2024 Research Supplement to Promote Diversity in Science

Important Notes:

- Proposals must be received no later than 3 p.m. Central Time on the deadline date. Early submission is encouraged.
- Before beginning an application, review the eligibility and requirements that apply to all AHA research awards at AHA Application Resources page.
- 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). All submissions require a signature from a designated institutional representative.
- Applicants 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.

DEADLINE EXTENDED:
Wednesday, January 17, 2024

ProposalCentral open for proposals: July 31, 2023
Award start date: April 1, 2024

Purpose

To enable current AHA awardees to identify and serve as mentors for predoctoral and postdoctoral fellows from underrepresented groups in science and medicine:

- Individuals from one or more racial and ethnic groups underrepresented in science, including: Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- LGBTQ+ individuals
- Individuals with disabilities, who are defined as those with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities
- Individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, defined as those who meet two or more of the following criteria:

- Were or currently are homeless
- Were or currently are in the foster care system
- Were eligible for the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program for two or more years
- Have/had no parents or legal guardians who completed a bachelor's degree
- Were or currently are eligible for Federal Pell grants

See additional eligibility criteria below.

Overview

An eligible AHA-funded investigator identifies an eligible trainee to mentor. (See Eligibility section below.)

Key elements of a successful application will include:

1. A trainee who has demonstrated excellent potential for conducting research. The fellow will initiate the application in ProposalCentral and will be the awardee/PI.
2. A research plan that expands or augments the currently funded AHA research project and the fellow's skills. The mentor and fellow will prepare the application jointly. The mentor's institution will be responsible for administering the project.
3. A capable mentor(s) who has constructed a strong development plan for the fellow.
4. A training environment that will facilitate the fellow's success.

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

Currently-funded AHA faculty awardees with at least one year of funding remaining on the original award term at the time of activation (April 1, 2024).

Up to two additional co-mentors are permitted, but are not required.

Awardees who hold the following AHA grants are eligible to serve as mentors for this supplement:

- AHA Institutional Research Enhancement Award (AIREA)

- AHA Merit Award
- Career Development Award
- Collaborative Sciences Award
- Harold Amos Medical Faculty Development Program
- Established Investigator Award
- Innovative Project Award
- Transformational Project Award
- Project PIs of a funded Strategically Focused Research Network
- AHA's Second Century Implementation Science Award
- AHA's Second Century Early Faculty Independence Award

Co-Mentor

A joint mentor has the same responsibilities as the primary mentor. A co-mentor is not required to be a current AHA awardee. If a co-mentor is named, the fellow must add the co-mentor in the Third-Party section of the application form in ProposalCentral. The primary mentor should work with the co-mentor to obtain content for the required documents. View the Sponsor/Mentor Information page.

Fellow/Trainee

Predoctoral Fellow

- Must be a full-time student working towards their 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.

AHA Stipend Levels for 2024	Annual Stipend (Published 7/18/23)
Predoctoral Fellow	$27,144
Postdoctoral Fellow, based on years of experience:	
0	$56,484
1	$56,880
2	$57,300
3	$59,592
4	$61,572
5	$63,852
6	$66,228
7 or more	$68,604

Health Insurance

Predoctoral Fellow: $4,550 per year
Postdoctoral Fellow: $12,200 per year

Note: Stipend may be used to further supplement health insurance costs, 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: One or two years

Restrictions

- An applicant (fellow) may submit only one Research Supplement to Promote Diversity in Science application per deadline.

- A mentor may be named on only one Research Supplement to Promote Diversity in Science application per deadline.

- The fellow may hold only one AHA award at a time.

- AHA allows supplementation from other sources to meet the sponsoring institution's stipend and benefit levels, however, the trainee may not hold a comparable award (such as another fellowship) as a source of supplementation.

- The fellow must resign the award if promoted to a staff or faculty position. See exception above, under Eligibility.

In addition, a mentor may supervise no more than four AHA-funded fellows (predoctoral and/or postdoctoral) and no more than two AHA-supported

student fellows (undergraduate and/or medical/graduate students) at any time. This restriction does not apply to co-mentors. Fellows who are part of an AHA Strategically Focused Research Network are excluded.

Required Application Documents

Refer to AHA Application Instructions (PDF) and links below for details.

Mentor:

- A new fellow may not have had adequate time to generate preliminary data; therefore, applicants may present preliminary data generated by the mentor. However, submission of an application with identical or significantly similar content as a submission by another investigator is prohibited. Also, submission of an application with identical or significantly similar content in a sponsor's grant and his/her fellow's proposal is prohibited.

- 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:

- Proposed Research Plan (3-page limit)
  The fellow and mentor should collaboratively develop a thoughtfully planned, systematic proposal aimed at clearly answering an investigative question in cardiovascular or cerebrovascular research related to the mentor's existing AHA award.

  Because the fellow receives only a stipend from the award, additional monetary support for the proposed work MUST come from the mentor's laboratory. Therefore, the proposal will likely be related to the mentor's currently funded work. The mentor should address the relationship of the

proposal to ongoing work in their laboratory, and how the proposal will contribute toward the fellow's training and career development.

- 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.

  In addition, detail how your experiences as an underrepresented individual has shaped your scientific journey. Please also note which underrepresented group listed above you identify with.

- 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
Does the Non-Scientist Summary identify how the research supports the AHA mission and impact to be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives? Does it describe the proposal at a level the general population can understand?

1. How well does the Non-Scientist Summary explaine 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?
3. Does it provide specific questions being addressed by the project?
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. The 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 cerebrovascular 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.

1. Is the Proposed Work appropriate for the fellow, given their academic background, experience, and career interests?

2. Does the proposal contain the right balance of challenge, 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.

Ethical aspects of the proposed research are to be addressed in the subject use approval documents. Describe any special ethical circumstance or issue of note in the proposed research plan.

- Animal subject use documents are to be uploaded into the Research Assurances section of the proposal.

- Human subject approval and consent forms are just-in-time documents that are submitted for funded projects prior to award activation.

If the proposed research project involves human subjects, the population sampled shall be inclusive of the general population, of relevance to the scientific question posed, without restriction regarding gender, race, age, and socioeconomic status. Proposals that intentionally restrict the population sampled must include a compelling scientific rationale for such research design as part of the proposed research plan. There is not a separate upload for this explanation; it must be included within the allowable page limit for your proposal.