investigator deems necessary, in accordance with institutional and AHA policies.

Budget items may include:

- salary and fringe of the principal investigator, any collaborating investigators, and other participants with faculty appointments
- salaries of technical personnel essential to the conduct of the project
- supplies
- equipment
- travel
- volunteer subject costs
- data management
- publication costs

No minimum effort requirement. Special consultative services from individuals may be requested, provided the circumstances are fully described in the application. International travel is permitted without prior AHA approval.

Award Duration: Five years; non-renewable

Maximum Award Amount: \$400,000

Restrictions

- An individual may hold more than one AHA award concurrently but may only hold one career development/recognition award (Career Development Award, Established Investigator Award, Merit Award).
- Strategically Focused Research Network personnel may hold individual AHA awards.
- Applications from current or past recipients of AHA advanced investigatorships (such as the Established Investigatorship or Established Investigator Grant) are not eligible. An awardee may hold the Established Investigator Award only once. This award is non-renewable.

Peer Review Criteria for the EIA

Applicants should never contact reviewers regarding their applications. Discussing the content of an application or attempting to influence review outcome will constitute a conflict of interest in the review. Reviewers must notify the AHA if an applicant contacts them.

To judge the merit of the application, reviewers will comment on the following criteria. Fully address these in your proposal.

Generally, the candidate and the innovativeness of the proposal are being evaluated. **The first two of the following criteria must be met to be competitive.** The remaining factors enter into deliberations, but the relative weight given to each may differ from case to case.

- **Innovative, novel research direction** described in the abbreviated application. Is the research direction described by the candidate likely to lead to significant contributions? Does the candidate pose an innovative research direction that challenges existing paradigms or critical barriers to progress in the field? Does the candidate propose to develop or employ novel concepts, approaches or technologies? Does this research direction address an important barrier to achieving a world of longer, healthier lives?
- **Applicant's demonstrated commitment to cardiovascular or cerebrovascular diseases:** Has the research program of the candidate focused on the impact of basic or applied science to cardiovascular or cerebrovascular disease? Does the applicant indicate a clear commitment to cardiovascular/cerebrovascular research in the proposed studies? Do the proposed studies illustrate this commitment?
- **Investigator Independence:** Independence is assessed by publications and financial support as a principal investigator. Is the candidate established as an independent investigator?
- **Investigator potential:** The investigator's potential for career growth should be assessed by several factors. These include the applicant's number, quality and independence of publications in peer-reviewed journals, previous professional accomplishments, and relevant experience. Do the reference letters and department head letter support the conclusion that the candidate's career is in a rapid growth phase? Is it likely that the investigator will have an impact on the field?
- **Prior or current independent national-level awards;** does the candidate's track record regarding funding provide evidence for independence and potential for future success? Has the candidate held independent national awards, such as an NIH R01and/or equivalent? (e.g., VA Merit Award, NSF

Grant, or PI of a project on a Program Project Grant from NIH). NIH "K" series awards are not considered equivalent to R01. Note: To encourage submissions from clinical investigators, epidemiologists, and translational scientists, individuals with significant support from national-level peer-reviewed clinical and multicenter trials and/or other clinically-oriented grants will be considered (e.g., U01, U11, and equivalent awards).

- **Award impact on career development:** Impact should be assessed based on the letters from the department head and references. Is it clear that the award will propel the career development of the candidate?
- **Environment:** Does the environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Does the proposal benefit from unique features of the scientific environment, or subject populations, or employ useful collaborative arrangements? Is there evidence of institutional support?
- **Impact:** Applications for research funding will be assessed for their potential impact on the AHA Mission, and on the applicant's ability to effectively describe the proposal and its potential outcomes to non-scientists. This potential impact assessment will be based primarily on the Summary for Non-scientists. This assessment will be factored into the Impact peer review criterion, which will account for 5-10% of the overall priority score.